

The University of West Alabama

Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act

2016 Biennial Review

Academic Year 2013-2014

Academic Year 2014-2015

Richard Hester

Director of Student Life

Division of Student Affairs

Introduction The University of West Alabama Division of Student Affairs certifies that the federally mandated biennial review for the two-year period ending August 31, 2015 has been completed.

For this report, the University reviewed the Department of Education's Complying With the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations [EDGAR Part 86]: A Guide for University and College Administrators as a guide to improve the colleges prevention program by looking at requirements and legislation. The content of the biennial program review will be on file in the Office of the VP of Student Affairs.

The Biennial Review is organized as follows: I. Policy and Annual Notification II. Resources III. Drug and Alcohol Prevention (D&AP) Program Goals IV. Enforcement Consistency V. Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations for Improvement

I. Policy and Annual Notification

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace and Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA), UWA electronically provides each staff / faculty member (hereafter referred to as "employees") a copy of the Staff Handbook and each student has access to an online copy of the Student Handbook, both containing full descriptions of the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy on campus. Hard copies of the handbooks and policy are available upon request. The University's Drug-Free Workplace Policy describes standards of conduct by employees and students on campus or as part of any of its activities. The policy also includes: 1.) a description of the applicable legal sanctions under federal and state laws for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, 2.) a description of the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and abuse of alcohol, 3.) a description of drug and alcohol programs (i.e., counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation)

that are available to employees and students, and 4.) a clear statement that the University will impose disciplinary sanctions on employees and students for violations of the standard of conduct. The complete employee policy can be found at:

<http://catalog.uwa.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=190>

The complete student policy can be found at:

<http://catalog.uwa.edu/content.php?catoid=34&navoid=1476>

Policy regarding Student Financial Aid and Scholarships The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) includes a question that reads: “Have you been convicted for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid such as grants, loans, or work-study)?” The students self-disclose their answer to this question. The Financial Aid Office is notified if a student admits to a conviction by the federal processor. The Financial Aid Office determines if the convictions affect the students’ eligibility. No financial aid can be processed until Financial Aid Office receives confirmation from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) that the students are eligible for aid. The Department of Education requires students convicted to complete a qualified drug rehabilitation program: which must include two unannounced drug tests.

Students complete the FAFSA and self-identify if they have been convicted for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while they were receiving federal student aid. If the student

self-disclose a “no” response, then the students are eligible for aid. If students self-disclose with a “yes” response, the Institutional Student Information Record has a comment code to indicate students that said “yes”. This causes a checklist to populate for the student. Students are instructed to go back to the FAFSA to complete the Student Aid Eligibility Worksheet. Once they have completed the worksheet, they will be able to determine their eligibility date. Based on the results of the worksheet, students make required changes to the question on their FAFSA and take additional steps to notify the University, if required. The UWA Financial Aid Office also collects additional documentation related to students’ drug convictions to ensure students meet the state’s eligibility requirements for state aid.

Policy and Resources regarding Accommodations The University’s Director of Counseling along with the ADA Coordinator, can provide referrals to confidential counseling services, psychological assessment, and consultation to students who self-identify as needing help with drug and alcohol issues. The campus ADA Office also provides students with academic accommodations with the appropriate documentation.

- ii. **Resources:** The Counseling Center is available at no cost to all students and employees. A licensed counselor is on staff to evaluate and offers choice of providers. All records are treated confidentially. UWA encourages its students to discuss safe alcohol use and/or the issues and problems associated with alcohol abuse, and provides a number of educational and outreach resources. The University’s Counselor Center, maintains office hours five days a week. Services include individual confidential counseling, crisis intervention, assessment and referral, as well as providing resource information. We also host a variety of informational programs to educate the campus community.

III. D&AP Program Goals

Under the direction of the Director of Student Life and the Student Life Committee (SLC), this group meets regularly and examines policy and explores issues and trends surrounding drug and alcohol concerns on campus.

The goal of drug and alcohol policies should continue to be focused around harm reduction and education, empowering students to make healthy, mature choices around alcohol.

Current recommendations of the SLC include:

Adding educational components in conjunction with sanctions for drug and alcohol violations.

Taking a proactive approach with Student Activity Programs by not allowing outside beverages and adding additional security.

IV. Enforcement Consistency

Enforcement consistency is effectively documented. All campus departments involved in enforcement of alcohol and other drugs policies and sanctions have procedures in place to ensure consistent enforcement. The following highlights enforcement policy and practice in primary campus departments.

1. Student Residence Halls: The Office of Housing & Residence Life is responsible for the quality of residential life at UWA. In collaboration with students, Residence Life seeks to provide a residential experience that is safe, nurturing, intellectually stimulating, and inclusive for all students.

Students are expected to abide by all policies as stated in the Student Handbook as well as all state and federal laws. Policies are effectively communicated, and enforcement and guidelines for sanctions are applied fairly. Violations of campus and residential alcohol policies are well documented and reported to the Office of Housing & Residence Life for inclusion in the annual Cleary report.

2. Campus Safety: Campus Police protect the persons and property of students, faculty, staff and visitors of UWA, assisting law enforcement and other emergency service providers as needed, by being the first responder to emergencies. They also provide around-the clock safety patrols of campus.

3. Student Life Committee: Each case referred to the SLC regarding allegations of misuse of alcohol and/or other drugs is fully investigated. The committee is tasked to uphold the UWA Student Code of Conduct. The SLC membership includes: Director of Housing, Director of Student Life, Director of Counseling, Registrar, Chief of Campus Police, SGA President, faculty members and 2 additional appointed students.

V. Recommendations for Improvement

Recommendations for Improvement:

Evaluate the progress of the Online Drug and Alcohol educational programs administered by the UWA Counseling Center for students and student athletes.

Seek out additional funding for Drug and Alcohol prevention programming and initiatives.

Target our Greek and Athletic populations through existing group meetings and established programs.

Consider breaking the D&AP out from the SLC to establish a smaller/task-focused committee

VI. Conclusion

By virtue of our small campus population, we are fortunate that we continue to experience a small number of violations due to drug and alcohol issues. With this in mind, we still need to be vigilant in our efforts to continue providing a safe environment for our faculty staff and students. We will continue to monitor student conduct issues and look for ways to increase safety and prevention measures that are recommended by our stakeholders.