Dear Purdue Parent,

Very soon your student will arrive at Purdue University to begin one of the most important experiences of his or her life. Purdue is an intensive academic environment, and the tremendous exposure to multiple cultural and social opportunities will enhance your student’s ability to learn, grow, and mature.

The primary purpose of this letter is to highlight one of the most difficult challenges we face on our college campuses with alcohol abuse by young adults. National data suggest that many of our first year students arrive on campus with their alcohol behavior already established. Approximately 58% of high school seniors consumed alcohol in the last year.¹

We know that alcohol abuse can lead to significant consequences for our students, such as unintentional injuries, and academic or legal problems. Violations can also impact a student’s educational record, which may jeopardize future employment opportunities.

Campus wide educational programs will address alcohol behavior throughout your student’s career, but none will be more effective than the conversation you have with your student. Studies show that students whose parents provided messages supporting alcohol avoidance and adapting healthy alternatives had lower alcohol use rates and alcohol consequences. Some discussions you may want to have before your child arrives on campus and throughout his or her career at Purdue include setting expectations for academic performance, health risks associated with alcohol use, understanding laws (underage possession and consumption, public intoxication, drunk driving, medical amnesty and Indiana’s lifeline law to protect students from legal consequences for getting help), and the importance of avoiding high risk behavior (such as doing shots and binging on alcohol). Encourage your student to get involved in student organizations and participate in non-alcohol events.

First-year students are expected to complete a 30-minute, online alcohol education program called eCHECKUP TO GO. This national program gives a brief overview of the drinking culture on college campuses, addresses risks related to drinking, tips on getting help, and includes personalized feedback tailored to your student. Your child will receive instructions on how to take the program at the beginning of August. Whether your child is in the 58% of high school students who consumed alcohol in the last year or the 42% who did not, we expect all incoming first year students to complete the program before classes begin on August 22nd.

By working together, we can assure that your student has a successful and life-rewarding experience at Purdue.

Dr. Beth McCuskey, Vice Provost for Student Life

Dr. Katie Sermersheim, Dean of Students

¹ Monitoring the Future, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2015