SPRING BREAK SAFETY
Carol Jensen, Assistant Director, Security Department
www.mnsu.edu/security

For many, Spring Break is a time to get away from the college setting and have a little fun. It can often be a time of unknown and lead to some high risk situations. It is important to practice crime prevention and safety in order to ensure that the mission of a good time is accomplished.

It is first important to acknowledge that the definition of a high risk situation may be significantly different among college students and those designated to teach students about safety. The National College Health Assessment in 2004 showed that Minnesota State University, Mankato students reported doing something they later regretted 49.2% of the time and 41.1% of the time forgetting where they were or what they had done when they had been drinking alcohol. Although most college students probably don’t consider loss of memory or regrettable behavior as a high risk situation, they definitely are.

Alcohol is just one factor that can lead to high risk situations; other drugs and a carefree, invincible attitude can also find a student in a situation that may become too much for them to handle.

Spring Break is a time for fun, relaxation and reflection. There are things students can do to reduce the level of risk in the activities they are participating in. Reducing the risk is a proven way to have fun and do it safely.

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What Classes Will Your Student Take Next Fall?
Bill Watts, Assistant Director, Office of First Year Experience
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While planning for the spring term break is paramount in many students’ and families’ minds the reality is that planning for fall should take precedence. Registration for Fall 2006 begins on April 10th. Depending upon the number of hours your student has completed they will be able to begin registering sometime between April 10th and 27th.

Prior to registration all students should visit with an Academic Advisor. Since we know many students change major, please encourage your student to make time well in advance of April 10th to visit with an Advisor in the major they are most interested in, or with the Office of First Year Experience if they are undecided, or are no longer sure what they’d like to major in.

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University of Rhode Island Director of Police, Robert Drapeau, shares some good safety tips that will reduce risk and lead to successful, fun and relaxing Spring Break activities. Drapeau advises students that as you travel, make sure you are either in possession of or track your baggage and personal belongings at all times. Make sure someone at home has a copy of your travel itinerary. If you change your itinerary, alert the person you shared the information with. Research your destination prior to leaving to learn about crime rates/trends, bad neighborhoods and tourist areas. Although tourists can be targeted it is generally wise to not wander into areas that tourists are not familiar with.

Drapeau also shares that before you go on a trip or out to an event, share your plans with someone other than those you are going with, don’t plan on going to a crowded event alone and make sure you stay together, traveling to and from the destination or event together. Wearing bright clothing so friends can find you if you become separated can also be helpful. Finally, always make sure you have identification with you and carrying a cell phone at all times is very helpful.

Spring Break is not a time to relax on practicing safe and responsible alcohol consumption. Look out for each other and limit the amount of alcohol you are consuming in a single setting. Alternate alcohol drinks with non-alcohol drinks, eat regular meals and arrange for someone in the group to remain sober, both to drive and to help look out for those who are drinking. Never hesitate to call for help if you believe someone is in danger because of excessive alcohol use.

The staff of the Security Office is excited for your return after Spring Break. Be aware of your surroundings, practice responsible drinking, and stay true to your personal safety practices. Have a great Spring Break and we look forward to your safe return.

If you are interested in additional Spring Break safety tips, please contact Carol Jensen at carol.jensen@mnsu.edu or (507)389-2111.

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To prepare for the meeting with an advisor your student should do several things. First they should review the courses they’ve taken, the Undergraduate Bulletin (for General Education and major requirements) and make a list of courses they think they need and/or are interested in taking. Second, use the Registrar’s website to identify their registration time http://www.mnsu.edu/registrar/index.html. Third, prepare a list of questions to ask the advisor, which might include:

- What are the requirements to be admitted to the upper level of the major (this might include coursework, a minimum grade point average, and extra curricular experience)?
- What General Education Requirements do I have left?
- What career opportunities are available for me if I continue with X major?
- Do you recommend any particular types of summer jobs to gain experience for my field?
- What extracurricular opportunities are available that would help me gain experience in my field?

We strongly encourage all students to meet with an advisor at least once each semester. If your student is unsure of who their advisor is or how to contact them, they can call the Office of First Year Experience to find out (507) 389-5498.
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time jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities is a necessity! Encourage your student to consider the following tips & resources in seeking a summer job or internship:

START EARLY! The odds of finding that “perfect” experience increase substantially the earlier you begin your search. Waiting until the last couple of weeks before classes end often means a desperate job seeker who accepts the first thing that comes along.

Get in touch with your skills and interests. Think about the courses you have enjoyed, tasks you have excelled at in the different jobs you have held, things that others have praised you for, things you are proud of, etc. Need more guidance? Use the exercises in the “Undeclared Majors Handbook” online at http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/students/undeclared/handbook/

Tell everyone you know that you are seeking summer employment—friends, relatives, former supervisors, people from your hometown, etc. Ask them if they have advice, ideas, or contacts to share with you.

Brainstorm a list of organizations to contact. Many opportunities are not advertised. Consider your geographic target and your major—for example, if you are majoring in education consider any and all organizations who work with kids OR if you are a communications major contact newspapers, magazines, etc. Don’t forget to research an organization before you contact them!

Write a resume. Many times seasonal positions will require you to complete an application form. It almost always increases your attractiveness as a candidate to include a well-written resume. If you are looking for an internship, in most cases you will be asked to submit a resume. Be ready when the opportunity presents itself! Looking for tips and samples? Check out the “Minnesota State University, Mankato Job Search Handbook” online at http://www.mnsu.edu/cdc/common/jobsearchhandbook/entire.pdf

Use the resources available to you through the Minnesota State Mankato Career Development Center. Seasonal jobs and internships are posted daily on the CDC’s mavijobs.com system. If you are a current student and do not have a MaviJobs account, you should! www.mavijobs.com

Other Internet resources:

- Minnesota’s Job Bank: http://www.mnworks.org/
- Summer Jobs: www.summerjobs.com
- Cool Summer Jobs: http://www.coolsummerjobs.com/
- Cool Works: http://www.coolworks.com/
- Get That Gig: http://www.getthatgig.com/
- Snag a Job: http://www.snagajob.com/
- Groove Job: www.groovejob.com
- Back Door Jobs: http://www.backdoorjobs.com/
- Camp Search: http://www.campsearch.com/index.jsp
- My Summers: http://www.mysummers.com/
- Seasonal Employment: http://www.mysummers.com/

Best of luck to your student in finding that perfect summer experience!