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December 12, 2008

TO: Dr. David Freund
Chair, Committee on Student Conduct

FROM: Kenneth G. Holum 
Chair, University Senate

SUBJECT: Request to Revisit Need for a Medical Amnesty Policy (MAP) (Senate Document Number 07-08-20)

Last year the Student Conduct Committee, under the leadership of Professor Boden Sandstrom, addressed the issue whether the Senate should recommend an amendment to the University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct adopting a so-called Medical Amnesty Policy (MAP). Such a policy would introduce amnesty in cases of alcohol use or substance abuse in apparent violation of the University of Maryland Code of Student Conduct if such a violation occurred while a student was seeking emergency medical assistance for themselves or another person. For your information, the Code of Student Conduct, a Board of Regents policy, is available at <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/v100b.pdf>, and the relevant sections are 9/(d)/i and (o). In its report of February 12, 2008, in response to Senate Document 07/08/20, the SCC did not support recommending an MAP, and the Senate Executive Committee declined to bring such a policy before the Senate.

In its meeting on October 22, 2008, the SEC decided that the 2007-2008 committee, while completing extensive research on MAP in the literature and at other campuses, did not sufficiently investigate opinion and experience on our own campus. We therefore request that you revisit the issue during the spring semester 2009.

In examining the advisability of recommending an MAP, the SCC should engage members of the University community fully. Particular attention should be given to members who deal with this type of emergency regularly, such as resident assistants, University Police officers, and students with relevant experience. One or more forums might be organized and publicized so members of the community can provide testimony in an open environment. An anonymous feedback mechanism might be developed in order to capture a larger number of candid responses from students. Officials of the Office of Student Affairs should be encouraged to provide opinions as well.

In order to complete this assignment expeditiously, the SCC might want to organize a working group including committee members and engaged students. The working group might also include a representative of the Office of Student Affairs, and in any case will want to consult with that Office while preparing to collect and evaluate the new data.

In order to permit Senate action in the Spring semester 2009, I ask that the SCC report on its findings, with its recommendations on MAP, no later than April 7, 2009.