Summary:

JSAAPP (Joint Student Administration Alcohol Policy Panel) was approached by several first-year students who were concerned about an advertisement that was sent to them over electronic mail. The advertisement was for a party in Gummere basement and stated that alcohol would be served at the party. The advertisement was mailed to the entire freshman class and had an unidentified sender. JSAAPP decided that a hearing would be necessary because there was a possibility that the invitation could be considered a public advertisement for a party at which alcohol would be served. If this were the case, then a breach of the Alcohol Policy would have occurred.

After Bubba (the sender of the electronic mail advertisement) came forward, a hearing was held. Although JSAAPP determined that Bubba had violated the Alcohol Policy, since the case established a precedent, Bubba was not held personally accountable. This abstract is designed to educate the community about guidelines governing invitations to parties where alcohol is served.

Fact-Finding:

During the fact-finding portion of the hearing, JSAAPP first heard Bubba’s account of what had happened. Bubba said that he was a co-host for a party that was to be thrown in Gummere basement. He found out that his Gummere party would be competing with other parties that night and was worried that Gummere wouldn’t attract enough people through invitations he had already sent out through campus mail. Therefore, Bubba used his roommate’s computer and freshman class list (copied from a previous mailing) to send party advertisements to the entire class. Bubba said that he had made the advertisement anonymous so that his roommate would not be barraged by return messages.

In this advertisement, Bubba stated that there would be a Gummere party on a certain weekend night with alcohol and that he wanted everyone to be there. Bubba said that he didn’t think that this form of advertising could not be considered public because it was the same thing as dropping 300 invitations in campus mail. Bubba said that when his HCO had informed him of the different types of advertisements that could be considered public, e-mail was not included. In effect, Bubba did not see the distinction between electronic mail and regular campus mail. How could one be seen as public and the other private?

JSAAPP then asked Bubba why he had not included his own name on the advertisement and why he had sent it anonymously. Bubba responded that he had not thought of putting his name on the invitation. When asked if he had asked for his roommate’s permission to use the class list, Bubba responded that he had not, but that he did obtain permission to use the computer. Finally, Bubba was asked if
he would have sent the advertisement if there had not been competing parties. He said no.

At this point in the hearing, Carla, a representative from academic computing, entered the room to answer any questions that either JSAAPP or Bubba might have about the technicalities of electronic mail. Carla told JSAAPP that she was unsure of what the distinction between public and private e-mail would be. She did say, however, that Bubba’s advertisement was a mass mailing and against academic computing policy. A mass mailing is any electronic mail sent to people you don’t know or you are not sure would be interested in the message. Carla also speculated that sending an electronic mail to people you don’t know may also be considered a public e-mail. She drew a comparison between Bubba’s e-mail advertisement and randomly stuffing campus mailboxes and expressed concern that Bubba had not taken responsibility for the advertisement because he had not created the class list himself.

Bubba and Carla were then asked to leave so that JSAAPP could deliberate privately.

Deliberations:

From what Carla had told JSAAPP, there was a general consensus that the e-mail advertisement could be considered public. The Policy states that invitations to parties must be individually addressed and neglecting to do so constitutes a violation of the Alcohol Policy. By using a class list and not individually addressing the e-mail advertisements, the invitation is considered public.

There was also concern about the anonymity of the advertisement. It is clear that people should know who is sending them the invitations, especially over e-mail. JSAAPP felt that sending anonymous advertisements violates the spirit of responsibility inherent in the Alcohol Policy.

JSAAPP was convinced that Bubba had violated the Alcohol Policy, but it seemed unfair that he should be held personally accountable for his actions. There was no way for Bubba to know that advertising a party over e-mail was a violation of the Alcohol Policy. Clear guidelines governing this use of e-mail had not been established. It was also clear from fact finding that Bubba did not intend to deceive and that he truly did not think that he was violating the Alcohol Policy by advertising his party over e-mail.

JSAAPP then came to consensus on the following statement of violation:

**Bubba violated the Alcohol Policy by publicly advertising a private party through e-mail. Not only does this violate the party policy and the spirit of the Alcohol Policy, but also Computer Center ethics.**

**Because clear guidelines of appropriate means of advertising a party haven’t been established, we do not feel that it is fair to hold Bubba personally accountable.**

There was consensus that this abstract needed to be used as an educational tool to establish clear policy. This policy is stated in the following guidelines:
GUIDELINES GOVERNING PARTY INVITATIONS

The Alcohol Policy permits alcohol to be served at private parties. Private parties are those which are held in private spaces and to which a limited number of people are specifically invited. The rationale for this was to encourage parties which were small enough in size so as to increase the potential for effective monitoring and control by the party hosts. The driving force, in effect, was a desire to have safer parties.

It was expected that hosts would send invitations to people that they knew and/or wanted to have at their parties. Hence, individually addressed invitations became the norm. It was also anticipated that the number of invitations to be sent would be reasonable (not more than could reasonably fit into a given party space) and would not be sent to so many that the party, in effect, became public.

1) Mass mailings are not permitted. You should only send invitations to people you know or who you are sure would be interested in the party.

2) Mass electronic mail is not an appropriate means for advertising parties. The Alcohol Policy does not govern personal communication over e-mail concerning parties.

3) All invitations should be personally and individually addressed.

4) It is not permitted to advertise that you are specifically selling alcohol. You may advertise that you are accepting donations.

5) Parties should only be advertised to students attending Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and Swarthmore colleges.

6) Because it is a requirement at all parties, invitations should specify that students should bring their student ID cards.

7) Invitations should not encourage irresponsible drinking or any violation of the Alcohol Policy.

It is expected that all hosts will follow these guidelines. There is no longer any excuse for violating invitation policy; these guidelines are clear and concise, and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Chris Ogiba ‘96, the chair of JSAAPP, at 645-5357 or any other member of JSAAPP. Other members of JSAAPP are Gabriella Sarnoff ‘95, Curt Ward ‘96, Anne Santoro ‘97, Laura DeStefano ‘97, Rebecca Rabin ‘97, Roberto Buono ‘98, Helen Chang ‘98, Jaime Spector ‘98, Steve Walzer ‘98, and deans Randy Milden and Steve Water.