

IUP: Underage Drinking, Dangerous Drinking Not Tolerated

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The following report by Westmoreland County Bureau Chief Jennifer Miele first aired Sept. 2, 2005, on Channel 4 Action News at 5:30 p.m.

Underage drinking, driving under the influence, open container violations -- the charges piled up against local college students. And those charges all happened over move-in weekend at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

There were many other charges during the first week of class, including public urination and theft. IUP officials said they weren't surprised.

"University police were actively on patrol because we thought we better start this semester out by sending this message -- underage drinking, dangerous drinking, not tolerated," said IUP spokeswoman Michelle Fryling.

Tougher sanctions against students caught drinking underage are also part of the plan to crack down on alcohol abuse at IUP. Four violations, and you are out. Most of the students charged racked up two or three at one time.

Students we talked to support the changes.

"They probably do need to be harder, make an example of someone. Hopefully, it will filter down into the younger kids," said student John Pedrosky.

"They should be tougher, because I mean it's just common sense. If you're going to do it, don't get caught, or at least be a little smarter about it," said Jason Lewis, also an IUP student.

IUP put posters up all over campus that detail what happens each time someone is caught violating the school's alcohol policy. The signs are also soliciting students to join the Judicial Review Board, which is not a coveted position because they, along with selected faculty and administrators, make the final decision about the status of a student if he gets into trouble.

That board heard the case against four former IUP football players this summer who were accused of the brutal beating of a bouncer just off campus.

The school won't confirm the board expelled them, but none returned to school this year. To lure students away from the bar and the booze, IUP holds dozens of campus events, such as a mixer where fraternities battle it out to make the best tasting alcohol-free drink.



IUP says the part of their crackdown with the most impact will be the counseling each student will be required to undergo each time they violate the school's alcohol policy. The intention is to have students leave school with a new sense of alcohol's pitfalls.

But, many students will also be leaving college with a criminal record.

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