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Teleconference

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Samuel Smith said grandparents were the key to dealing with misbehaving students.

"The biggest weapon we have are the parents; if you can get 1,000 grandmas on your side, you can win any battle," Smith said.

Carrie Mayer, student body president at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said the solution was much harder.

"I think there's a general tradition of violence," she said. "There's a mentality of study hard and play hard. There's a routine of violence every weekend. There are fights at parties and bars that don't make it on TV."

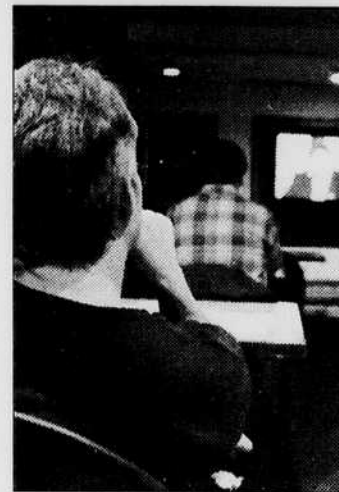
Alan Lizotte, criminal justice professor at State University of New York-Albany, said there was a 600-year history of alcohol-induced student riots. The first on record was at Oxford University in 1355. He said the three-day riot started after some students accused an innkeeper of watering down the wine.

Dr. Richard Keeling, medical professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said public policy was too vague to better address the high risks that surround college drinking.

"Do they want to let students have a little alcohol but not a lot?" he asked. "Do they want them to act in a specific way?"

Keeling said some policy risks were bar density, drink specials and service/server requirements for alcohol-serving establishments.

Keeling said there was no direct cause-and-effect relation between alcohol and riots. Above all, he said, community must be



Scott Barnett/Emerald

Community member Shelly Sutherland watches the teleconference.

at the focus of preventing riots.

"We need to approach this problem as 'we' and not 'they'," he said. "I encourage us to be patient and to wait and see; we are still a heartbeat away from one of these tragedies."

The University of Oregon has already been structuring many of the strategies that Keeling advised, said Byron McCrae, assistant dean of student life.

"We're at the cutting edge and at the head of the curve, so to speak," McCrae said. "An active part of the college experience is to make critical safe decisions. On one hand, we don't want people driving drunk, and on the other hand, we don't want to enable poor behavior."

The panel discussed police response to riots in Boulder, Colo., where the University of Colorado witnessed two nights of conflict

between police and students in May, 1997. The Boulder riots involved a total of about 2,000 people, according to UC-Boulder's campus newspaper.

Police have since compromised their aggressive riot-response procedures.

"If we can take care of a problem when there are 50 to 100 people there, we can nip it in the bud," said Joseph Pelle, commander of the Boulder Police Department's SWAT team. "We have since then refocused on behavior more than strict enforcement aspects."

Removing the rowdy students is often more important than controlling any crowds, Pelle said.

"Some of the ringleaders in the riots are still in jail — that had a deterring effect," he said.

Greek houses and university officials have joined in a joint effort to resist the riot trend.

"Here at WSU, we've pretty much reached a coalition," said Andy Boyd, president of Washington State's Interfraternity Council.

Pelle agreed greek cooperation is important.

"We actually had Interfraternity Council leadership and student body leadership involved in stopping riots," Pelle said.

The University of Oregon's Office of Student Life found the panel's strategies especially encouraging, said Laura Blake Jones, associate dean of student life.

"What I heard here was really affirming that we're on the right road to dealing with this," she said.

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