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# Dartmouth bans hard alcohol, forbids Greek life pledging

Moves target binge drinking, sex assaults

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**Dartmouth College President Philip Hanlon spoke to faculty and students about changes planned for the Ivy League school.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 29, 2015

Dartmouth College on Thursday announced sweeping changes aimed at curbing dangerous behavior on campus, saying it will ban hard liquor, forbid pledging at fraternities and sororities, and require all students to undergo a four-year sexual violence prevention program.

The major overhaul, spelled out by President Philip Hanlon in a speech to the Dartmouth community, places the school among the leaders of colleges targeting binge drinking, sexual assaults, and other problems. Hanlon warned Greek organizations that if they fail to make improvements, their future could be in doubt.

“Our aspirations will never be realized if we fail to address a vital component: the environment in which students live and learn,” said Hanlon, a Dartmouth alumnus.

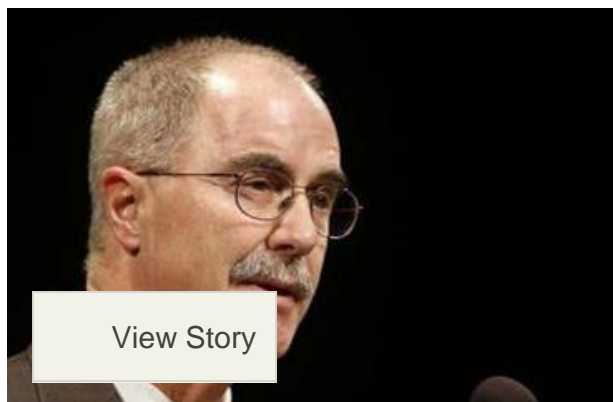
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The plan, called “Moving Dartmouth Forward,” stemmed from recommendations of a special committee of students, faculty, staff, and alumni [Hanlon assembled last spring](#) to explore ways to reduce dangerous behavior, which has bedeviled the Ivy League campus as well as other schools.

**RELATED: Read Hanlon’s full remarks**

Dartmouth, which inspired the film “Animal House,” has been trying to shake its hard-partying image after drawing national scrutiny for excessive drinking and alleged Greek life misconduct, some of which was detailed two years ago in a former fraternity member’s sensational expose on alcohol-fueled hazing.



## Full remarks of Dartmouth president

Reforms include a campus ban on hard alcohol and a prohibition on pledging at fraternities and sororities.

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Hanlon, who has led Dartmouth since June 2013, has said that the negative attention brought on by poor student conduct played a role in the dramatic drop in applications last year. The numbers rebounded somewhat this year.

The new alcohol restrictions, which start at the end of March, when the spring term begins, ban the possession or consumption of alcohol that is 30 proof or stronger and increase penalties for students caught with hard liquor. The potent drinks are prevalent in alcohol abuse because students misjudge when they have had enough. Hard alcohol is also popular among underage students because it is more easily concealed.

Colleges that ban hard liquor include Colby, Bowdoin, Bates, and Providence colleges. Other schools, including Brown University and the University of Virginia, have placed new restrictions on alcohol possession and consumption in recent months.

Such policy changes, which aim to reduce some of the most-dangerous types of alcohol consumption but do not necessarily try to eradicate drinking altogether, are becoming increasingly popular at campuses nationally, said Sarah Belstock, an expert on high-risk drinking at colleges. The measures, when enforced properly, tend to be effective, she said.

“The research shows if you don’t have strong policies and enforcement that matches those policies you’re not going to get anywhere,” said Belstock, of the University of Denver.

Dartmouth sophomore Isaac Green said he largely agreed with Hanlon’s plans, including the ban on hard alcohol.

“I don’t think Dartmouth’s problems are any worse than anyone else’s, but I don’t think that absolves us from addressing them,” Green told the Associated Press. “In a lot of ways, our problems are less severe than in a lot of other places, but we’re in Hanover, we’re an Ivy League institution and we have the microscope upon us.”

In addition to the required assault-prevention training, the college will create an online “consent manual” that will include information designed to reduce ambiguity about what is acceptable, and what is not, when it comes to sexual behavior. The Hanover, N.H., school will also soon join dozens of other colleges nationally in conducting anonymous campuswide surveys to measure the prevalence of sexual assault.

Dartmouth is among nearly 100 campuses facing US investigations for their handling of sexual assault complaints.

The changes also stand to transform Greek life. While organizations still will be allowed to induct new members, they will be prohibited from participation in pledging, or often months-long probationary periods during which members have a lesser status.

A growing number of colleges nationally, and some Greek organizations themselves, have banned pledging in recent years because of dangerous hazing.

Some have suggested Dartmouth should impose more drastic measures, including permanently banning Greek life. In his speech Thursday, Hanlon — who belonged to a fraternity during his Dartmouth days — did not rule that out.

“If in the next three to five years, the Greek system does not engage in meaningful, lasting reform, and we are unsuccessful in sharply curbing harmful behaviors, we will need to revisit its continuation on our campus,” Hanlon said.

Half of Dartmouth’s undergraduates are members of a fraternity or sorority.

In an apparent attempt to shift the college's social scene away from Greek life, Dartmouth will also adopt a new housing model starting with next year's incoming freshman class.

New students will be placed into one of six communities, akin to Harvard's "houses," each based around a cluster of dormitories. Each community will host and organize social and academic programs and will eventually have a dedicated space for studying and socializing.

From sophomore year on, students will remain a member of the community even if they move off campus or into a fraternity, sorority, or other housing run by a student group.

Dartmouth senior and Interfraternity Council President Wil Chockley said that while he does not support certain parts of the plan, he supports the goals the college is trying to accomplish.

"Obviously changing a system that has played such an important role in the lives of thousands of current and former Dartmouth students is a difficult process, so while we do not agree with every aspect of President Hanlon's new policies, we hope they will help to address the issues plaguing college campuses across the country, and we look forward to continued collaboration with student leaders and administrators to implement these policies," Chockley said in an email to the Globe.

Hanlon said he has asked an external oversight committee, chaired by former Tufts University President Larry Bacow, to hold the college accountable for following through on its plan.

"Colleges and universities across the country face the issues I've detailed today," Hanlon said in his speech. "We are not alone in facing them. But we will take the lead in saying 'no more.' "

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