College and Alcohol: Know Your Policy

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 Changes in Spring Hill College’s Alcohol Policy offer students new guidelines to safe yet enjoyable times on campus.

 Safety and Responsibility; these two words describe Spring Hill College’s Student culture. It is no surprise that college culture includes alcohol. The difference between SHC and other universities is that Spring Hill attempts to facilitate the best and safest possible environment for the student culture.

 Some schools have very strict policies on partying, and other student functions in which alcohol may be present. These schools are more prone to not having a healthy drinking culture and are more at risk to unhealthy alcohol consumption than other institutions.

Before delving into the details of Spring Hill’s alcohol policy, the 2016-2017 Student Handbook states that; “Spring Hill College abides by Alabama State Law, which dictates that persons must be 21 years of age or older to legally consume alcohol.”

While a majority of students cite the “opaque and inconspicuous” clause of the alcohol policy, what does that actually mean? This clause of the alcohol policy states “Any consumption in outdoor and public spaces must be in opaque containers that are not identifiable as holding alcoholic beverages.” This policy allows public consumption of alcohol as long as it is not obvious you are drinking alcohol. Some containers that would be allowed would be solid colored cups and the many different types of tumblers available on the market.

As for the areas that casual consumption is allowed, those include personal residential space, inside an apartment in the Fairway Apartments, or Skip’s Place common rooms. This means that it is not allowed to consume alcohol in the freshman residence halls, and it is not allowed to drink in the lobby of other halls. The weekend social spots mostly are confined to the Fairway Apartments, and there is a policy regarding underage students around students who are drinking alcohol.

“Residential students in whose room and/or apartment alcohol is being consumed are responsible for, and will be held accountable for, the behavior of their guests, including, but not limited to, ensuring that persons younger than 21 years of age do not consume alcohol, that open containers of alcohol are not carried out of the room and/or apartment, and that neither the residential students, nor their guests, become intoxicated or behave in a disorderly manner.” This excerpt from the alcohol policy details the guidelines that residents of the Fairway Apartments must follow when holding a social gathering with alcohol. Students are relatively safe from discipline unless they start acting in a belligerent manner or are dangerously intoxicated.

 The student handbook states “The College confronts students when inappropriate decisions are made.” The handbook also goes into detail about the disciplinary actions and sanctions that are brought about after being cited for alcohol or drug related offenses. These sanctions include parental notification, fines, probation, and if the cases are often and severe enough, dismissal from the institution.

The standards set out by the school are for the students’ safety, and abiding by the principles in place will facilitate a positive and safe environment for students. Senior Resident Advisor, Ellie Mallon said, “I think the biggest challenge moving forward with the Alcohol policy will be keeping the balance between making sure students are not drinking in public spaces while also not dramatically breaking the fire code by having too many people inside an apartment. At the end of the day student safety is always the main goal.”

 It is important for the student body to follow the guidelines and policies determined by the school, as misuse or taking advantage of the policy will result in loss of privileges. If anyone has questions about the alcohol policy or would like to further educate themselves on Spring Hill College’s Alcohol Policy, please refer to pages 27, 36-39 in the 2016-2017 Student Handbook.