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8/31/18

Most Drug Busts Occur at Beginning of Semester

Campus Police Can't Find Enough Evidence to Convict

So far in 2018 there have been 19 students arrested for possession of marijuana at Longwood University. The Police Chief of Longwood University's Campus Police Department Col. Robert Beach, explained that the beginning of the year is when the majority of drug busts occur, he said, "The first part of the semester we have a whole bunch of new people that are coming in and bring with them either a perception or idea that you know this is a place for that to happen and usually stabilizes out, but never goes away." Even though campus police may search someone's room it is very rare that anyone is ever charged with a crime because there is rarely any proof. Beach said, "Officers will attempt to try and identify if there is a smell of marijuana if they can locate where the smell may be coming from, again the process of developing probable cause has to lead us to that, many times the end conclusion is that we either don't smell it or can't tell where it is coming from." This is why many students don't get punished for having marijuana.

Even though students are rarely convicted it can still happen. Last year Longwood had a significant drug bust occur. Four people, including a Longwood student were charged with possession of marijuana with intent to sell. During a raid at a residence on Hill street which was thought to be where the drug deals were operating from, officers found an undisclosed amount of money, several guns and marijuana as well as other narcotics. Beach commented on the arrests, "We had a gentleman last year that was running a drug operation out here so he will

get 15 years in a penitentiary, so it [meaning the punishment] could be pretty significant depending on the level and involvement in the operation.”

According to NBC News the number of college students who have used marijuana recreationally in the past 12 months, jumped from 30 percent in 2006 to 38 percent in 2015. According to the national Monitoring the Future Study, more students are getting high on pot, and the students who do smoke are getting high more frequently, their statistics showed that one out of 22 students smoked at least 20 times in a month. Even though these numbers are rising researchers from this study have found that student’s use of narcotics and opioids are on decline.

Hampden Sydney College has also been affected by the rise of marijuana use in students. According to the Hampden Sydney website in 2014 20 students were given referrals after making drug law violations. In 2016 those numbers more than doubled to 47 referrals. In an interview with the Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police at Hampden Sydney College, Mark Fowler explained their process of prevention and punishment of drug abuse when it comes to students. According to Fowler there is a drug and alcohol abuse prevention program that all of the students are required to attend at least once. One of the major differences between Longwood’s system and HSC’s is the amount of collaboration between the schools and states police. When asked when the Farmville police get involved in situations at HSC Chief Fowler responded, “They don’t, we take care of ourselves over here.” While on the other hand because Longwood is a public institution there is more coordination between the departments.

Longwood has several different ways that the University tries to combat the use of illegal substances on campus. According to Beach there are several forms of drug and alcohol

abuse prevention provided by Longwood. Beach said, "Every resident has a responsibility to do floor programs on various issues, in addition to that we talk about it in freshman orientation. The peer mentors do it in their orientation. All the New Lancer Days that occur in those first couple of weeks."