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## University of Dayton Suspends Homecoming, Prompted by Concerns for Student Safety

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON SUSPENDS HOMECOMING,  
 PROMPTED BY CONCERNS FOR STUDENT SAFETY**

DAYTON, Ohio — Concerned about student safety and irresponsible behavior, University of Dayton officials will suspend Homecoming indefinitely.

During the fall, the University of Dayton will expand its traditional alumni awards banquet to include student-initiated awards that also recognize the achievements of graduates. The University will initiate a five-year class reunion during its annual Reunion Weekend next June in an effort to attract younger alumni back to campus.

"The University administration believes Homecoming as it is presently structured is an inappropriate community celebration," said Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., president. "In recent years the tone of Homecoming has been set by those who use it as an occasion for a weekend-long party. These include students, young alumni and another 1,000 to 1,500 college-age persons, some guests of UD students and some who merely join the crowd. There is extensive and excessive drinking and trashing of the student neighborhoods. This behavior is unacceptable at any time."

An Oct. 21 Homecoming street party, with a crowd estimated between 7,000 and 8,000 people, resulted in eight arrests, 18 citations and complaints from Oakwood neighbors of drunken and lewd behavior, noise and overflow parking. Of the arrests, two were UD students. Most of the citations were for violations of the University's alcohol and keg policies.

"The bottom-line issue is safety," said William Schuerman, vice president of student development and dean of students. "We're sponsoring a potentially unsafe event and can't continue to do that."

UD took a similar aggressive approach when celebrations on St. Patrick's Day turned

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destructive. In 1994, UD instituted a spring break during the week that included St. Patrick's Day in response to problems with drinking and damage during celebrations that attracted large numbers of students from other colleges and local high school students. Students peacefully celebrated St. Patrick's Day on campus in 1999 when spring break was scheduled later to coincide with an early Easter.

"The decision to suspend Homecoming is not a reflection on the work of a group of students who organized a number of positive events during Homecoming week, such as a blood drive and an alcohol-free concert. They did an outstanding job," Schuerman said.

"Unfortunately, the irresponsible actions of some students that do not reflect the values of the University of Dayton have convinced the administration that it needs to address the issues of student conduct and accountability."

The University also continues to take strong measures to address alcohol abuse on campus. In November, the University hired Scott Markland as its first coordinator of alcohol and drug education. In September, UD launched The Weekend Scene, which features alcohol-free weekend activities. In 1998, UD instituted a three-strikes-and-you're out alcohol policy intended to curb underage drinking. In 1989, UD prohibited beer kegs in all University-owned properties, except under special circumstances and with prior approval that ensures proper control and identification.

An event that dates back to at least 1928, Homecoming has evolved into a weekend that attracts primarily younger alumni, most of whom do not attend the Homecoming football game around which the weekend was originally centered, according to UD officials.

"For the University of Dayton, our largest concentration of alumni do not return to campus during Homecoming. They come back in June during Reunion Weekend," said Ted Partlow, associate vice president for development and alumni relations.

The President's Council, composed of vice presidents and other top University officials, announced the decision today after a six-week evaluation in the fall that included consultation with the Student Government Association.