

Letter to Faculty,

Recently at a sister institution in the State University System, a student tragically died due to abusive drinking at an off-campus party. Unfortunately, this type of occurrence is all too common on college campuses today (this past week, there was a death under similar circumstances at Texas State University). We don't have to look very far to see examples of abusive drinking behavior by individuals in social settings, on airlines, at local restaurants and bars and on videos posted on social media platforms. The prevalence of these images imply that this is normal behavior and is now acceptable. Unfortunately, this message, that it is ok to binge drink alcohol, when paired with young people inexperienced in the effects of alcohol on their body, leads to tragic consequences including injuries, automobile accidents and in some cases death due to alcohol poisoning. We as leaders in the academy cannot stand by and let these life choices become the new normal.

As President of the Faculty Senate and Vice President for Student Affairs, we are asking for your help to begin to change this message to our students at FGCU. While the academic content in your class and a conversation about choices in social settings may not seem like a natural fit, the young people in your classroom are the same across all academic disciplines and are looking to us for guidance. They are seeking to learn, not just course content, but how to live a meaningful like as a member of a community. Their learning encompasses so much more than what they absorb in a 3-hour academic credit and we are all responsible contributing to this outcome.

As a campus wide initiative of our faculty, we encourage you to take a few minutes on a regular basis to:

- Remind students of their obligations to care for each other in social settings,
- To be aware of the choices they make,
- To minimize risky behavior,
- To make healthy choices in what they consume in all settings, and
- To improve the health and safety of the entire campus by not using alcohol to reduce stress.

The loss of one of our students due to a tragedy that can be avoided is something we can all impact by our messages to students. Our influence can assist in shaping the culture of FGCU. We look forward to your contribution to this on-going discussion with our students and each other. Join us in establishing a campus culture that is healthy, sustainable, caring, civil and safe throughout our community.