

Parents will hear about students cited for I.V. drinking offenses

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UCSB students cited for drinking in Isla Vista will soon face more than a fine — they'll have to explain themselves to their parents.

Starting next school year, undergraduates cited by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department for being drunk in

public and other alcohol-related offenses will also have a note sent to their parents from the university.

Criminal citations are public record and the university will coordinate with the Sheriff's Department to learn when an undergraduate student, regardless of age, is cited and then make sure parents also receive that information. The Santa Barbara Police Department has no

involvement with the new policy.

Officials say they're not trying to punish students by notifying parents. They're just trying to enlist help to calm the party scene.

"They can use this information to talk to the student about their alcohol use, hopefully to set some expectations," said Cynthia Bowers, campus physician and director of

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WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY



"We're adults here and we're basically responsible for ourselves. But I don't think students care enough to do something."

NICK NEGRETE, 21



"Once you're in college, you're in college. It shouldn't matter to you that your mom is mad at you. It should matter to you that your life is (messed) up."

SARAH ZUSKA, 18



"High school's kind of about telling your parents, and even then that's ridiculous. I think it's absurd for a school of this size to call about every little thing."

PAUL JOHNSON, 22

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the Student Health Center. "Frankly, most of these students are dependent on their parents financially."

Students and some parents interviewed on campus said the measure is intrusive given that part of the college experience is learning to be independent. Grades, after all, are not provided to parents, they said.

Sophomore honors student Kristin Kern says she's an adult and her parents don't need to hear that she drinks in Isla Vista, especially since she's keeping her life in balance with a 3.9 grade-point average.

"I've already gotten that (notification) stuff in high school," said Ms. Kern, 20. "My parents would just lecture me, but they already know I do this."

University officials say they're eager to try new programs to improve safety in Isla Vista. They're tired of students being raped, falling off beachfront cliffs or getting into fights, at least in part because they have alcohol in their system.

Students risk their lives when they drink, which makes them more likely to drive while drunk or tumble off cliffs, officials say.

The new policy follows another implemented in the fall that gives the school authority to discipline students for serious off-campus offenses, such as rape or battery. The changes come at a time when a number of agencies are working more efficiently to make Isla Vista safer.

The Sheriff's Department, for example, soon will start notifying landlords if their tenants make their property among the most frequently visited addresses in town. And a coalition of county, college and sheriff's officials recently saw new ordinances approved by the Board of Supervisors that are tailored to calm the Isla Vista party scene.

Dr. Bowers says most students in Isla Vista aren't addicted to alcohol, that they're just young people who

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Cynthia Bowers,

campus physician and director of the Student Health Center

don't believe anything bad will happen. That belief doesn't end until they reach their early 20s, she explained.

"I personally am really tired of seeing students die just because they're ignorant," she said. "My job is to make sure they make it home alive, and I get very hurt when they don't."

Parents on a UCSB campus tour with their high school sons and daughters said Wednesday that they were surprised to hear about the new policy.

"We've got some civil liberty issues here," said Arlene Bloom, a parent from Thousand Oaks who doesn't support the new policy. "I'm not sure how much of a parental role the university should take on."

Sheila McIntyre, on the other hand, said she liked the idea. She already has a daughter at the University of Arizona, where she's heard there's a lot of drinking. Ms. McIntyre said she wishes that school would do more to limit drinking.

She was touring the campus with her son Thomas, who is considering enrolling at UCSB in the fall.

"I would probably come up here to talk to him" if she got a letter from UCSB, Ms. McIntyre said. "You're concerned if they're having a problem with alcohol, if you're interested in your child. If you care."

But Thomas, not surprisingly, didn't like the idea of parent notification. "You're pretty much grown up. You're an adult," the 17-year-old said.