

UNH Initiates Student Conduct Charges, Including Interim Suspension, against the First 16 of 52 Students Arrested during Riot

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UNH News Bureau
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April 18, 2003

DURHAM, N.H. - The University of New Hampshire has begun taking action against 16 of the 52 UNH students arrested during last Saturday night's melee following the national championship hockey game. Further action against the remaining 36 students is expected as soon as Durham and UNH police complete the remaining police reports.

Two students, facing charges of arson and assaulting a police officer, were notified last night that they are immediately suspended from the university on an interim basis, pending the outcome of student conduct proceedings. This means these students cannot live on campus nor take classes. Because of federal privacy rules, students' names cannot be released by the university.

The 14 others are being notified that they have student conduct charges brought against them immediately. Charges include possession of alcohol, disorderly conduct and littering. Sanctions can range from community service work to suspension or expulsion.

Those students who are UNH scholarship recipients will be notified in writing that their scholarships -- ranging in value from \$2,500 to \$7,000 for the coming year -- are on hold pending resolution of these cases.

"We are acting in a manner that is consistent with our normal student conduct procedures," said Anne Lawing, senior assistant vice president for student affairs. "We are taking this strong action because the seriousness of this unlawful behavior undermines the purpose of the university. We will be fair, and students will have their due process. Immediate interim separation from the university and temporary revocation of scholarships until a case is settled are serious consequences, but they are necessary."

According to the UNH student rules and regulations, an interim suspension from the university may be imposed prior to a student conduct hearing. It is effective immediately without prior notice, and is imposed for reasons that include when the safety and well-being of the community is threatened. Interim suspension initiates the student conduct process.

An interim suspension also may be imposed to ensure a student's own safety, or if a student poses a definite threat of disruption of interference with normal operations.

During the period of interim suspension, students are denied access to the campus, including classes, and all activities and privileges otherwise available as the vice president for student affairs deems appropriate.

Meantime, UNH student leaders -- from student government, athletics, the arts, the Greek community -- are organizing a summit on student behavior that will take place at UNH over the summer. Already, University of Minnesota officials have said they will attend. Invitations are going out to administrators, students, and campus security staff at Ohio State, Syracuse, Kansas and others.

"While we will not tolerate the kind of behavior that was witnessed last Saturday night, I vow to work very hard with our students, and to provide the necessary resources, so that we can indeed lead the cultural shift that needs to take place among college students today," said UNH President Ann Weaver Hart. "It will take time, but we must begin right away. I also believe in our students, and I believe the vast majority can turn this around. I meet with students every day, I hear about their good work from professors and deans every day. I believe from the bottom of my heart that working together, we can change the culture."

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