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DURHAM, N.H. - In anticipation of this weekend's Homecoming and the Saturday night Red Sox game against the Yankees, student leaders at the University of New Hampshire are talking to students one-on-one in all residence halls and off campus apartments about celebrating responsibly.

The students, some of whom were involved in last month's student summit on responsible celebrations are “building on the spirit of that experience,” says Mark Rubinstein, vice president for student and academic services. He added many of them helped to disperse Monday night's post-baseball game gathering on Main Street and were struck by the impression they made on peers.

“One consistent message we heard throughout the student summit was that students will listen to students,” Rubinstein said. “And when they tried that Monday night, it worked.”

Wednesday, UNH and town officials met to review preparations for this coming weekend, as well as the rest of the baseball play-off season. “We all want a collaborative effort going into the weekend,” said UNH President Ann Weaver Hart. “We will continue to work in close partnership with town officials to ensure that the campus and Durham community is safe. The safety of our students and residents of Durham is paramount.”

However, Hart added, “We will hold our students accountable for their actions. We will not tolerate the kind of behavior we witnessed in April, and we will work closely with Durham and UNH police departments to see that swift and strong action is taken.

“While we all understand it will take time and multifaceted efforts to shift the student culture here and at other colleges and universities, we must also address the problem by sanctioning those who insist on illegal behavior in our community,” Hart said.

The student leaders this week are going door to door and telling others about the homecoming events that are scheduled, which include everything from athletic events and art gallery exhibitions to jazz concerts and a road race. In addition, they are reviewing with students the UNH code of conduct - the kinds of behaviors that could end up in arrests as well as being reported to the judicial programs office. If found responsible for behavior, such as failure to disperse or intentional obstruction of traffic, students could face sanctions up to and including
suspension from the university.

There also will be a full-page ad in Friday's student newspaper, The New Hampshire, about the illegal activities that have serious consequences for a student's academic career at the university.

The President's Cabinet, academic deans and faculty leaders letters write in an op-ed for tomorrow's student paper, “While the purpose for a gathering might be fun and excitement, the consequences when crowds become too tightly packed or too large are potentially deadly, and we are trying to ensure that, in the midst of the excitement that this season brings, we not lose sight of our collective responsibility to look out for the safety and well being of all members of the community.”

Meanwhile, Ernie Gale, executive director of the Alumni Association, has sent an email to all alumni/ae returning to campus for Homecoming this weekend, asking for their cooperation in celebrating responsibly. For more information on homecoming activities, go to www.unh.edu for a complete schedule.