



Resolution in support of the implementation of a medical amnesty policy at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay

Author(s): Cora Mollen (Health and Safety Committee Chair), Harrison Thiry (Speaker of the Senate)

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Whereas, The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay does not currently have a medical amnesty policy in place to protect students' health in situations involving alcohol and/or substance use;

Whereas, Chancellor Alexander stated in his "Installation Speech" (September 2021): "We must lead with kindness and empathy. . . We must have the courage and be willing to think differently, take risks, sacrifice some of our personal goals for the greater good, and we must put students and the betterment of our region always at the forefront of our decision . . .;"ⁱ

Whereas, the Student Government Association of the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay firmly believes that implementing a medical amnesty policy would put students' health at the forefront of such decisions, and would demonstrate kindness and empathy in a fuller capacity in situations where alcohol and/or substance use is involved;

Whereas, the preservation of life is of utmost importance;

Whereas, amnesty policies promote the preservation of life by encouraging more students to seek medical help;

Whereas, such was the case at Cornell University after the adoption of an alcohol amnesty policy that found the number of alcohol-related calls to consistently increase each year after the implementation of the policy;ⁱⁱ

Whereas, amnesty policies "promote trust, collaboration, and communication among mental health services, college administration, emergency services, college personnel and students;"ⁱⁱⁱ

Whereas, research published in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* in 2018 found that implementation of such an amnesty policy regarding personal use of alcohol did not lead to an increase in alcohol consumption, psychological problems, or other adverse consequences;^{iv}

Whereas, the same research found that the policy increased usage of emergency medical services in appropriate circumstances;



Whereas, the University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse^v, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire^{vi}, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison^{vii} have already implemented similar Responsible Action Policies regarding the personal use of alcohol;

Whereas, the lack of a medical amnesty policy deters students from contacting emergency services, perpetuates animosity and mistrust between students and University Police, and is a threat to the preservation of life at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay;^{viii}

Therefore, be it resolved, as is consistent with academic research, policies implemented at other universities, and our ethical obligation to promote health and safety, we call for the immediate adoption and implementation of a medical amnesty policy which shall promote the preservation of life, the health of the students at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and demonstrates kindness, empathy, and understanding by allowing students to feel safe and secure when contacting emergency services;

Therefore, be it further resolved, the Student Government Association of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay calls upon university administration to implement a policy to provide amnesty in any situation consistent with the following guidelines:

1. In any situation in which a student or other person can reasonably be assumed to require immediate medical attention, neither that person nor any individual contacting emergency medical services on their behalf should be cited or disciplined for personal use of any substance by officials acting on behalf of the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, regardless of if they were contacted through housing staff, University Police, 911, or other methods.
2. The exceptions to this policy would include educational sanctions (e.g. alcohol or substance education programs) by the Dean of Students Office, or abuse of this protection (e.g. multiple uses within a short time period). Appeals to these exceptions may be recommended to the student court.
3. In order to be protected under this policy, bystanders must remain with the individual in need of medical attention until assistance arrives. Any individual, whether a bystander or a person in need of medical attention, must cooperate with the responding personnel, and must be willing to provide relevant information requested by those personnel to the best of their ability.

Therefore, be it finally resolved, that upon institution of such a policy, the Student Government Association of the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay calls upon University Police, the Dean of Students Office, University Housing, and any other relevant university agencies as determined by the Health and Safety Committee to include materials advertising this policy on their respective websites, in orientation materials, and across physical locations on campus, as is appropriate for those agencies.



Vice President

Speaker of the Senate

President

References

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- ^{viii} Griner, Strasser, S., Kemp, C. B., & Zesiger, H. (2020). State-by-State Examination of Overdose Medical Amnesty Laws. *The Journal of Legal Medicine* (Chicago. 1979), 40(2), 171–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01947648.2020.1819484>