

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS REGARDING SUBSTANCE USE AT THE OREGON EXTENSION

Many of our students' home colleges restrict their use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. These restrictions are sometimes ignored by students – after all, some or all of these substances have, perhaps, been part of normal life since high school. It's not hard to avoid detection when you're practiced at it, and your school's staff and faculty are not close neighbors.

We at the OE also ask our students to restrict their use of these substances during their participation in our program. This is not because we believe they are harmful in every time and place. But we believe they detract from an atmosphere in which serious thought and honest dialogue are the norm. Below, we describe these restrictions.

Occasionally, OE students have been unwilling or unable to observe these restrictions. Then faculty have been forced to play campus cops, and students have had to practice secrecy and deception. On these occasions, the climate of honesty so essential to a genuine learning community has dissipated, and personal relationships between students and faculty have become poisoned. The entire community has suffered.

So please read what is below, and if you hear a little voice in your head saying, "These are dumb, I'm not going to be able to take them seriously," then we ask that you decline from participation in the OE. If you understand why we ask them of you, and find yourself saying "I can do this for four months" or even "I look forward to this," then we welcome you wholeheartedly.

Drinking

Alcohol quickly changes the behavior of individuals, as well as the social climate. Alcohol would be destructive to our common goals if it were used on weekdays, when virtually around the clock we are concentrating on thinking and learning. It would also be unfair to permit drinking where over-age and under-age students live together in cabins. So we ask you to commit to the following guidelines:

Dry campus: No alcohol is to be brought to or consumed on the property at Lincoln at any time. This policy also holds for residential premises during OE-sponsored field trips.

Dry mountain: No alcohol is to be purchased or consumed on the mountain at any time.

Discretion in town: While we do not encourage drinking by members of the community, we do not attempt to monitor this behavior off-campus. But we ask you to consider the human costs of making alcohol the focus of off-campus social life. Invariably, it results in painful alienation between those over and under 21 years of age.

No intoxication: Drinking to excess, leading to behaviors that are harmful or disruptive to oneself or others, will be understood as a violation of the spirit of the OE.

Smoking

We have two main concerns about smoking. It kills people – it has killed people whom we love dearly. For this reason alone, we would like to banish it from the earth. It also causes fires – for many years it has caused forest fires across the West, including forests near our homes. Beginning in late summer, smoking anywhere near a forest in our neighborhood is against the law. In buildings, it is a fire hazard.

Perhaps you have never smoked and don't want to start, so this is not an issue for you. That seems smart. For a few students each year, not smoking is a difficult challenge, even if they are trying to quit. Most of them come to Lincoln in good faith, planning not to smoke, and that's when they discover how addictive this substance is. Here is the way we'd like to handle smoking:

Please don't start: If you're not a smoker, we beg you not to start. This may be difficult, if people you like are smoking and you'd like to be with them. Let us know how we can help.

Please try to quit: If you are a smoker, we ask you to attempt earnestly to quit for the semester, and hopefully longer. Let us know how we can help.

Smoke in designated area only: Until you can quit, we require you to restrict your smoking to the designated outdoor campus smoking area. Nowhere else please.

Discretion in town: While we discourage smoking, we do not attempt to monitor this behavior off-campus. But smoking in town will make it hard to quit during the week.

Drugs

We ask you not to use illegal or harmful drugs at any time during the semester.

In conclusion...

We hope you understand how these expectations embody the spirit of our common purposes here. The faculty supports them wholeheartedly and will not overlook violations. We will consider breaches of these expectations as grounds for dismissal from the program. Please apply for the Oregon Extension only if you can agree, wholeheartedly, to abide by them.

If you have questions about anything in this statement, please email (inquiries@oregonextension.org), call (1-800-801-OREX), or write us about them. If you decide you cannot wholeheartedly affirm the community expectations, we ask you to make other plans for the fall.