

FRATERNITY OF MEN, NOT BOYS.

Sigma Nu's Risk Reduction Newsletter

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Don't Play Doctor

All too often, individuals notice distinct signs of alcohol poisoning and write them off as if they just graduated from Harvard Medical School. In those moments, it's more important than ever to be your brother's keeper and don't waste time.

Take a moment this month to have your chapter view Sigma Nu's ["Don't Play Doctor" video](#) at a chapter meeting or LEAD session. Those suffering from alcohol poisoning don't have the privilege of screaming for help, so be their advocate and get them quickly and safely to a hospital.

Do unto others as you would have done unto you. Certainly you wouldn't want someone without even a bachelor's degree to make a decision with your life at stake.

Officer Resource Pages

Did you know that almost every collegiate chapter officer has a specific webpage dedicated to highlighting available resources to effectively take care of their responsibilities and duties? [Officer resource pages](#) have been on the Sigma Nu website for several years and we have recently added many new and exciting resources.

For example, the [Commander officer resource page](#) now includes the participant manual and PowerPoint presentations from the 2013 College of Chapters. Additionally, the [Marshal officer resource page](#) includes an updated resource outlining the key components of an effective candidate education program and sample 6, 8, 10, and 12 week programs. [LEAD Chairmen](#) will also find a LEAD certificate order form and [Scholarship Chairmen](#) have an order form for scholarship keys.

So if you have not visited your officer resource page recently, be sure to take the time soon to check it out. You may find something new that can help you be even more effective in your position!

Spring Breakdown Pt. II

Another year has come and gone, and here you are again on the verge of that penultimate event known as Spring Break. It's a time to get away from school, head south to warmer weather, get a brief respite from your academic workload, and enjoy the company of friends. Unfortunately, that is not an all-encompassing description of a typical Spring Break. In fact let's go to some numbers to give us a fuller look at Spring Break.

First, let's look at the economics of Spring Break. Between Florida and Texas alone, students spend about one billion dollars on Spring Break. Students will also spend an average of \$1,100 a week, with rent and transportation covering less than half of that figure. The local clubs, hotels, taxis, and MTV marketers aren't the only ones cashing in on this student money machine however. In South Padre Island, TX, there is an average of 25 arrests per day.

So it's safe to say that there is a lot of money involved in Spring Break and a substantial cost to partake in the typical activities. There's also a health and safety cost to Spring Break. This is the one that most students do not account for when they make their plans.

On average, both men and women consume over 10 alcoholic drinks a day during Spring Break. Outside of Spring Break, college students typically consume an average of 6 alcoholic drinks a week. In fact, 50% of men and 40% of women said during recent surveys that they drank every night until they passed out. Assuming we take the half million students who descend upon Panama City, FL, every year as our test group, we're looking at roughly half of those students drinking until their body physically shuts down and puts them to sleep. Of course that's not the end of the story, since passing out is often a precursor symptom of alcohol poisoning. *(continued on page 2)*

Public Relations During A Crisis

Has your chapter recently reviewed its crisis management plan? Are all of your officers aware of their responsibilities in the event of a crisis? Have you defined the chapter's media policy within the crisis management plan? If after reading these questions you find yourself wondering whether or not your chapter has a crisis management plan, stop reading this article and check out the ["Sample Crisis Management Plan"](#) resource NOW.

If you are already on top of having a broadly understood written crisis management plan, then let's focus on that last question about handling media in the midst of a crisis. As you have often heard, fraternities get a lot of bad press (Google "fraternity hazing" if you need a reminder). Regrettably, this is often by our chapters' and members' own doing. While we cannot avoid negative press when a crisis situation happens, there are good and bad ways to handle the attention the chapter receives in the aftermath of a crisis.

First, tell all of your members to not discuss the crisis with anyone and forward all media inquiries to the Commander. This includes no posts on social media or online articles about the situation, as tempting as it may be. The chapter needs to centralize its response to one spokesman to ensure there are not contradictory messages coming from the chapter.

Second, with guidance from the General Fraternity, define the chapter's initial response. Typically this would involve the chapter confirming allegations of an incident, the chapter is concerned by these allegations, and the chapter is cooperating fully with authorities.

With these initial steps and active support and guidance from the chapter's alumni leaders, university officials, and the General Fraternity, the chapter should be in a good position to handle the initial surge of media coverage. Depending on the size and scope of the continued coverage, additional strategies will need to be discussed and decided upon. But one thing that can almost guarantee increased media coverage is an ill-advised off-the-cuff comment.

For example, a candidate member is transported to the hospital after consuming alcohol at a chapter event. In responding to a reporter covering the story, the Commander states, "Well we didn't force him to drink." That simple response paints a very negative portrait of the chapter – a chapter that doesn't care that a member is in the hospital; rather, a chapter that cares more about ensuring the public knows that this member was not forced to drink. The public's view of this is likely going to be negative: *this person became dangerously ill while drinking at a fraternity event, therefore the fraternity is responsible*. They don't necessarily care if the chapter *claims* this individual was not *forced* to drink.

For more examples of good and bad ways to handle public relations amidst a crisis, check out <http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/in-a-crisis-be-like-eliot-spitzer-not-anthony-weiner-20121212>.

Spring Break Trends *(continued from page 1)*

We know for a fact that alcohol consumption impairs judgment just like any other drug. Let's take a look at the effects of this impaired judgment, specifically as it concerns sexual activity. Half of the sexual encounters during Spring Break are unplanned or "random." Half of sexual encounters are also unprotected. With such a staggering statistic it's not hard to imagine many students returning to campus with unwanted souvenirs from their trip.

Lastly, what about poor decisions outside of sexual activity? 60% of students will have a run-in with law enforcement during their trip. On average there are 1,300 arrests made during Spring Break in Panama City, FL. 60% of students will also be injured at some point with a majority of those injuries being self-inflicted.

Now none of these statistics are designed to say that it is impossible to have a safe and fun Spring Break experience at many of the typical locations. The latest "GreekLifeEdu Check-In" contains ten helpful tips to having a safe Spring Break trip this year - http://www.outsidetheclassroom.com/upload/boosters/greek2_2013.html.

Source: <http://www.infographicsshowcase.com/spring-break-just-the-facts/>