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New Penn Panel to Study Alcohol And Drug Use On Campus

The University of Pennsylvania has formed a commission to review alcohol and drug use on campus and consequences for students who violate policy.

The Penn Commission on Student Safety, Alcohol, and Campus Life will look at "the status of student social life at Penn," and "pay particular attention to the potential for sexual violence and other forms of injurious behavior that can result from excessive alcohol consumption," Penn said in a release.

Spokeswoman Phyllis Holtzman said the panel was created not in reaction to a problem on campus, but out of Penn's desire to respond to a national issue.

"Nationally, there have been a disturbing number of recent incidents where excessive alcohol consumption led to tragic consequences," president Amy Gutmann said in a statement. "No campus - indeed, no sector of American society - is immune from these problems."

Last month, attorneys announced that the parents of a student, 20, who fell to his death after a 2010 fraternity party at Penn would receive more than $3 million from the fraternity and a beer distributor in a wrongful-death settlement. David and Helene Crozier of Yardley also reached a settlement with Penn, but its terms were confidential, officials said.

The couple's son, Matthew, a La Salle College High School graduate and junior at John Carroll University near Cleveland, suffered severe head injuries after a 30-foot fall over a railing at the Phi Kappa Sigma house. He was at the party with friends and was intoxicated, the lawsuit said.

The fraternity is no longer active on campus.

Penn's new commission will be chaired by Charles O'Brien, vice chair of psychiatry and director of the Center for Studies of Addiction in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine.

Source: Philadelphia Inquirer