

New WSU alcohol policy takes effect

Student organizations now allowed to serve alcohol at campus events

By Yesenia Amaro, Daily News staff writer

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Steven Davis said students would be better off without any alcohol at the Compton Union Building or anywhere else on the Washington State University campus.

"I do not understand the push to have it served" at WSU, said Davis, a member of the Graduate Professional Student Association. "Are we missing something in the current events at the CUB that alcohol will provide?"

Not everyone shares his concerns.

WSU recently implemented a universitywide alcohol policy that allows student organizations to serve alcohol during events anywhere on campus, said Milton Lang, senior associate vice president for the division of student affairs, equity and diversity.

He said student organizations that want to serve alcohol at an event must go through a process that involves proving everyone drinking is 21 or older and providing information on the time, date and place of their event. The WSU Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development will process the applications.

The policy only allows student organizations to serve beer and wine, said Brian Shuffield, assistant director of the WSU Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development.

"Anything else is not an option," he said.

Approval also will depend on whether the facility where the event is taking place is deemed appropriate for alcohol to be served, he said.

"That is something that we would be working on" with the students, he said. Most events likely will take place inside the CUB.

Shuffield said he only expects alcohol to be served at 10 to 15 student-organization events a year.

"I'm not anticipating a high frequency of events that would have alcohol," he said.

Lang said the policy received final approval last Friday by Michael Tate, vice president for the division of student affairs, equity and diversity.

Shuffield said the eight-member Student Organizations Alcohol Policy Committee, which included students, faculty and staff, worked on the policy during the fall semester.

He said there was not a demand from student organizations for such a policy, but committee members felt it was "something that was kind of missing."

"I think some of it may have had to do with the alcohol that is now served in the CUB, with the fact that it's already happening on campus," he said.

Joan O'sa Oviawe, president of the Education Graduate Organization, said she doesn't have a problem with the policy and doesn't foresee it affecting her organization.

"Our events typically don't require alcohol," she said. "I don't see us taking advantage of the policy for now."

She said student organizations on campus are responsible for the most part, and she doesn't anticipate the new policy being a problem.

WSU Police Chief Bill Gardner declined to say whether he had any concerns about the policy, but noted that his office "responds to an awful lot of underage drinking and it's more of a common call on campus."

"I think that is true of any college campus or any environment where there is a college nearby," he added. "We handle those kind of calls pretty frequently."

Student organizations previously had to seek off-campus sites to host events where alcohol could be served.

Chris Nash, manager of Zeppoz Bar and Grill in Pullman, said the policy might affect his business a little bit on the catering end, but not in the alcohol aspect.

Pawny Johnson, manager of Rico's in Pullman, also doesn't expect her business to suffer from the alcohol policy.

"We usually get small groups that come to study," she said. "We don't normally get big groups who come here looking to get away from campus."

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