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UNH Hosts Nations First Student Led Summit on Promoting Responsible Celebrations Sept 19 21

Kim Billings
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DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire will host the nation’s first student-led summit on promoting responsible celebrations Sept. 19 to 21, 2003.

“Student Summit: Promoting Responsible Celebrations” was initiated by UNH students in response to the disturbing events surrounding UNH’s trip to the NCAA Hockey Championships in April 2003, and following the growing trend of similar events taking place on college campuses across the country.

“Many students are concerned about what happened and why,” Catherine Clarke, UNH’s student body vice president, said. “We are very interested in understanding more about this national trend and what we, as students within our larger community, can do together to effect positive change among our collective student body.”

The summit will bring together teams of students, university administrators, faculty and community members from universities across the United States to discuss such things as the role of campus climate and culture and the enforcement of campus codes and criminal laws. The goal of the conference is to build a deeper understanding, develop constructive ideas, and identify traditions that promote healthy celebrations.

“The summit is a first step in the process of change. It will provide an opportunity for people to ‘come to the table’ and begin to think about ways to prevent further events of this kind,” UNH President Ann Weaver Hart said. “Research done by Ohio State University and the NCAA shows that solving the problem will take a long-term, multifaceted approach led by students and supported by the university and community. UNH is committed to playing a leading role in changing celebratory behavior, and we realize that it will require consistent, committed effort over time.”

Keynote speaker for the summit is Daniel Wann, associate professor of psychology at Murray State University. His talk, “Understanding Sports Spectator Violence,” will focus on the different levels and causes of spectator violence – from individual acts to full-scale riots – and offer suggestions for colleges and universities to help manage and prevent future events.

His talk takes place Friday, Sept. 19, at 7 p.m. in Huddleston Hall. It is free and open to the public.

Wann is author of the book Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators. He has
written numerous articles on fan behavior including “Sports Team Identification and Willingness to Consider Anonymous Acts of Hostile Aggression” (Aggressive Behavior, in press), and “Relationship Between Sport Team Identification and Integration into and Perception of a University” (International Sport Journal, 2002).

Universities expected to attend the summit include Michigan State University, Ohio State University, Plymouth State University, Syracuse University, U-Mass Amherst, the University of Connecticut, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, the University of Rhode Island, and the University of Vermont. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will also participate.

Bruce Mallory, UNH provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, will present a summary of findings at the conclusion of the summit Sunday, Sept. 21, at 11 a.m. in the Memorial Union Building Strafford Room. This presentation is open to the public.

In addition, the Web site http://www.unh.edu/studentsummit/index.html will serve as an ongoing reference for colleges and universities. A conference summary and recommendations will be posted, and an electronic forum will be available to generate ongoing discussion of best practices and better management for the benefit of the national higher education community.

UNH’s Student Senate, Division of Student and Academic Services, Provost's Office, and President's Office support “Student Summit: Promoting Responsible Celebrations.”

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