February 27, 2015

Dear Parents of Off Campus Students,

The Lackawanna County District Attorney’s office and The University of Scranton are partnering to share important information to off-campus students and their parents. The City of Scranton’s upcoming St. Patrick’s Day Parade weekend (March 13 – March 15) has traditionally proven to be challenging for off campus students, not only in regard to their own risky alcohol consumption, but also in regard to high-risk hosting practices. Houses that have tried to host responsibly have struggled to do so during Parade Weekend. In light of these challenges, we wanted to offer helpful information for you to discuss with your student.

Seniors and graduate students who are over twenty-one years of age are invited to attend the annual Shamrockin’ Eve Celebration that occurs the evening of Friday, March 13. This formal, philanthropic event is designed to reconnect alumni with the University and to allow current seniors to network with those who have graduated within the past five years. If your student chooses to attend Shamrockin’ Eve, they are encouraged to depart Scranton to begin their Spring Break the morning of Saturday, March 14.

It is imperative that you have a conversation with your student about whether he or she should remain in Scranton for Parade Day. This conversation should also include specific risks and concerns of hosting a party at her or his off-campus home. Additional resources and information including, but not limited to, state laws and city ordinances, tips for being a good neighbor, and safety information are available on the University website: www.scranton.edu/paradeday.

If your student departs Scranton for Parade Weekend, encourage them to engage in a candid conversation with all of their remaining housemates and guests to identify clear behavioral expectations including, but not limited to assurances about the safety of their apartment and personal property.

If your student chooses to remain in Scranton, the following information is critical to their safety and wellbeing:

- The University is closing the residence halls for Spring Break on Friday March 13 at 8:00 pm. Residential students wanting to take part in Parade Day festivities may ask to spend the weekend at an off-campus house. Off-campus students should be vigilant about who enters their home on Parade Day and if any guests have permission to stay overnight. Hosting guests during Parade Weekend significantly increases liability, particularly when alcohol is involved.

- Parade Day Weekend is a popular event in our region. Parties in the Hill Section have been known to attract underage individuals, including local high school and junior high school students. Your student should not allow anyone they do not know or trust onto their property for their own safety, the safety of their guests, and in an effort to reduce their hosting liabilities.
• The Scranton Police Department will be increasing its presence and strictly enforcing all laws, with an emphasis on open containers, underage drinking violations, nuisance and other violations often associated with parties on this weekend.

• Charging for alcohol without a license, furnishing alcohol to minors, and social hosting are all violations of both criminal law and the Student Code of Conduct.

• Off-campus students must recognize their responsibilities as local citizens and members of the Historic Hill Section of Scranton neighborhood. Excessive noise, vandalism, and trash are continual concerns of our local neighbors particularly on Parade Day weekend. We ask you to encourage your student to treat their off-campus residence as if it is their home and home neighborhood and, therefore, to treat the community with respect.

• Encourage your student to be mindful not only of their hosting practices, but also of their individual consumption of alcohol and that of their friends. No matter what the circumstances, students must call for help if an emergency arises, and may do so by dialing 9-1-1 or by contacting University Police at 570-941-7777.

• It is critically important for off-campus students to recognize the seriousness of these expectations and that violations of law and/or University policy may be detrimental to future career goals and aspirations.

In closing, please know that the District Attorney’s Office, the Office of Off Campus and Commuter Student Affairs, and the Off Campus Advisory Board (OCAB) are working together to provide support and resources as St. Patrick’s Day Parade Weekend plans are finalized. Your help in reminding your student that being a good neighbor and a responsible member of the University community is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Jessica Adler Errington in the Office of Off Campus and Commuter Student Affairs at The University of Scranton at 570-941-6292.

Sincerely,

Anitra McShea, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Student Formation & Campus Life
The University of Scranton

Andrew J. Jarbola, III
District Attorney
Lackawanna County