



# Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

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## The Greek-Enforcement Connection at Oregon State University

In the wake of a series of riots in 2001, university administration, campus police, and local enforcement began to work more closely together to address student-drinking issues, especially those related to fraternity and sorority life. Student alcohol-related incident reports in off-campus settings have dropped by more than half after implementation of an innovative program involving enforcement and Greek Life at Oregon State University (OSU).

At OSU, off-campus parties involving alcohol would often get out of control and result in negative consequences such as alcohol poisoning, assaults, noise disturbances, damage to public and private property, and death. Issues with fraternity houses were ongoing and accounted for a large number of calls to service by enforcement. "Greeks did not trust the police, and the police defiantly disliked the character of the community," said Brice Nesbitt, Interfraternity Council President at OSU.

In an effort to address alcohol-related issues with fraternities and sororities, the Corvallis Police Department established an Officer Liaison Program to help create an environment in which fraternity and sorority members could better understand their responsibilities as citizens and better use available services and resources. The program focused on building strong student-enforcement relationships by assigning officers as liaisons to a group of Greek fraternity and sorority houses. The officers provided information on alcohol laws and consequences, crime prevention, problem-solving, educational programs, and other enforcement-related issues. They also attended

events such as house functions, educational programs, dinners, and celebrations, and established themselves as the point of consistent contact for questions and answers by house members.

Members of Greek Life embraced the program and now work closely with enforcement to ensure compliance with campus policies and local and State laws, participate in student patrols and enforcement ride-a-longs, and are now better neighbors in the community.

The OJDP Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Initiative supports cooperation between community organizations, enforcement agencies, youth, and other concerned citizens to change local ordinances and enforcement practices.

Jackie Balzer, interim Dean of Students at OSU says, "The OSU Greek-CPD Liaison Program has created numerous collaborative opportunities between OSU and the Corvallis Police Department. The program builds relationships that help us to avoid difficulties and handle difficult situations in a much more productive manner."

Enforcement statistics have shown that members of Greek houses who worked with the police while planning special events typically experienced fewer problems. This is substantiated by crime reporting data from OSU showing arrests for liquor law violations in off-campus settings dropping from approximately 439 in 2001 to 145 in 2003.

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