February 27, 2015

Dear Off Campus Students,

The Lackawanna County District Attorney’s office and The University of Scranton are partnering to share important information with 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 your 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 parents and housemates.

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 you choose to attend Shamrockin’ Eve, you are encouraged to depart Scranton to begin your Spring Break the morning of Saturday, March 14.

If you depart Scranton for Parade Weekend, it is imperative for you to engage in a candid conversation with your housemates and every individual who has co-signed your lease to identify clear behavioral expectations including, but not limited to, assurances about the safety of your apartment and personal property. Parties can escalate quickly on Parade Day making risk-reduction challenging. The only effective way to mitigate your risk is to not host, secure your house, and depart Scranton.

If you choose to remain in Scranton for Parade Day Weekend, the following information is critical to your safety and wellbeing:

- The University is closing the residence halls for Spring Break on Friday March 13 at 8:00 p.m. Residential students wanting to take part in Parade Day festivities may ask to spend the weekend at an off campus house. Off campus students must be vigilant about who enters their home on Parade Day and determine in advance whether 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. You should not allow anyone you do not know or trust onto your property for your own safety, the safety of your guests, and in an effort to reduce your hosting liabilities.
- The Scranton Police Department will be increasing its presence and strictly enforcing all laws, with an emphasis on open container, underage drinking, 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 serious violations of both criminal law and the Student Code of Conduct.

• As off-campus students, you must recognize your 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 during Parade Weekend. For the majority of you, your off-campus residence and the Hill Section of Scranton is your home; it therefore should be treated and respected as such.

• In addition to reducing risk and liability as it pertains to hosting, you must also be mindful of your individual consumption of alcohol and that of your friends. No matter what the circumstances, you 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 your future career goals and aspirations.

In closing, please know that the District Attorney’s Office, the University’s 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. 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. Additional resources including, but not limited to, state laws and city ordinances, University policies, tips for being a good neighbor, risk-reduction strategies, and safety information are available on the University website: www.scranton.edu/paradeday.

Sincerely,

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

Andrew J. Gabola, III
District Attorney
Lackawanna County