Alexandra Goudy

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Dr. Falik

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**The War on Wisconsin Binge Drinking**

On Monday, William Smith, president of the Wisconsin Binge Drinking Institute, made a speech on the problems with binge drinking in Wisconsin and the steps needed in order to solve them.

The definition of binge drinking includes having five or more drinks in one setting, which the National Center for Policy Analysis have shown that 23% of Wisconsinites are guilty of on more than one occasion. Over the years, Wisconsin has had the highest binge-drinking rate among teens, college students, and the even the elderly in the entire country, therefore the goal of Smith and the Wisconsin Binge Drinking Institute is to limit the damaging effects of alcohol without impairing the rights of responsible adults.

In order to better understand the issues with binge drinking, a study was authorized at three different University of Wisconsin campuses at Madison, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh, where they followed more than 400 students at each school. After the study was completed, conclusions were drawn pertaining to the causes.

It was shown that being a part of a sorority or fraternity did not increase chances of binge drinking among students. It was seen that binge drinking tends to increase after the hours between midnight and bar close along with an increase in drunk driving. Those who are 21 and older are more likely to drink and drive than those who are not of age.

He later unveiled a new effort called the “Say When Project”. This project revolves around college education on binge drinking and safety along with the decision to extend the current “Titan Nights” on the Oshkosh campus. An effort to mandate all bars within a one-mile radius of any college campus and ceasing the serving of alcohol after 12 p.m. is also in action.

Angela Zemke, a member of the UW-Oshkosh Greek Life responded with admiration and support for the project, stating that she was grateful that Dr. Smith’s statements did not revolve the issue around Greek life itself. “We are happy to be able to use our knowledge to educate the campus.” Angela stated, “Furthermore, we are very happy to be more actively involved in the Titan Nights program. Members of all fraternities and sororities on campus will be working with the program through the staffing of games, food booths and various other volunteer efforts at this expanded event...Finally, we applaud the courage of the institute and will stand side-by-side with its members as they attempt to roll back bar time around our campus.”

On the other hand, The Tavern League of Wisconsin responded with strong opposition to any attempt at mandating the serving of alcohol in Wisconsin. Terry Harvath, the president of this non-profit trade association stated, “We at the Tavern League would also like to point out that every attempt to limit alcohol, from clamping down on 18-and-up beer bars in the 1980s to the Prohibition movement in the 1920s and 1930s has led to far greater problems. When alcohol is driven underground, responsible adults are treated like criminals and more of them tend to act like it”. Terry claims that although Alcohol is dangerous within consumption, limiting the sales will only harm the local businesses.

Smith and his team will be attempting to work with college campuses and the state in an attempt to make Wisconsin a better and safer place.