

July 26, 2013

Dear Member of the Class of 2017:

Congratulations and welcome to Columbia University!

You may already be aware of how alcohol use can be a significant issue in the lives of some students. You and your new classmates will come to Columbia with a variety of beliefs about alcohol; and whether or not you choose to drink, it is likely that you will know someone who does. Our goal is to ensure that alcohol use, by you or a peer, does not prevent the achievement of your academic and personal goals.

Columbia recognizes that New York state law designates 21 as the legal drinking age and follows-up with underage drinkers violating the law or University policy. That being said, we also know that you will likely be in environments where alcohol is present and we want all students – regardless of their beliefs about or experiences with alcohol – to have an accurate understanding of alcohol in order to make well-informed decisions.

When you arrive on campus for the new student orientation program (NSOP) you will take part in our Responsible Community @ Columbia [RC@C] initiative. This peer-facilitated program allows for an honest dialogue about alcohol and other drugs while exploring our normative community of smart, safe, and responsible decision-making. This session will:

- Challenge misperceptions about alcohol and other drugs,
- Focus the conversation on lower-risk behaviors,
- Describe the impact that drinking has on the broader community,
- Provide life-skills training, and
- Discuss how negative consequences are avoidable.

All incoming first-year Columbia University students are expected to participate in the Responsible Community @ Columbia discussion. Your upper-class peers will lead these honest conversations as part of NSOP. Attendance will be monitored and you need to bring your Columbia ID with you to the session hosted in your residence hall on Tuesday, August 27.

As you prepare to join our community we encourage you to review the Columbia Alcohol and Other Drug Policies (<http://housingservices.columbia.edu/content/alcohol-and-other-drug-policy>) and think about how to maximize the Columbia experience without potential alcohol-related consequences.

In addition to the RC@C effort there are many of our resources available to you. More information on our prevention and response work can be found online at health.columbia.edu/alcohol. Together we can make significant efforts to ensure a community that provides a solid education, a fun atmosphere, and an environment free of alcohol-related consequences. Thank you in advance for your support and please reach out with any questions. We look forward to welcoming you onto campus in a few weeks.

In health,

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