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Policy revision

Furman University

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Furman reports

Policy revision

Furman has adopted a new policy permitting alcohol to be served in specially designated areas of the campus under strictly regulated circumstances.

The new policy allows alcohol to be served at private, catered events at Timmons Arena, Cherrydale Alumni House, the golf course and the proposed Younts Conference Center, which will be located near Cherrydale. Students 21 years of age and older will be able to have alcohol at closely supervised, university-approved events in the designated areas. The campus “living and learning environment,” which includes all residence halls and academic buildings, will remain off limits to alcohol.

The policy goes into effect August 30. The former policy prohibited the possession or use of alcohol anywhere on university property.

This decision, which was approved at the spring meeting of the board of trustees, was prompted by the recent dramatic growth in Furman’s involvement with the local community — a key goal of the university’s strategic plan. More and more outside groups are asking to hold meetings or special events on campus, and the number is expected to increase once the Younts Center is built. These events strengthen ties between Furman and the community while often providing valuable experiences and contacts for students. Most groups request that they be allowed to serve alcohol.

Similarly, the Charles E. Daniel Chapel is becoming a popular site for weddings, but families are forced to go off campus for receptions if they want to serve alcohol. By designating specific areas on the campus periphery where alcohol may be served, Furman will be able to accommodate these outside requests without fundamentally altering the alcohol policy for students.

Leighan Rinker, chair of the board of trustees, says, “The trustees are committed to keeping the residential and academic areas of the campus alcohol free. We felt

Alcohol to be allowed in specially designated areas of campus

it was important to maintain the integrity of the living and learning environment for Furman students, which is why the designated areas for alcohol use are located at the edges of campus and away from the center of student life. It is a practical philosophy Furman is very comfortable with, especially since the great majority of its 2,600 students are under the age of 21.”

Alcohol may be served at private, catered events in Timmons Arena, but it will not be allowed at any public event in the arena, such as concerts or basketball games. Alcohol will be permitted at the

President David Shi says, “The bottom line is that alcohol will be available only in certain places, under specific circumstances and within regulated conditions. This new policy sustains our commitment to maintaining a social atmosphere that promotes safety for all students, encourages responsible student behavior and protects the campus living and learning environment.”

The decision to revise the policy was made after an extended period of study. In June 2002, prompted by the growing number of requests for use of campus

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— President Shi

golf course during private tournaments but not for general play.

ARAMARK, Furman’s food service provider, will be responsible for purchasing and serving alcohol at all catered events. Furman will not have its own license.

Pam Underwood Thomason ’76, president of the Alumni Association, says of the new policy, “It is well-defined with built-in safeguards for any problems that may arise. I support the trustees’ commitment to prohibiting the use of alcohol in the living and learning environment on campus.”

Furman student organizations that use the designated venues will be strictly regulated. Students will be required to fill out an event registration form, and each event will be jointly monitored by ARAMARK, the Office of Public Safety and the Division of Student Services. Security must be provided, and carding and/or wristbands will be required for all participants. Only students 21 years of age or older will be allowed to purchase or consume alcohol.

facilities, the executive committee of the board of trustees asked the president to appoint a committee to examine the alcohol policy.

The committee, consisting of Furman administrators, analyzed the alcohol policies at a number of the university’s peer institutions, among them Birmingham Southern, Bucknell, Centre, Davidson, Gettysburg, Rhodes, Richmond, Rollins, Sewanee, Stetson, Washington and Lee, William & Mary and Wofford. All allow some form of alcohol use. The committee also consulted with Furman’s legal counsel and insurance carrier. After completing its study, the committee presented a proposal to the president suggesting that the policy be modified. The proposal later went to the executive committee of the board and then to the full board.

The board of trustees emphasized that, as with all policies at the university, the new alcohol policy will be continuously evaluated.