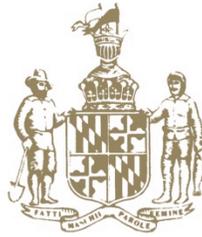


JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK
21st Legislative District
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
Public Health and Long Term Care



The Maryland House of Delegates
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April 22, 2015

Dr. Wallace Loh
President
University of Maryland
1101 Main Administration Building
College Park, MD 20742-6105

Dear Dr. Loh,

I am writing as the chair of the Maryland House of Delegates Public Health Subcommittee to express my strong opposition to the possibility of beer and wine sales at University of Maryland sporting events.

The April 13 letter posted on your web page characterizes the proposal to allow drinking at athletic events as a 'student proposal.' Given the fact that the vast majority of your students are not of legal drinking age, it would seem that such a proposal should carry no weight with you. On the other hand, we understand that the Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking was asked to advise the Athletic Council regarding this proposed change, and recommended against permitting alcohol sales at events. The Athletics Council voted to ignore this recommendation, with the lone dissenting vote cast by the Director of the University Health Center, the only medical person on the Council. If you go forward with this proposal, you will be taking the advice of underage students over that of community and campus leaders with experience in public safety and other pertinent fields, and over the vote of the Director of the University's Health Center.

The adverse effects of alcohol abuse are well known, but it has also been shown that increased access to alcohol results in increased exposure and increased abuse. The University's own web site states:

"The issues associated with alcohol consumption by college-aged people are of utmost importance. Of particular concern are the negative consequences of alcohol misuse or abuse. For example, research summarized by the National Institutes of Health ([NIAAA, 2012](#)) suggests that alcohol use by students ages 18 through 24 may be responsible each year for as many as 1,825 deaths, 599,000 injuries, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault and date rape. About 25% of students experience academic problems including missing class, falling behind in coursework, doing poorly on exams and papers, and receiving lower grades."

The United Educators studied sexual assault claims filed between 2011 and 2013 by the institutions it insures. The study found that 78% of the 305 sexual assaults reported involved alcohol, and one in three victims were drunk, passed out, or asleep.

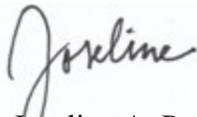
Your policy for alcohol in residence halls expressly forbids parties involving alcohol, sale of alcohol, and possession of alcohol in common areas. Yet your proposal would result in parties (in the form of football, basketball, and other games) involving alcohol consumed by thousands of students and alumni, sales of alcohol, and possession of alcohol in a common area, the stadium or arena.

A recent study at the University of Minnesota revealed that at sporting events that allow alcohol, about one in twelve spectators leaves the venue drunk. The number is even higher among those fans 35 years of age and older. Among those tailgating at stadium events, one in four consumes at least 5 drinks. These statistics do not reveal the deaths, assaults, and injuries resulting from this abuse.

The University of Maryland should be a leader in the community, setting an example for others to follow. Establishing policy that enables alcohol abuse and its concomitant problems is not the way to achieve this.

I sincerely hope that you will allow common sense to prevail and reject the proposed change.

Sincerely,



Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Public Health Subcommittee

CC: Dr. Linda Clement, Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Maryland
Ross Stern, Assistant to the President for Legislative and Community Relations,
University of Maryland
Carlo Colella, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, University of Maryland
Jim Shea, Chair, University System of Maryland Board of Regents
Members, University System of Maryland Board of Regents:
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McMillen, Thomas G. Slater, Norman R. Augustine, Joseph Bartenfelder, James
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