



**Mount Wachusett
Community College**

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

POLICY STATEMENT ON:

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Drug and Alcohol Policies established at Mount Wachusett Community College are intended to address student or employee misuse of alcohol and other drugs on campus, thereby creating a safer campus and an environment that nurtures students' academic and social development and employee professional development. The goal of this policy is prevention that will allow the college to establish and maintain an environment that will discourage substance use.

On December 12, 1989, Congress amended Title XII of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This amendment, known as the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, requires that every educational institution as a condition of receiving funds or any other form of financial assistance under any federal program, certify its adoption and implement programs designed to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees. It further requires that the college submit a written certification to the Secretary of Education that it has adopted and implemented a drug prevention program as described in the regulations. Mount Wachusett Community College, in accordance with legal mandates and its philosophy of establishing and maintaining an environment of learning and supportive climate in which to conduct the business and mission of the College, will enforce the following policies:

(1) The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs is prohibited on any campus of Mount Wachusett Community College or as part of any college-related activity. Students or employees who violate these restrictions shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including, suspension, expulsion or discharge, and shall also be subject to referral for criminal prosecution. Where students or employees are convicted of violating a criminal drug or alcohol statute related to a college activity, the College shall ordinarily expel or discharge the offender absent mitigating circumstances. Mitigating circumstances shall include, but shall not be limited to, considerations of disability under federal and state law.

(2) Mount Wachusett Community College shall cooperate in the enforcement of federal and state laws concerning illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages. Massachusetts statutes pertaining to illegal drugs and alcohol include:

*Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C (Controlled Substances Act)

*Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 272, Section 59 (Public Drinking)

*Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, Section 24 (Operating Under the Influence, Open Container)

Prescribed penalties under Chapter 94 range from mandatory probation for a first conviction for possession of a class E substance, e.g. marijuana, to a period of imprisonment of up to two years and a fine of two thousand dollars for each subsequent conviction related to sale or distribution. Prescribed penalties under Chapter 90, Section 24,

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range from a fine of \$100 to imprisonment for not more than two years and a fine of \$1000. Federal judicial guidelines also exist that suggest penalties for violation of federal criminal statutes related to drugs and alcohol.

(3) Under age drinking is prohibited at Mount Wachusett Community College functions and on any part of the campus.

(4) It is Mount Wachusett Community College's policy that consumption of alcohol is prohibited in connection with any College function, whether on- or off-campus, without the express written permission of the President of the College or his designee.

(5) Employees working under federally funded grants are additionally subject to the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. The Act creates the following obligations:

(a) Employees convicted of any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace must notify the associate vice president of human resources and affirmative action of Mount Wachusett Community College no later than five (5) days after such conviction. Such notification must be in writing.

(b) The College shall notify the appropriate federal agency within ten (10) days after receiving notice from the employee regarding such conviction. Such notification will be in writing.

(c) The College, within thirty (30) days of receiving notice, with respect to any employee who is convicted, will:

(i) Take appropriate disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination of employment, or

(ii) Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse resistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

(6) The College will present campus-wide drug and alcohol education programs on an annual basis. This is in addition to other educational opportunities available in current or future academic offerings.

Health Risks Associated With the Use of Illicit Drugs and the Abuse of Alcohol

The misuse of alcohol and other drugs create problems for students or employees who engage in this behavior as well as for their peers or fellow employees who suffer a range of consequences from having their study or work interrupted to far more egregious acts. Obvious health risks include physical dependence, psychological dependence, possible overdose and withdrawal symptoms.

Alcohol consumption causes a number of marked changes in behavior. Even low doses significantly impair the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely, increasing the likelihood that the driver will be involved in an accident. Repeated use or abuse of alcohol can lead to physical and psychological dependence. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol can also lead to permanent damage to vital organs.

Statistics show that alcohol use is involved in a majority of violent behavior on college campuses, including acquaintance rape, vandalism, fights, and incidents of drinking and driving.

Mount Wachusett Community College Resources

For any member of the MWCC community who is experiencing substance abuse problems, Mount Wachusett Community College stands ready to offer supportive services and referral for treatment, as appropriate and available. Information concerning substance abuse and rehabilitation counseling programs is available through the following College resources:

(1) **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Regular meetings are held on campus for students and staff. Information about these meetings may be obtained from the Health Services office.

(2) **Substance Abuse Education - Student Life Informational Programs**

(a) Substance Abuse Education and Counseling

The Health Services office at Mount Wachusett Community College is the primary resource for individuals experiencing or affected by persons with substance abuse issues. Information and referral services are available

on a drop-in basis. Informational brochures on topics such as AIDS transmission and other sexually transmitted diseases are made available to students, so they may access information in an anonymous manner. The College nurse and college counselors are available by appointment to discuss issues with students confidentially.

(b) **Awareness Activities** The Office of Student Life, in conjunction with the MWCC Student Government Association, plans a number of alcohol and drug awareness activities. In conjunction with National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in October, activities such as educational performers and drunk driving awareness programs are held. Additionally, groups such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) set up informational booths on campus to encourage responsible drinking.

At key times during the semester, such as during the holiday season and at graduation, awareness activities are scheduled. The focus of these activities is to raise awareness of students on responsible use of alcohol and the effects of illegal and prescription drug use and abuse. The responsible and legal choice is always emphasized.

(3) **Human Services**

Alcoholism is treated as part of a unit of Psychology 240, Abnormal Psychology, a course required of Human Services and Criminal Justice students. This topic is discussed in 3 classes as a category of Substance Use Disorders as outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSMIV) of the American Psychiatric Association. The following broad concepts are covered in this unit: incidence; physical effects; progression; gender differences in addiction; and treatment.

(4) **Mount Wachusett Community College Library**

A bibliography available in the MWCC Library lists books on alcohol & drug abuse.

Distribution of the Policy

This policy is distributed annually in writing to all students and employees through the following means:

- Printed publications
 - College catalog
 - Student Success Manual
 - Employee Publications and Policy Manual
- Online
 - MWCC website
 - All student and all employee email

Review and Compliance

In compliance with the United States Department of Education requirement, this policy is reviewed on a biennial basis to: (1) determine its effectiveness and implement changes if they are needed and (2) to ensure that the sanctions developed are enforced consistently. The 2006 biennial review will be completed on November 1, 2006. Copies of this review will be retained in the Office of the President, the Student Services Office and the Department of Human Resources and Affirmative Action.

FERPA Parental Notification Policy

In compliance with FERPA regulations, Mount Wachusett Community College, has adopted a Massachusetts Board of Higher Education recommendation that the parents or legal guardians of students under twenty-one years of age be notified when the student has violated the MWCC alcohol or drug policies. Section 952 of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments, authorizes institutions of higher education to disclose to parents and guardians of students under age twenty-one, violations of institutional policies or rules, as well as local, state, and federal laws governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.