

**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

University of Maryland at College Park\*

***Accentuating the Positive at UMCP: The Caring Coalition***

by Jody Gan

Following a recent year-long study of community life issues on the nation's college and university campuses, the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching issued their findings. Results showed that college presidents ranked substance abuse, especially alcohol abuse, as their number one concern.

But at the University of Maryland, an emerging leader in the development of programs designed to deal with substance abuse problems among students, campus administrators were already meeting periodically to look for ways to address such issues.

Although the use of illicit drugs continues to receive much attention, the reality is that alcohol abuse is by far the greatest substance abuse problem on college campuses throughout the country. The University of Maryland is no exception.

The good news is that the results of both local and national surveys indicate that 30% of all students would actually prefer to socialize without alcohol. In response to this finding, the *Caring Coalition* was founded at the University of Maryland earlier this year. Funded by a \$205,000 FIPSE (Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education ) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the *Caring Coalition* is an association of university departments, student organizations, and individuals committed to strengthening alcohol and other drug abuse prevention activities on campus.

The objectives of the *Caring Coalition* are to foster a positive approach to the issues, and to promote activities that support the nearly 10,000 students on the UMCP campus who prefer an alcohol-free lifestyle. Grant-sponsored programs include a substance-free housing option, an alcohol-free campus nightclub, a community service project with volunteer opportunities for students, a special orientation program for new commuter students, student conferences, and grants for faculty members who incorporate information about substance abuse in their courses.

Funding for the *Caring Coalition* and FIPSE grant activities will end in December, 1994. The University hopes to institutionalize as many of the components of this highly successful, innovative alcohol and other drug prevention program as possible, but it is critical that we identify other funding sources. For more information about the *Caring Coalition's* activities and FIPSE grant, please call Jody Gan, M.P.H., Project Coordinator at (301) 314-8123.

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