ALCOHOL CONTENT AND ADVERTISING IN COLLEGE NEWSPAPERS: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF *THE RED AND BLACK*

by

WENDI GRIMES ZONGKER

(Under the direction of Leara Rhodes)

ABSTRACT

This body of research analyzes the alcohol content and advertising which appeared in editions of the University of Georgia's independent, student-run newspaper, *The Red and Black.* This research is guided by social learning theory, social responsibility theory, and the theory of emerging adulthood. Utilizing the method of discourse analysis, editions of the newspaper were analyzed from January 1, 2006, to January 1, 2007. In total, 157 published editions were analyzed. This analysis resulted in 365 articles relating to alcohol and approximately 441 advertisements for alcohol. Seven staff members at *The Red and Black* participated in a one-on-one in-depth interview for this research project, in which they answered questions ranging from their perception of the culture in Athens regarding alcohol use by students to the existing formal policies for dealing with content and advertising related to alcohol.

INDEX WORDS: Alcohol content, Alcohol advertising, Social responsibility theory, Social learning theory, Theory of emerging adulthood, Discourse analysis

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DEDICATION

Several individuals have helped me get to where I am today. First and foremost, I thank God for all of the many blessings he has given. I thank my husband, Jarrett, for his unwavering support of my academics and for being an amazing blessing in my life. My parents, Bruce Grimes and Sharon Grimes, my sister, Stephanie, my brothers, Jonathan and Christopher, and my in-laws, Dr. John and Mrs. Karen Zongker have always supported me in anything and everything I chose to do with my life. I also owe a lot of thanks to my grandparents, Howard and Betty Grimes and Steven and Ruth Gwin, who have always shown a vested interest in my education.

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One professor at the University of North Florida is the reason I even applied to graduate school. Dr. Beasley taught Mass Communications Research. I wrote my research proposal on the effects of alcohol advertising on adolescents. And Dr. Beasley suggested that I take that research proposal and apply to graduate school. That topic, coupled with recent events at UGA, and columns by one unnamed editor at *The Red and Black* inspired this body of research.

Dr. Rhodes, my major professor, made the process of researching and writing this thesis painless. Her endless encouragement and support, not to mention the constant smile on her face, made this process a smooth one. I could not have completed this thesis without you. I am grateful for her dedication and commitment to this thesis. Also, to Dr. Hollander and Professor Fink, thank you for agreeing to come on board and serve as members of my thesis committee.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Binge drinking, playing quarters, fraternity parties, and general debauchery is what college life is all about – that is if you take the movie *Animal House* and the Tom Wolfe novel *I am Charlotte Simmons* as truth. In *I am Charlotte Simmons*, Tom Wolfe writes about alcohol, sex and social status in a book that according to one review "relieves its reader of all the burdens of the imagination" (Metcalf, 2004, ¶2). *Animal House* was seen as a classic virtually immediately following its release. The movie came out in 1978, yet current college students still pin to their dorm room wall the classic poster of John Belushi wearing a sweater marked with the word college. *Old School, Road Trip, Van Wilder* and countless other movies chronicle the stereotype that college life centers on drunken escapades. These movies feature the comedy in what happens when alcohol and college mix.

Alcohol use on college campuses is nothing new. Grandparents tell their grandchildren stories of their drinking episodes during their college days while many others assert that college will be the best four years of a person's life. Campus newspapers, which are often student-run, publish story after story referencing alcohol.

This is a study taking a look at one college newspaper on one college campus. This study seeks to analyze the newspaper content and advertising in *The Red and Black*, an independent,

student-run newspaper at the University of Georgia. I will also speak directly with the ones who put those stories in print, conducting in-depth interviews with seven staff members.

Much research on alcohol and its effects has been published as has research on college newspapers. What is scarce, however, is research on alcohol referenced in college newspapers. What follows is a review of some of the available research on alcohol mixed with college.

Several studies point out the well-known fact that the consumption of heavy amounts of alcohol on college campuses is prevalent and continues to be a major issue (Kahler, Strong, Read & Palfai, 2004; Wechsler, Molnar, Davenport & Baer, 1999; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo & Lee, 2000). This issue does not appear to be going away, as excessive consumption of alcohol in college has increased in the last few years (Granfield, 2004). This problem is such an issue that college presidents view heavy or excessive use of alcohol as the most severe challenge on college campuses (Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2000).

The challenge is deemed more serious by the enormity of the problem both in numbers of people imbibing and quantities imbibed (Wechsler, Molnar, et al., 1999). The penalties paid for the alcohol consumption by college students can, and often do, range from minor consequences such as being tardy for class, to the more severe consequences such as sexual assaults (Donovan & McEwan, 1995). "This culture of abuse is taking its toll in student accidents, assaults, property damage, academic problems, illnesses, injuries, mental health problems, risky sex, rape and deaths" (The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2007, p.1).

Since the first CASA Commission report in 1993, the issue of drugs and alcohol on college campuses has grown. According to the study, 65 percent to 70 percent of college students

today consume alcohol. CASA also reports that since 2001, binge drinking, intoxication and drinking just to get drunk have all increased.

Heavy consumption of alcohol by college students is often referred to in the literature as binge drinking (Weschsler, Molnar, et al., 1999; Christie, Fisher, Kozup, Smith, Burton & Creyer, 2001; Granfield, 2004; Wechsler & Nelson, 2001). The same research states that the most commonly used definition of the term 'binge drinking,' when referring to the consumption of alcohol by college students, means that a male student consumes five or more drinks in a single time period and a female student consumes four or more drinks in a single time period.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism states that the total cost of alcohol abuse is estimated to be \$100 billion per year, which includes the cost of violent crimes and vehicle crashes caused by alcohol, healthcare costs from liver disease, addiction to alcohol, and the care of babies born with fetal alcohol syndrome (Glassman, 1997). The issue of heavy consumption of alcohol on college campuses has gained national attention in recent years. The U.S. Surgeon General made public a goal to reduce college binge drinking by 50 percent by 2010 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000).

Binge drinking creates a problem for students for obvious reasons. Wechsler et al., (1999) posit that by completing a thorough look at the drinking patterns of college students one can see that the binge drinkers account for the majority of the alcohol consumed and also cause the majority of problems on college campuses. A study completed by the Harvard School of Public Heath indicates that 44 percent of college students underwent at least one instance of heavy drinking over the course of a two-week time period (Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Moeykens & Castillo, 1994).

Several scholars (Thombs, Beck & Mahoney, 1993; Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt & Lee, 1998) have conducted research on what factors lead to over-consumption of alcohol by college students and several have concluded that drinking behaviors among young adults are to a great extent influenced by the social situations in which they are involved. Individual personalities and motivations may influence the drinking behaviors of college students just as the personalities and motivations of friends may influence their drinking behaviors (Hussong, 2003). According to the available research, this correlation with peers who consume alcohol is one of the most powerful single predictor of alcohol consumption among youth (Bauman & Ennett, 1994; Beck & Treiman, 1996; Coker & Borders, 2001; Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992).

This perception of alcohol use among peers is important to research on the consumption of alcohol use among college students since some research data indicates that most college students overestimate the quantity of alcohol consumed by their peers (Granfield, 2004). Granfield's research shows that approximately 70 percent of the college students surveyed think that most other college students drink three times a week or more when in reality the majority of college students, an estimated 60 percent, indicate that they actually only consume alcohol once a week or less (Granfield, 2004).

Students also overestimate the level of acceptability by their peers (Perkins & Weschler, 1996). If a college student thinks that such norms exist among their college peers, that believable norm may serve to justify and explain extreme behavior and then may influence students to engage in heavy consumption of alcohol (Weschler, Molnar, et al., 1999).

College students may be influenced by their perceptions of their peers' drinking habits and acceptability of those habits, but other research also indicates that college students may be

influenced to drink by prevalent alcohol advertising, mainly promotions and drink discounts. Advertisements appearing in college newspapers often promote drink specials or discounts such as "Ladies drink free all night long (Erenberg & Hacker, 1997, p. 9)," an advertisement that appeared in an edition of the student newspaper at Louisiana State University and is prevalent in other student newspapers across the country. Auburn University's student newspaper published this advertisement: "Ease your mind before final exams with our mind eraser drink special," (Erenberg & Hacker, 1997, p. 9). The promotions and discounts offered by bars may influence the heavy consumption of alcohol endured by college students (Christie et al., 2001). This same research indicates that promotions on alcoholic beverages are more favorable in attitudes and intentions than are similar promotions offered for menu items such as appetizers (Christie et al., 2001). This change in attitude and intention, according to the research by Christie et al., often leads to a perception of the likelihood that consumption will increase.

The March 2007 report from CASA discusses ways to eradicate the issue of alcohol and substance abuse on our college campuses. The report states that the key to solving the issue of alcohol and substance abuse is "that the alcohol and tobacco merchants cease all advertising and marketing to attract student users" (CASA Commission, 2007, p. iii).

With all of this available research on alcohol, its effects, and what makes people more likely to consume the substance, it is still reasonable to say that there is a lot more to be studied. While scholars write about what makes people more likely to consume alcohol, editors at college newspapers continue to fill the pages with stories and advertisements referencing alcohol. SETTING THE SCENE

On January 1, 2006, the University Police Department of UGA issued a new policy that, according to *The Red and Black*, would make it so that "persons charged with Underage

Possession of Alcohol by University Police will be taken to the Athens-Clarke County Jail, as is the practice of every other law enforcement agency in the county." This was a big change from the previous policy of giving a student found in violation of underage possession a citation or notice to appear.

On January 22, 2006, Lewis Rockwell Fish, a freshman attending UGA, died in his Russell Hall dorm room. Rodney Bennett, vice president for student affairs, was quoted in *The Red and Black* as saying, "Our greatest fear at the University of Georgia has been realized." In February 2006, an autopsy determined that Fish died from a lethal combination of heroin, cocaine and alcohol.

On July 1, 2006, the policy for underage consumption of alcohol at UGA changed once again. The previous policy stated that parents of students who violated UGA's alcohol and drug policy would not be notified until the second offense. The new policy changed that rule. Now parents of students found in violation of UGA's alcohol and drug policy are notified on the first offense. First offense notification was not the only change; the policy was now stricter on alcohol policy violators.

Students attending UGA who are found in violation of this alcohol and drug policy are now required to take an alcohol awareness course. At minimum the student is also placed on probation for the remaining of the current semester plus two additional semesters. Summer terms do not count toward the two semesters. If a student is currently on probation for violation of the alcohol and drug policy and is found in violation of that policy for a second time, the student then receives a minimum sanction of suspension for the current semester and one additional semester, again, not counting summer terms.

Adding to all of the alcohol and drug policy changes taking place at UGA, the administration has also made several attempts to change the general alcohol and drug attitude tone at the University. The crusade began with changing policies regarding alcohol on campus during home football games.

The 2006 Bulldog football season brought changes in the tailgating rules on campus. Fans were no longer allowed to have alcoholic beverages in certain pre-designated "familyfriendly zones" on campus. University President Michael Adams also launched a campaign during the 2006 football season to change the name of the annual match-up between the University of Florida and UGA. The game, always held in the neutral zone of Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida, held the nickname of "The World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party." Adams set out to change that and did so successfully. Several media outlets dropped the term, including the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and CBS. *The Red and Black* then launched a contest to rename the game. Suggestions included Mike & Bernie's Annual Big-Ass Interstate Intoxifest (and Football Game); The World's Most Politically Correct Keg Party, Seldomly Sober Sunshine State Shootout, along with the winning suggestion, The World's Largest non-Alcoholic University-sanctioned Family-fun Event and Bowl (No Admittance without Passing Alcohol Awareness Test).

The most recent battle with the culture of alcohol consumption at UGA is the proposal of creating an amnesty policy. The policy would provide, essentially, a "get out of jail free card" for students who seek medical attention for friends who are in medical danger due to heavy drug or alcohol consumption. As of this date, a resolution has not been reached between the administration and the student body.

This research seeks to shed light on the policies and codes behind the choices and decisions made daily by staff members of *The Red and Black*.

When the Princeton Review names UGA as the 12th best party school, it becomes apparent that alcohol consumption is obviously a big issue at UGA (Soltan, 2006). Whereas the administration appears to be trying to do what may be best for the student body, the students want their freedom. In reaction to the party culture at UGA, the administration enacted these new policies to make the campus a safer place. While all of this occurrs, the student newspaper is still in business. Articles and advertising referencing alcohol are still being published and the newspaper is also reacting to the administration. The circumstances taking place at the time an article is published also tells a story and contributes to the overall tone and theme of the newspapers' message.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This research project is guided by three theories, which serve as a lens in which to filter all of the information gathered during the research process. The three theories are social learning theory, social responsibility theory, and the theory of emerging adulthood. These theories set a framework for this research project while helping to explain why the issue of alcohol content and alcohol advertising in college newspapers is such an important issue to study.

The first theory, social learning theory is an important theological lens to guide this research due, in large part, to the idea that individuals can learn based on what they see, hear, and/or read in the media. Often humans imitate what they see and therefore develop patterns of behavior that can contribute to risky behaviors.

The second theory that guides this research is social responsibility theory, which is an equally important theory to guide this research mainly because this study explores the idea of a staff of young aspiring journalists producing an independent college newspaper. Ethical dilemmas and issues of responsibility come into play daily in the production of a newspaper. Therefore, it is important to explore the role of responsibility and ethical decision making surrounding journalism.

The third and final theory that guides this research is the theory of emerging adulthood. This theory highlights the issue of the two populations of concern to this research project: the journalists and the students. The theory of emerging adulthood draws attention to the issues

faced by our students who are in a transition period from adolescence to young adulthood and the ways in which they process the idea of responsibility and the temptation of substance abuse. SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning theory is an approach that "grew out of stimulus-response behaviorist (S-R) psychology and was primarily developed by social psychologist Albert Bandura and his associates in the 1960s" (Harris, 1999, p. 20). Others who helped form social learning theory include Michael Mahoney, Donald Meichenbaum, and Walter Mischel (Kreitner & Luthans, 1984). Research points to at least two other social learning theorists, Akers and Sears, as being instrumental in the development of the theory (Grusec, 1992). Each of the social learning theorists puts a different spin on the theory. Sears "was among the first to argue that the study of personality and social development must acknowledge not only that the external world acts on an individual, but also that the individual has an effect on the external world" (Grusec, 1992, p. 780). Akers' version of social learning theory incorporates mainly adolescent behavior patterns (Winfree & Bernat, 1998).

Harris states that Bandura's social learning theory first developed "in the context of studying the effects of violent media models on behavior" (Harris, 1999, p. 21). Social learning theory largely "applies principles of learning to social situations" (Harris, 1999, p. 192). Another definition of this theoretical model describes social learning theory as "the processes by which individuals develop and maintain patterns of behavior" (Britton, 2004, p. 103). Also known as social cognitive theory, social learning theory proposes that three factors – cognitive, behavioral, and environmental – all interact to produce specific behaviors in individuals in particular situations (Bandura, 1986).

The theory maintains that behavior is learned by imitating what other people do (Smith & Mackie, 1995). Crain (1992) suggests that behavior is not only shaped by live examples but also by those examples shown in the mass media. Therefore it is reasonable to generalize this statement to say that behavior can be shaped by the alcohol content and advertising appearing in college newspapers. Soft-news articles written about social situations involving alcohol portray a scene that college students may choose to imitate.

Social learning theory relates because, according to the theory, people have the ability to imitate others directly by viewing the behavior or indirectly by following an event portrayed in the media (Thomas, 2001). This thought process is reinforced through Triplett and Payne's (2004) research on the idea that people learning mostly through social reinforcement is one tenet fundamental to social learning theory. Other research challenges that individual behavior and the environment work to influence each other (Kreitner & Luthans, 1984).

Durkin, Wolfe, Clark, and Gregory (2005) state that social learning theory has been empirically tested numerous times and has received great support. The theory has been applied to multiple deviant behaviors, which include substance abuse among others. Akers does suggest that his social learning theory is intended to be a general theory with the ability to explain many behaviors (Winfree & Bernat, 1998).

Social learning theory postulates that deviant behavior, like all other forms of human behavior, is learned and much of the learning takes place in primary groups such as the family group, peer groups, and work groups (Durkin, Wolfe, et al., 2005). Other research expands on this claim that social learning theory maintains that individuals "learn to become substance abusers due to such social forces as internalized definitions supportive of delinquent behavior,

the influence of delinquent peers, the presence of powerful social reinforcers, and the absence of adequate social punishers" (Winfree & Bernat, 1998, ¶1).

Harris (1999) posits that:

For social learning to occur someone must first be exposed to the media example and attend to it. Second, he or she must be capable of remembering the behavior and thinking about it. Finally, the person must possess the cognitive ability, motor skill and motivation to perform the behavior (p. 20).

Students in the college arena fit all of these criteria. Students are exposed to alcohol in the media through their college newspapers. "The media occupy a pervasive presence in our lives, and it is at least reasonable to conclude that they affect our behavior in ways yet to be determined" (Day, 1997, p. 243). Due to the level of the students' intellectual ability, it is reasonable to assume that students are able to remember what they see and read and therefore are also able to think about the content. It is also reasonable to assume that a student is able to perform any behavior they described in the media.

As it relates to alcohol consumption, social learning theory proposes that "drinking is a volitional, goal-directed behavior that lies along a continuum, ranging from abstinence to alcohol abuse. As such, the initiation, maintenance, and development of differential drinking patterns are assumed to be governed by similar learning principles" (Wall, Thurssell & Lalonde, 2002, p. 1272). Research completed by Britton (2004) states that the social learning theory "of alcohol abuse posits that problem drinkers exhibit coping deficits and hold positive expectancies or beliefs about the effects of alcohol that independently and conjointly promote the generalization of alcohol consumption as a coping strategy" (p. 103-104). Wall et al. indicate that there is much research that proves that social learning theory is a well-founded model to use when attempting

to understand drinking behavior, which most concerns are about alcohol outcome expectancies (Wall et al., 2002).

In relation to the debate on publishing content in newspapers which social learning theory states can influence individuals, Day (1997) states that:

The media should not retreat entirely from controversy just because some...are likely to imitate the behavior revealed through its content. From an ethical perspective, the focus should be on the lessons (messages) communicated through the behavior of the media practitioners themselves and the values and attitudes reflected in their material (p. 243).

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY

In light of all the research on social learning theory, it is important to discuss the ethics and idea of social responsibility surrounding the production of a newspaper. Therefore, the second theory that will guide this research project is social responsibility theory. In its rawest form, "social responsibility theory proposes that the media take it upon themselves to elevate their standards, providing citizens with the sort of raw material and disinterested guidance they need to govern themselves" (McQuail, 2002, p. 184). Others define social responsibility as "the idea that one needs to take into account more than oneself when decisions are made that affect the larger society" (May, 1996, p. 400). Day (1997) offers a more complex definition in stating that social responsibility is:

...a commitment to the public good that outweighs short-term individual interests. Lurking in this rather abstract concept of social responsibility is the principle of reciprocity, the notion that individuals and institutions have a moral obligation to the public's welfare, in return for which society bestows its respect and trust (p. 34).

Fink (1996) contends that the concept of social responsibility of the newsroom has been around since the beginning days of the nation. "Since the days of the Founding Fathers, newspapers have assumed – and been given by society – responsibilities to inform and enlighten, to foster public discussion, to create a marketplace of ideas and facilitate the democratic consensus that guides the nation" (p. 407).

Fink (1996) asserts that maintaining that level of responsibility "can be burdensome for a manager and even, harmful to the bottom line" (p. 407). Yet, social responsibility still does not stop with content. The staff members should also take the idea of social responsibility into account when considering the advertisements they use to fund those pages.

Research findings "show consistent evidence of the influence of an advertisement offering discounted prices on beer and wine, with significant effects on attitude toward the ad and bar, intentions to patronize the bar, and consumption estimates for self and others" (Christie et al., 2001, p. 250). Many companies in the alcohol industry have felt pressure from the public and have entertained thoughts of potential liability enough to stop advertising on college campuses. Unfortunately advertisements now appearing in college newspapers are of local bars rather than alcoholic beverages (Christie et al., 2001).

Research has shown there are clear associations between excessive levels of drinking and an increase in frequency of car accident fatalities, sexual activity that was unplanned, both sexual and physical assault, unintentional injuries, impairment, and poor performance in academics (Wechsler & Isaac, 1992). Obviously a student newspaper would report on such incidents of news value regarding students on campus. These stories would include the fact that alcohol was involved.

The issue becomes complicated when one considers the fact that the advertising sold determines the number of pages available for news content. The harsh reality is that an advertiser often will not hesitate to pull an advertising campaign if the company does not like the content of the newspaper. On this topic Fink (1996) writes that "ethical, journalistically sound newspapers have the best chance of flourishing over the long term. Simply put, responsible business practices are good business" (p. 407).

Journalists surveyed have verified that establishments do utilize their advertising money to threaten news media. Companies sometimes remove advertisements to take action against news content they do not agree with (Craig, 2004). "For American media, advertising creates the financial independence from government or political groups that permits extraordinary journalistic independence. There is danger, however, of economic dependence on a relatively few large advertisers who exert undue influences on news coverage" (Fink, 1988, p. 152). While every company has the write to decide where to place their advertising budget, companies should not demand to know every time a publication writes something about the company, or demand to see the copy in advance, whether that coverage be positive or negative ("Audiences First," 2005).

Businesses are not the only culprit in the war against content versus advertising. Research does indicate that often pressure is put on the news from inside the news organization (Soley & Craig, 1992). Craig concludes that this influence occurs "when the business side pressures the news side to write or censor stories to promote, please, or placate businesses that advertise" (Craig, 2004, p. 234). This method is referred to as self-censorship. In some cases, "newspapers may suppress stories when advertisers withdraw their support in protest, or suppress them in case they might" (MacDonald & Petheram, 1998, p. 30). The study completed by Soley and Craig

also concludes that advertisers most often succeed in killing news stories written for smaller circulation newspapers, or those with an average 25,000 to 50,000 readers.

The Red and Black is the independent and student-run newspaper on the UGA campus and can be considered a small circulation newspaper. More than 43,000 students, staff, and faculty members create the UGA population. The advertising rate card for the newspaper states that an estimated 97 percent of the UGA community reads the newspaper in a given week, while an estimated 78 percent of the UGA community reads the newspaper three to four times per week. Therefore, this publication has the readership to fall within the range of smaller circulation newspapers most likely to kill a story according to the previously mentioned research by Soley and Craig (1992).

Analyzing alcohol advertising in a college newspaper is just as important as analyzing the content referencing alcohol. Understanding the impact that alcohol advertising has on college students is important. Still, it is equally important to understand how media use by those involved operates to influence the perceptions of risks associated with alcohol use (Slater & Rasinski, 2006).

Shrum's research (1995) indicates that the amount of use of specific genres of media may be more predictive of media effects about relevant social beliefs than is the amount of media use in general. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that reading a newspaper and viewing the advertisements could have more effect on one's belief about alcohol consumption than the effect of all media use in general. Slater and Rasinksi state that both exposure and attention to content are necessary to have an impact on one's beliefs or behavior (Slater & Rasinski, 2005). O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987) support findings that news exposure has a substantial impact on risk

judgments. Additional research is necessary to determine if one medium is more likely to have an effect on attitudes and behaviors than another.

With the research on alcohol effects that exists, it makes sense that efforts to influence media content to support public health goals are becoming more common (Wallack & Dorfman, 2001). Efforts to influence the media content of both news and entertainment with respect to alcohol-related risks might well influence public support for more restrictive alcohol policies (Slater & Rasinski, 2006). In terms of substance abuse, "the alcohol and tobacco industries, including local retailers, contribute to the problem by enticing students with advertising, promotions and sponsorship that prey on young people's desires to fit in, relax inhibitions and reduce stress" (CASA Commission, 2007, p. 41).

A college population that will gather around to support restrictive alcohol policies that would affect their freedom as well as the content and advertising of a student newspaper is unlikely. Students at UGA have written numerous letters to the editors at the student newspaper expressing their disdain for the strict alcohol policies that the administration has already put in place. Students simply want their freedoms. Also, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for the University to enforce such policies since the student newspaper at UGA is published independently of the University. *The Red and Black* is a not-for-profit organization, which is governed by a volunteer board of directors consisting of 15 individuals living in various cities of Georgia (About Us, 2007).

Nevertheless, the college does have the right to refuse distribution of the newspaper on campus if the content of the publication is shown to pose a danger to the college's educational program or safety (Ryan & Martinson, 1988). Since it is unlikely that the University of Georgia will take such a drastic step, there are other avenues in which the administration could limit the

party culture on campus. The CASA Commission suggests that schools refuse money in the form of "sponsorship, promotions and advertising on campus" (CASA Commission, 2007, p. 76) as a way to send a message that underage drinking is not acceptable. But, as CASA points out, the alcohol industry, along with the tobacco industry, wants to hook the drinkers at a young age to secure lifelong customers and are willing to pay a lot of money to do just that. According to a February, 2006 article in *The Red and Black*, several local alcohol distributors are huge sponsors of the University of Georgia. Individuals who pledged a gift of \$10,000 over a 10-year period or a gift of \$25,000 at death are President's Club Founders. Members of this club include the leaders of the local branches of Budweiser, Miller, Coors and other alcohol distributors. Some of these individuals also make donations to the Athletic Association and have histories of serving on the University Foundation board of trustees. "Schools that permit these advertisements and sponsorships are profiting from the sale of their students' future health" (CASA Commission, 2007, p. 76).

Though the refusal of sponsorships and promotions from the alcohol industry could occur, it is unlikely to occur. It is also unlikely that a ban on alcohol and content in the student newspaper will take place due to the obvious First Amendment battle that would ensue. "The First Amendment states that 'Congress shall make no law…abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press" (MacDonald & Petheram, 1998, p. 5).

Yet according to one survey published in Journalism Quarterly, it appears that 33 percent of journalism advisors strongly agreed with a statement that "it is more important for a newspaper to be free of control than it is for the college/university to be protected from potentially damaging stories" (Ryan & Martinson, 1988, p. 57). These "potentially damaging stories" (Ryan & Martinson, 1988, p. 57) are not defined in the research and, therefore, one is

left to believe that these journalism advisors could be saying that they think it is more important for a newspaper to exercise the First Amendment right than it is for a staff to protect the student body from the potentially damaging effects of alcohol advertisement and content in those publications.

A newspaper exists with the primary purpose of providing news and information to the community it serves. Yet, there is little literature on the parameters of what defines news on a college and university campus. Research on media content often "is conducted on the assumption that news media do not mirror the real world, but they construct versions of reality, since news production inevitably involves processes of selection and transformation" (Stamou, 2001, p. 653).

The laid-back attitude of college life at UGA may transfer itself onto the pages of *The Red and Black* as the tone of the newspaper is often humorous or sarcastic. However, this humorous tone may not be fit for the editorial pages where it often appears. Flakstad (Rystrom, 2004) thinks that humor is not a proper use of the limited space of an editorial page and that it is not appropriate to "drop a funny piece into editorial pages merely for entertainment and comic relief" (p. 218). On the other hand, Horowitz sees it differently in that the "occasional light touch" of humor is a great way to attract readers to the section and keep them reading. "Being funny doesn't mean you aren't being serious. It's simply a different way of making points" (Rystrom, 2004, p. 219).

The Hutchins Commission charged the press with the responsibility of giving a "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the events of the day" (Patterson & Wilkins, 2005, p. 194). With this charge there seems to be no room for articles written about teaching students to

play drinking games, yet that is what some college and university newspapers cover in their publications. Kieran (1997) states that:

For the public interest, what we need to know to function in a democratic, civil society should not be confused with whatever the public may be interested in. The mere fact that we may be interested in knowing or seeing something does not give us the right to see or hear about it (p. 82).

The Hutchins Commission also proposes that the media should provide a "representative picture of constituent groups in society" (Patterson & Wilkins, 2005, p. 194).

On the other hand, the American Society of Newspaper Editors states that the "primary function of newspapers is to communicate to the human race what its members do, feel and think" (Skaggs, 1985, p. 39). What the members of a college campus "do, feel and think" (Skaggs, 1985, p. 39) has the potential to be much different from the "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent news of the day" (Patterson & Wilkins, 2005, p. 194).

An issue arises with the concept of responsibility as it relates to the media. McQuail (2002) states that responsibility requires accountability that often comes from some type of state intervention. In the case of a college or university newspaper this might mean administrative intervention. Any intervention on the media is seen as a decrease in liberties afforded to the press through the First Amendment. "The notion that media have obligations to society is a contested one, since it appears inconsistent with principles of freedom of expression" (McQuail, 2003, p. 46).

In opposition to the argument that this intervention and accountability would take away from the legal rights of the press, McQuail (2002) points out that social responsibility is not

about challenging the legal rights of the media, but differentiates between a legal right and a moral right. May (1996) states that:

Those who display social responsibility are those who take responsibility for the facts about their societies that they have at least some control over. Socially responsible individuals are attentive and sensitive to the social conditions of their communities, large or small (p. 412).

Patterson and Wilkins (2005) contend that the issue that the media has with social responsibility theory and other such theories is that "they smack a kind of benevolent paternalism" (p. 171):

If individual human beings carry moral stature, then assigning one institution – in this case the mass media – the role of social and political arbiter diminishes the moral worth of the individual citizen. The mass media become a kind parent and the citizen a sort of wayward child in need of guidance (p. 171).

The American Press Managing Editors Association declares that a "good newspaper" is one that is "fair, accurate, honest, responsible, independent and decent truth is its guiding principle" (Skaggs, 1985, p. 39). These criteria might be issues with many college newspapers. Frost (2000) maintains that:

A journalist needs to determine right from the start of any story the reason why he or she is covering it. If the reasons for covering it are morally, not just commercially, viable, or if the moral reasons for using the story outweigh the moral arguments against, then we should publish. However, we also need to look at this in another way: are we not covering a particular story because it is morally, or merely commercially, unjustifiable? (p. 28).

In regards to social responsibility and media ethics, Frost also asks if a good journalist is one who brings stories to his employer with high principles in mind, or one who simply brings stories that will increase circulation (Frost, 2000). Journalists are charged with the responsibility to keep ethics in mind at all times. The issue becomes complicated when you consider the fact that the role of a newspaper is to serve the community in which it is published. A journalist should consider the ethical implications of writing stories which reference alcohol for a population that includes heavy consumers rather than simply hiding behind the veil of serving the community and publishing the reality of that community. With all of the available research on the issue of alcohol consumption and the adverse consequences associated with that consumption, it is reasonable to review the policies and standards set in place by college newspapers to deal with these issues (Christie et al., 2001).

THEORY OF EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Within this discussion on the ethical and social responsibilities of college newspapers is the audience. A third theory will highlight the issues faced by this population of young journalists and the students who read the newspapers.

This theoretical model is the theory of emerging adulthood, which was proposed by Jeffery Arnett and "argues for recognition of a new stage of the life-course between adolescence and adulthood reflecting the extension of youth transitions to independence brought about by a globalization and technological change" (Bynner, 2005, p. 367). Some research indicates that this theory of emerging adulthood might vary by cultures in terms of age limits and characteristics (Nelson, Badger & Wu, 2004). Arnett reaffirms this claim by stating that "emerging adulthood is not a universal period but a period that exists only in cultures that postpone the entry into adult roles and responsibilities until well past the late teens" (Arnett,

2000, p. 478). This age period is defined by "ambivalence concerning adult status, individualistic criteria for adulthood, identity exploration, and frequent participation in risky behaviors" (Nelson & Barry, 2005, p. 248).

This theory is relevant to the research given the age range of the staff at the *The Red and Black* and the age range of the newspapers' core readership. "Research reveals that most 18-to-25-year-old individuals do not consider themselves to be adults" (Nelson & Barry, 2005, p. 242). The father of adolescence research, Stanley Hall, suggests that the adolescent period terminates around age 25 (Bynner, 2005).

This period of emerging adulthood, according to Nelson and Barry (2005, p. 243) represents a transitional nature in which individuals "know that they have left adolescence, but, at the same time, they do not yet feel that they have taken on adult roles." According to Arnett (2005) this transitional nature creates several problems as it:

Could mean that they feel that, because they are no long adolescents, they are capable of deciding for themselves whether or not to use substances. But, if they also feel that they are not yet adults, they may not feel committed to adult standards of behavior and an adult level of responsibility (p. 246).

Individuals in this transition phase, according to Arnett, may believe that as an emerging adult they have the freedom to experiment and do things that will be frowned upon once they transition out of emerging adulthood and into young adulthood.

Emerging adults see these freedoms "as part of the daring, exuberance, and license of youth" (Arnett, 2005, p. 246). During this transition period individuals face numerous developmental tasks "that must be confronted and mastered in order to make a successful transition to adulthood. Failure to master these tasks can result in frustration and stress, which

can lead to a variety of unhealthy behaviors, including increased drug use" (White, Labouvie & Papadaratsakis, 2005, p. 281). Additional risk behaviors associated with the period of emerging adulthood include binge drinking and most other kinds of substance use (Nelson & Barry, 2005). As a comparison, Nelson and Barry (2005, p. 258) state that "perceived adults claimed to be engaging in fewer risk behaviors."

Other research also points to the likelihood of an increase in drug use during the age period of emerging adulthood, and specifically during the year immediately following high school (Arnett, 2005). "It also is the most likely age period for the escalation from drug use to abuse and for the progression from 'soft' to 'hard' drugs' (Martin & White, 2005, p. 229). This period represents the time of transition to the period of emerging adulthood from adolescence. Arnett makes a claim that substance abuse rises during this time as the emerging adult moves away to college and therefore leaves the parental control behind (Arnett, 2005). Despite the available research, mostly from Arnett, "in contrast to a large and growing body of knowledge about drug initiation and use during the earlier transition from childhood to adolescence, there are large gaps in knowledge about use during the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 230).

Regarding this particular research project and the prevalence of articles related to student alcohol use, it is interesting to note that "other factors may lead to initiation or escalation of alcohol and drug use among first-year students, including student perceptions that heavy drinking and drug use are normative behaviors among college students" (White, Labouvie, et al., 2005, p. 282). White and Jackson (2005) reiterate this point in stating that "attending college may represent a special risk to emerging adults, as increases in alcohol availability and

acceptance of drinking on college campuses may lead to increases in heaving drinking among students" (p. 182).

Arnett (2005) suggests that an increase in substance abuse during this age period could also be due to the exploration of identity that takes place during this time of transitions. He bases this on individuals wanting "to have a wide range of experiences before they settle into adult life, and for some of them that means trying out substances" while others find that "constructing a stable identity can be confusing and difficult, and some emerging adults may use substances as a way of relieving their identity confusion" (p. 240).

White et al. (2005) believe that an individual's transition from the household to college creates an increased risk for problematic use of substances like alcohol and drugs for numerous reasons including "the initiation of new roles, the development of new friendship networks, separation from families and old friends, more academic choices and opportunities, more academic demands, increased independence, and less parental support, guidance, and monitoring" (p. 282).

Characteristics of emerging adulthood include independence issues, feelings of depression, identity exploration, and an increase in risk behaviors. As the individual reaches the period of young adulthood, he or she gains independence, decides his or her identity, has less feelings of depression and a decrease in risk behavior participation (Nelson & Barry, 2005).

As Settersten (2006) contends, age is "linked to personality attributes and behavioral dispositions, conceptions of the self, and processes of self-regulation, coping, and goal setting" (p. 4). In regards to what age one actually becomes an adult, Settersten maintains that many individuals give ages 18 and 21 as the beginning of adulthood and this is most likely because of the legal significance of the two ages and the responsibilities that result. One of the many studies

completed by Arnett (1998) concluded that only 31 percent of 140 respondents aged 21 to 28 indicated that reaching the age of 21 is necessary for adulthood. Reaching the age of 18 was listed as a necessity for adulthood by 39 percent of the respondents.

These two ages bring about several responsibilities in the United States such as the right to "vote, drink, marry, have consensual sex, serve in the military, or be prosecuted" (Settersten, 2006, p. 5). Although there is emphasis on the age 21 as the beginning of adulthood in the contemporary United States, at least one researcher states that there is "no single age that can define an adult even within one society, let alone on a comparative basis, because legal and social liabilities come into play at different ages," (Rogers, 1996 as cited in Irani, Place, and Mott, 2003).

Research from the Alliance for Childhood indicates that "becoming an adult in our culture corresponds to the timing of this neural integration of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Alliance for Childhood, 2007, ¶13). Other research indicates that "the stage of adulthood in the United States is often associated with the completion of high school, being gainfully employed, moving out of the parents' home, either entering into marriage or living with a significant other, and having children" (Mahaffey, 2003, p. 5).

In summary, social responsibility theory, social learning theory, and the theory of emerging adulthood are the theological lenses which will guide this body of research. Social responsibility theory charges the media with basically being responsible for their content and keeping the issues of their readers in mind at all times. Social learning theory is important because it posits that individuals often imitate what they see, read, or hear in the media. This has enormous implications for alcohol content and advertising. The theory of emerging adulthood relates to students in regards to alcohol consumption. Often students state that they have a new-

found freedom and can do what they want. However, when it is time to pay the consequences for those actions, the students state that they are still learning and are not yet an adult. These theories will continue to be discussed.

While evaluating the articles published in *The Red and Black* between January 9, 2006 and December 7, 2006, certain questions will guide the research. These questions focus on the overall tone and theme of the article and will help paint a picture of the message that the newspaper sends to students regarding alcohol. Both articles and advertising referencing alcohol will be analyzed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1: Does newspaper content in *The Red and Black* portray a positive or negative view of alcohol consumption by students?
- RQ2: Do advertisements in *The Red and Black* portray a positive or negative view of alcohol consumption by students?
- RQ3: Do the editors at *The Red and Black* take a position on alcohol consumption by students?
- RQ4: Does the position of the editors at *The Red and Black* regarding alcohol consumption by students vary from or match the overall tone of the newspaper regarding alcohol consumption by students?
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

METHODOLOGY

Editions of *The Red and Black*, the student newspaper at the University of Georgia, were analyzed beginning on January 9, 2006, and ending on December 7, 2006. This time period was chosen due to several key changes to the University regarding policy on underage alcohol consumption. Editions of the newspaper are published Monday through Friday, when classes are in session. Classes began January 9, 2006, and, therefore, the analysis began with the first issue of the year.

Although there are 220 published editions of *The Red and Black* available on the newspaper web-site during this time period, only 157 published editions are available in the archives located in the Main Library on the UGA campus. Several editions published on the web-site were Saturday or Sunday editions. The published hard-copies appear Monday through Friday. This study looked at content and advertising and, therefore, only 157 hard-copy editions were analyzed. These editions are not currently on microfilm and, therefore, I analyzed the editions given to me by the Periodical Department staff.

The newspaper pages varied between 6 and 12 pages. Some editions had up to 24 pages, with 12 pages per section. Issues with multiple sections contained a weekly section such as First and Goal, which is published during the football season. Due to the small size, and the prevalence of alcohol references throughout all sections of the paper, all sections were analyzed

with the exception of page 2, which focused on national and international news. Sections analyzed include Our Take, which represents "the majority opinions of *The Red and Black* Editorial Board" and Opinion Meter, which is a recap of the week's events and is written by an Editor. Sports, Variety, Out and About, and columns were also analyzed. There were approximately 365 articles published with references to alcohol. These numbers are skewed by the summer editions, which were only published on Thursdays, rather than the usual Monday-Friday schedule, and therefore contributed to a lower total.

This study used discourse analysis as a method of analyzing the newspaper content. "Discourse analysis, a qualitative research method, is an umbrella term for a number of different approaches to the study of language" (Harper, 2006, p. 2).

Included in the analysis are all news articles, feature articles, and editorial articles focusing on alcohol coverage. Advertising was included due to the high quantity of literature indicating the effects that businesses can have on newspaper content.

Much research has been conducted utilizing the method of discourse analysis and subsequently, numerous definitions of the term exist. Baronov (2004) posits that the term discourse "refers to the use of language within a belief system in a manner that reflects the (hidden) assumptions of that belief system" (p. 146). Renkema states that "in layman's terms, a discourse, and especially a text, is a sequence of connected sentences or utterances (the form) by which a sender communicates a message to a receiver (the function)" (Renkema, 2004, p. 32). Stillar offers another definition, stating that "discourse concerns the participants involved, the particular kinds of situations in which text plays a part, and the social systems and structures that bear upon how and what text can mean to those involved" (Stillar, 1998, p. 12). Wimmer and Dominick offer what they state is an oversimplification of the term in noting that "discourse

analysis examines the organization of language at a level of analysis beyond the clause or the sentence" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 406).

Halliday, a researcher on the theory of discourse analysis "regards language as a network of options from which language users make selections that are ideologically significant. Thus, meaning is generated from the choices made, or not made, by text producers" (Stamou, 2001, p. 657).

"Data collection in discourse analysis involves gathering examples of texts and messages that are relevant to the problem being investigated. These may consist of existing documents, such as speeches by company executives, press releases, internal memos, and advertisements" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 407). The texts and messages that are relevant to the proposed research questions are the editions of *The Red and Black* published between January 1, 2006, and December 7, 2006. Research questions are preferred over hypotheses as "most discourse analysis researchers usually have some broad and relatively open-ended questions or areas of interest" (Harper, 2006, p. 6).

Discourse analysis is a form of textual analysis. Alan McKee states that by performing a textual analysis the researcher makes an educated guess at "some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee, 2001, p. 140). It is important to note that McKee also contends that there is no correct interpretation of text. Harper expands on this in stating that due to the emphasis on language construction, no analysis of a text is seen as the only "true" reading, "rather it is presented as one possible reading of many" (Harper, 2006, p. 7).

Wimmer and Dominick state that there "is no concrete set of procedures for conducting a discourse analysis" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 406). Horsboel states that "discourse analysis does not operate with distinctions such as surface-depth, manifest-latent or hidden-

visible; it does not seek to break the codes of the text, but takes the text quite literally" (Horsboel in Dorfman, 2004, p. 181). Newspapers attempt to make sense of reality by reporting on the most important stories of the day and therefore, there is good reason for that text to be interpreted. McKee further defines textual analysis as a way to gather and analyze information in academic research.

"Media discourse is a broad term which can refer to a totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper" (O'Keeffe, 2006, p. 1). Horsboel echoes this statement in stating that "a discourse consists of statements, which do not simply describe but also produce and form reality. In that sense, a discourse is a construction of reality" (Horsboel in Dorfman, 2004, p. 173).

The importance of analyzing these editions of the student newspaper is to shed light on the significant ethical issues journalists face daily. The students working on this newspaper are in the learning process and may not consider the aspect of social responsibility, rather they may operate under the idea that they are creating and publishing a newspaper for the students and therefore the content should reflect such a purpose. "Journalists have to make choices all the time about what to put in or leave out of stories, what stories to use in newspapers or broadcasts, which stories to cover and which ones to ignore" (Frost, 2000, p. 28). These students should see the potential consequences of what articles appear in the newspaper they produce. The articles these young journalists write will be around long after these aspiring journalists have careers and leave UGA. What legacy will they leave?

Due to the longevity of these articles, it is important to analyze the text, looking for themes that may appear regarding how the staff at *The Red and Black* approaches articles related

to alcohol use by students. Whereas a public speaker may not have adequate time to choose words wisely when discussing such subjects:

The writer...may look over what he has already written, pause between each word...take his time in choosing a particular word, even looking it up in the dictionary if necessary, check his progress with his notes, record what he has written, and even change his mind about what he wants to say (Brown, 1983, p. 5).

While there are various definitions of what discourse analysis is, Horsboel (2004) states that:

Discourse analysis investigates culture – it investigates the webs of significance that people spin and have spun around themselves, and it investigates how knowledge-about-the-world, social relations and social identities inform and are informed by inter-human practices. If the conceptual specialization of discourse analysis does not, in the end, add any insights into the formation of social meaning, it loses its significance (p. 172).

This form of qualitative analysis seeks to identify the themes in the text. Wimmer and Dominick make the claim that "Data analysis usually consists of focusing on large segments of language in order to identify key words, themes, imagery, and patterns in the text" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 407). "Discourse analysis does not regard a statement or a point of view as isolated," states Horsboel, "but tries to assign it to a larger context" (Horsboel in Dorfman, 2004, p. 173).

As Wimmer and Dominick state, I will "pay special attention to the context of the language, examining such factors as who is speaking, the circumstances surrounding the message, and the intended audience" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 407). The idea is to

analyze front page news, institutional editorial opinion, columns, the Out and About Section, and advertising.

One of the limitations of discourse analysis is the small sample sizes used for the research (Harper, 2006, p. 8). "A standard response to this in qualitative research is to state that one's analysis only applies to the sample studied" (Harper, 2006, p. 8). Harper also states that another limitation to discourse analysis is the fact that the method is not a simple technique to learn or apply.

Journalism focuses intensely on language, yet "it rarely tells the whole story. Consequently, discourse analysis should be supplemented by other qualitative techniques, such as observation or focus group interviewing" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 408). Up to ten staff members currently working at *The Red and Black* will also be interviewed, one-on-one, following a pre-determined and approved set of questions thru the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board. Project number 2007-10522-0 was authorized by 45 CFR 46.110(a) on Tuesday, March 20, 2007. The responses to the interview questions of seven staff members have been analyzed for themes and subsequently compared to the themes emerging from the article and advertisement analysis.

PROCEDURES

Various staff members at *The Red and Black* were asked to participate in a one-on-one in-depth interview as part of a study on college newspapers. Potential participants received an informational letter outlining the details of the study. Participants were informed of the voluntary role of their participation in the study and any potential risks involved in participating. Informed consent was received from all participants before the interview process began.

Interviewing the staff members at the newspaper is important for several reasons. First, *The Red and Black* is a student-run newspaper published independent of the University. Therefore, there is no funding coming in from the University to support the product. The students who work for the newspaper are given the responsibility of making their own decisions on what to publish and what advertisements to accept for the publication. Second, the newspaper is distributed free of charge, and therefore all of the revenue coming into the newspaper is a result of advertising. This has the potential to cause a huge problem if an advertiser threatens to pull an advertisement based on content appearing in the newspaper. The newspaper needs to make money; but, the newspaper also must serve the community in which it is published. The advertising placed in the newspaper may conflict with the journalistic tone and editorial position of the newspaper.

The interview involved a set of 12 pre-determined questions and lasted approximately 30 minutes to 45 minutes per person. All interviews were in a one-on-one format with the researcher. The interviews were tape-recorded and extensive notes were taken throughout the interview.

The participants are identified herein only as a staff member at *The Red and Black*. Following the final write-up of this research, the audio tapes will be destroyed. Before that time, all audio tapes, written notes, and signed consent forms containing any identifying information of the respondents will be kept secure in a locked drawer. Respondents were identified by a number in all transcriptions of interview notes. The respondents will not be identifiable in any way in the final write-up.

The respondents will be questioned regarding their perception on society's condemnation of alcohol content and the overall attitude and tone regarding the culture of alcohol at the

University. Questions attempt to determine if there is a Code of Ethics or Statement of Policy for dealing with such real-world ethical dilemmas as advertising versus content. Questions were also posed concerning what, if any, effect the administration has had on the content of the newspaper as well as what effect recent deaths in the University community related to alcohol and drugs has had on the content.

This is a study looking at a case of young journalists who are learning the realities of the market and the fact that any content published in the newspaper has the ability to offend advertisers, who may choose to pull their advertisements in protest against that content. This study will also attempt to uncover the policies and codes in place at *The Red and Black* regarding how to handle stories related to alcohol use by students. Obviously the policy and/or code will differ when dealing with hard news stories related to alcohol use by students. But, what conversations take place when discussing ideas for entertainment stories related to this important issue? Vestergaard (2004) makes a good point regarding the choices that must be made in a newsroom relating to space available versus news available:

The number of events happening around us every day is of course infinite, whereas there are limitations of space on the number of events a single newspaper could report. News workers have to make choices, then and these choices are naturally and inevitably conditioned by the fact that news is a commodity produced by an industry for consumption on the mass market, where it will compete with other mass cultural products for consumers' attention. Not everything that happens therefore stands the same chance of becoming transformed into a "news story" let alone of hitting the front page. (p. 308)

How do these young journalists wrestle with the ethics and responsibility of running a newspaper?

Human Subjects

Ten staff members at *The Red and Black* were contacted for participation in this study. Not all staff members who were contacted agreed to participate.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Alcohol advertising is prevalent in the pages of *The Red and Black*. The newspaper editions were analyzed from January 9, 2006, to December 7, 2006. During this time 441 alcohol advertisements appeared in the student newspaper, which amounts to almost three advertisements per edition. Out of the 157 editions which were analyzed, 147 of those contained alcohol advertisements. This means that almost 94 percent of the editions analyzed contained advertisements with references to alcohol. While some editions did not include alcohol advertisements at all, other editions included six or more alcohol advertisements. *The Red and Black* usually runs as a 6-page paper, however, some editions are extended to 8 or 12 pages. On occasion the newspaper had two sections with 8 to 12 pages each. This occurs when another section is added, such as the Out and About section and the First and Goal section that runs during football season.

Only advertisements which referenced alcohol were included in these totals. Advertisements for DUI defense lawyers and bail bonds were not included, though it is worth noting that they too were prevalent in the pages of *The Red and Black*. The advertisements discussed below did not just appear once in one single edition of the newspaper. Often the advertisements appeared in several editions and sometimes over the course of several months. Many establishments advertise in the student newspaper consistently every month. Sometimes

the establishments would use the same advertisement as the previous month, and sometimes the advertisement was altered to showcase a new drink special or an upcoming event that the bar wanted to promote.

The Red and Black publishes a code for advertisements in its rate card. A portion of this code states that:

The Red and Black reserves the right to regulate typographical tone, subject matter, form, size, wording and illustrations of all advertisements, and to reject or revise copy which it considers objectionable. *The Red and Black* reserves the right to print "Advertisement" above any advertisement that closely resembles editorial matter (p. 11).





Alcohol advertisements appearing in *The Red and Black* employ several methods in which to attract student patrons to their establishment. Throughout the analysis, four methods emerged, which include the promotion of drink specials, utilizing giveaways and merchandise with the purchase of a drink, banking off popular television shows, and the promotion of special events and holiday events. Before I discuss advertisements related to these categories, I will discuss the placement of these advertisements, specifically above the crossword and sudoku puzzles.

Placement

In regards to advertisement placement, the 2006-2007 online rate card for *The Red and Black* states: "No page position can be guaranteed or sold, but requests for position will be honored when possible" (Rate card, 2007, p. 11). However, the advertisement department does sell advertisements specifically for their crossword and sudoku puzzles, which run daily in the newspaper. Early in the semester the newspaper placed their own advertisements, mostly below the sudoku puzzles, calling for advertisers to inquire about sponsoring one of the puzzles. These advertisements were prevalent when the newspaper first began running sudoku puzzles.

Throughout several editions of *The Red and Black*, staff members make various comments that the sudoku and crossword puzzles are the most read parts of the newspaper. "Come on, we know students only pick up *The Red and Black* for sudoku and the crossword." It could be that the staff member is making a joke; however those words appeared in a September edition of Opinion Meter, the weekly wrap-up of the events of the week. Based on this, it is interesting to note the almost constant appearance of alcohol advertisements either below or above the crossword and sudoku puzzles, and sometimes in both locations. More on the

solicitation of sponsors for these puzzles is discussed in the section outlining the findings from the interviews of the staff members.

Advertisers know that students will stare at that portion of the newspaper for quite some time. Often students can be seen in class with just a puzzle ripped from the newspaper. The remainder of the publication might be thrown away and never looked at again, but that portion of one page stays in their notebook, textbook, or wherever else while the student tries to finish the puzzle. Subsequently, the advertisement that is placed above or below that puzzle, and sometimes in both locations, also stays with the student.

Method 1: Drink Specials

There is a significant amount of research which correlates alcohol advertisements with the likelihood of consumption. Research referenced in the theory section of this paper shows "consistent evidence of the influence of an advertisement offering discounted prices on beer and wine, with significant effects on attitude toward the ad and bar, intentions to patronize the bar, and consumption estimates for self and others" (Christie et al., 2001, p. 250). The majority of the alcohol references in advertisements appearing in *The Red and Black* are promoting drink specials.

Often the advertisements promoted both drink specials and live music at the same time. Some of the advertisements were published with images of drink glasses, like margarita or wine glasses, or black silhouettes of women. The silhouettes mostly appeared on advertisements promoting "Ladies Night." The drink specials offered in the advertisements varied from "Coors Light 6 for \$6" to "\$1 drafts."

"Dollar night," "power hour," and "happy hour" are all some of the popular ways that bars attract drinkers. Though the exact hours and nights of the week vary with different

establishments, happy hour usually takes place from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. when power hour kicks off until 11 p.m. Specials are offered only during certain times and the price of the drink will likely increase as the night goes on. This encourages patrons to get downtown earlier than they might usually visit a bar. The bars also frequently celebrate their "birthday" or "anniversary" with drink specials. Drink specials for The Winery's 10th anniversary event in November were one of the advertisements which employed this method. The most alarming drink special appeared in an April advertisement. One bar advertised a 34 ounce "fishbowl" drink for \$7.

In August as students returned to campus and new freshman were introduced to Athens, bars advertised "Welcome back specials." Some bars advertised trivia nights sponsored by Bud, poker, darts, giveaways and pitchers of beer starting at \$3 as well as karaoke and open mic nights. In November one bar advertised pitchers of beer for \$2 between the hours of 8 p.m. and 9 p.m.

The research clearly points to the fact that alcohol advertisements by bars for promotions and drink discounts may influence the heavy consumption of alcohol by college students (Christie et al., 2001). However, the pages of the student newspaper are full of these types of advertisements.

Method 2: Freebies Attract Students

College students love a good deal and also love receiving free stuff. As students we are showered with freebies all the time. The seats of Stegeman Coliseum are showered with t-shirts and beanies as gifts to students attending home basketball games. The seats of Sanford Stadium are covered with red pom poms to wave to the team. The dining halls consistently give away items at their special dinners. Bars have picked up on this and have found ways to use it for their advantage.

A few local bars consistently advertise the give-away of a free t-shirt with the purchase of a pre-determined shot on a specific night of the week. For example, J.R.'s Baitshack offers patrons a free t-shirt with the tropical kamikaze shot while the Arch Bar advertised in an October ad that patrons who purchased a \$6 shot would receive a free t-shirt. Molly O'Shea's Irish Pub advertised "free wings while you drink."

Other bars advertised \$.50 well drinks for ladies during Ladies Night. Monday night isn't the most popular night to go out and drink, so bars often advertised steep discounts such as \$.50 drafts and drinks to allure patrons. Another bar advertised \$1 glasses of wine for ladies on Monday nights, while "Ask about our souvenir drink specials" was the call from another popular downtown bar. One bar even raffled off a regulation-sized foosball table. All you had to do to receive a ticket is purchase a Miller Light product and you had to be present for the midnight drawing.

The research shows that advertisements for drink specials are likely to attract students to patronize the bar and increase consumption levels. The majority of the advertisements appearing in *The Red and Black* that reference alcohol promotes these drink specials. The research also shows that these advertisements are likely to increase binge drinking (Christie et al., 2001). Method 3: Bank Off Popular TV

Over the year several television shows have captured the target college audience. Popular shows are big hits among students, especially ladies. Often a group of ladies will get together to watch a favorite show. Bars like to capitalize on this trend.

One such advertisement looked like this: "Ladies Night, come watch the O.C. with us -\$.50 champagne and \$1 domestics during the O.C." While the O.C. aired on the popular hangout night, Thursday, it came on at 9:00 p.m. Most bars don't start to get busy until after 10:00 p.m.

Therefore, this was a way for bars to bring in more patrons earlier in the evening. Other advertisements included drink specials for patrons who came to the bar to watch Grey's Anatomy, which used to air on Sunday evenings. Most students prefer to stay in on Sunday evening rather than going downtown, but having this special event is a way to get them downtown and into the bar. Not only did the bars offer drink specials during the show, some even offered free pizza to patrons.

Bars need patrons to be successful. The bars want to get customers through the door earlier than usual and on nights that are not popular hangout nights. One way that they do this is to offer drink specials and free food under the concept of watching a popular television show together. Ladies get their friends together and head to the bar, earlier than usual and maybe even on a night they aren't likely to go downtown at all. They watch the show and drink. Method 4: Special Events and Holidays

The prevalence of alcohol advertising in *The Red and Black* grew during the time period of special events such as Valentines Day in February and Halloween in October. Bars want patrons to be aware of their parties and drink specials occurring during those holidays and, therefore, advertise more often.

For Mardi Gras in February, several bars advertised parties and drink specials. One such special appears to encourage binge drinking, as Bourbon Street advertised a 64-ounce "fishbowl" drink for \$8. Unless it was a typo, the same bar advertised an 84-ounce "fishbowl" drink for \$8 a few days after the initial advertisement appeared in the newspaper.

"Bacardi Girl Bar Call" took place at the Arch Bar in September. Patrons were encouraged to come out and vote for their favorite girl. Ballots cost \$10 and included a donation to a local charity and a drink. September also brought the UGA Championship American

Beerpong Association of America tournament, which was hosted at a local bar and advertised in *The Red and Black*. October saw the advertisements for Halloween parties and costume contests. The Arch Bar even advertised that the individual winners of a group costume contest would receive a free bar tab.

Advertisers in *The Red and Black* don't stop with just special events and holidays. The establishments utilize other avenues for attracting students. They know that students love football. On days when a game is not being played at home, these bars want fans in their establishment. So, they advertise how many big screen televisions are in the bar. In September, the newspaper published the following advertisement from Wild Wings Café: "Saturday UGA @ MISS – 18 TVs. 2 HD big screens, 33 flavors of wings, 20 brews on tap, don't miss our post game parties with lots of drink specials!"

SUMMARY OF ADVERTISING FINDINGS

The alcohol advertisements appearing in the pages of *The Red and Black* between January 9, 2006, and December 7, 2006, employed at least four methods to entice student patrons into their establishments. These methods include the advertisement of drink specials, giveaways and free food, utilizing popular television shows, and promoting special events and holiday events.

These methods often were used in an attempt to draw student's downtown either earlier than they normally would patron a bar or on a night in which students do not typically frequent downtown, such as Sunday night. Christie et al., (2001) states that heavy alcohol consumption by college students can be influenced by discounts and specials offered by bars. This body of research also points out that those advertisements for drink specials are more favorable in

attitudes and intentions than similar advertisements for discounts on food items (Christie et al., 2001).

ARTICLE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Three hundred and sixty five articles were analyzed in this study. Headlines for all of the articles referencing alcohol from the available editions were recorded. The articles were printed and analyzed for content, theme and tone. During the analysis several themes emerged. The themes include discussion of policy, social training, editorial rebuttals, advocacy for drinking, being big brother, and irresponsibility. Discussion of these themes will include examples from the newspaper articles.





The Death of Lewis Rockwell Fish

The spike in the number of articles referencing alcohol between January 2006 and February 2006 is most likely attributed to the sudden and tragic death of University freshman, Lewis Rockwell Fish. An autopsy determined that Fish died from a lethal combination of cocaine, heroine, and alcohol. Articles related to the death of Fish contained headlines such as: "Freshman dies in Russell Hall: Death appears to be alcohol-related, police say," "Fish dead from mixture of heroin, cocaine and alcohol," and "Friend with Fish the night he died turns himself in." The death lead to numerous arrests of University students and several alcohol and drug-related charges, which were all covered in articles published by the student newspaper. Theme 1: Policy

The staff members at *The Red and Black* wrote numerous articles touching on University policy issues. The stories focused mainly on the recent policy changes made by the UGA administration in regards to student alcohol use. The theme of policy can further be broken down into discussion of the administration and discussion of the proposed amnesty policy.

The tragic death of Fish closely followed a new ordinance passed which stated that students found to be a minor in possession of alcohol will be taken to jail rather than given a citation. This new ordinance coupled with the death of a student led many on the UGA campus to fight for an amnesty or immunity policy for students seeking medical attention after a night of drinking. Based on the types of articles published, the student newspaper appears to be leading that crusade.

In March a statement in the Our Take section asks for "a bill that grants immunity from arrest for underage persons who report being sick or having a sick friend." In the column "Univ. alcohol policy not best solution," which appeared in a March edition, the author offered statistics

stating that "88.9 percent of University undergrads consumed alcohol in 2005" according to University Health Center Statistics and "60.5 percent had been binge drinking at least two weeks prior to the survey." The article also outlines the number of alcohol-related deaths occurring among college students each year.

Stories promoting an amnesty policy reappeared in *The Red and Black* in August with "Univ. studies amnesty policy: Student affairs office studying alcohol policy proposal." In that same month, the Editorial Board began discussing the issue again in the Our Take section and agreed that: "The University's administrators probably designed its policy to scare underage students from participating in the party culture...The University should heed the words of SGA and approve the amnesty policy to avoid seeing any more body bags carried out of Russell Hall." Exhibiting a bit of defiance, the Editorial Board also wrote: "Administrators should want their students to be safe...If they rule the campus with an iron fist, the underage-drinking students will simply continue to rebel like they rebelled against their parents in high school."

In September *The Red and Black* published six articles referencing an amnesty policy. An Editorial Board opinion published in early September regarding the amnesty policy states: "although college is a time to experiment, it shouldn't be a time to see how many shots it takes to end up in the emergency room, followed by how many trips to the E.R. it takes to get kicked out of the University."

The Editorial Board wrote a lot about the amnesty policy issue in the Our Take section and the Opinion Meter. In September the members of the Editorial Board asked the question: "Should one underage drunkard or one underage hospital patient getting his or her stomach pumped be punished by the University?" While applauding the administration for discussing the amnesty issue, the staff members state that: "the administration should remember that college is

a place of learning, and many younger students haven't learned the true meaning of the word 'tolerance'."

While it seems as though the Editorial Board is asking for the administration to listen to them and read their words, in the very same issue of the Opinion Meter as the previous example the staff members mock University President Mike Adams. The staff members at *The Red and Black* give thanks to University President Mike Adams for sitting down with them to discuss issues facing the University by saying: "Let's do it again soon, maybe over a pint or a nice glass of Scotch. We're over 21, so it's all good."

Theme 2: Social Training

Several articles appearing in the student newspaper between January 9, 2006, and December 7, 2006, are written in a somewhat of a teaching tone. The stories discuss where to go for the best margarita or at which bar you can find the best music. The theme of social training can be broken down into several subcategories. These include games, bars, trivia nights, sex, music, food and the Internet.

Related to the first sub-theme, stories on games appearing in *The Red and Black* include almost everything from drinking games to darts. In March the newspaper published an article titled "Mercury Lounge hosts first wine, art show" and stated that the venue will offer a "TV at the bar for customers to play video games while they drink." That same edition saw another article titled "Athens pub offers dart games, league for locals" and stated that darts provide "a unique experience to draw people into the pub." The author quoted someone as saying that "you drink a beer, throw darts, and have fun."

The article which inspired this thesis ran in August. "Guide to drinking game basics" leads with: "If you're a naïve freshman or have been living in sober seclusion since age 16 or

perhaps both the college social scene can be rather overwhelming with all it has to offer in the realm of inebriation, and never more so than when the aspect of fierce competition is thrown into the mix." The article stated that "it's vitally important to know the core essentials of drinking games so that you don't seem like a total loser in the commonest of college social settings, a party." The columnist outlined the equipment necessary and rules for such drinking games as Beer Pong and Flip Cup.

This article ran in third issue of the new semester. In the first three issues of the new semester, 11 stories ran with references to alcohol or with alcohol as the main subject. August is the beginning of a new academic year and the entry of thousands of new students to campus. It is fitting then that the student newspaper would target these new students with various articles. However, it is questionable why 49 articles published in August contained references to alcohol.

In the fourth issue the staff members reference drinking games again in their Opinion Meter with the following address to students:

Michael Adams isn't a good flip cup partner. Rodney Bennett probably won't be playing beer pong with freshman either. The Out and About article on barhopping was meant to be taken with several grains of salt, followed by a shot. *The Red and Black* in no way encourages underage consumption. But, for those of legal drinking age, come join us for happy hour tomorrow.

The statement regarding the article on barhopping is in reference to a story that ran in the same issue as the beer-drinking game story. This will begin the discussion of the second sub-theme on bars. In "Any given Thursday: Downtown bar scene uncovered" a columnist went on a tour of downtown. The lead states: "Chris, 22, and on his eighth beer upon departure, and Charles, 21, are appreciative of the fact that my journalist duties are – as they often are – a

perfect excuse and vehicle for their own debaucherous exploits." He outlined his job as this: "I need to experience a sufficient cross-section of the various bar styles in downtown Athens." As he hopped from bar to bar downtown, his drink total reached at least nine drinks, while one of his companions consumed at least ten. All of this is detailed in the article.

The same day that the previously mentioned article ran in the newspaper, another article ran which publicized the opening of a new bar downtown. The article highlighted the features and drink specials.

"Bars may be different, songs sound the same" took the reader on a tour of what types of songs are played at what types of bars. This closely follows the article "Where to rock out in Athens," which also appeared in the first published edition. This article featured a description of almost every bar downtown and all listed the age requirements for access.

Other stories written about bars include "Sunday marks close of mainstay Lunch Paper," which appeared in a September edition and informed readers about a bar downtown, owned by a former University student, that would be closing after 12 years of business. As employment issues arose, the owner thought "What am I good at?" I'm good at talking to people. I'm good at drinking...And I certainly was an expert on drinking and on Athens nightlife." In this same issue another article appeared referencing alcohol. "Bar to celebrate birthday in style" stated that "Tasty World has given a lot to the Athens community in the past nine years" and that the bar would be holding a birthday celebration. "Piano men 'duel' with ballads: Library hosts weekly event" also appeared in a September issue and highlighted an event taking place a local bar. In that same issue "Domenick's promises OK grub" which leds with "Athens' newest bar and grill, Domenick's Pub and Grub, is a great hangout already famous for its biscuits 'n beer on gamedays."

In October one columnist went on a crusade to find the best margarita in town. This resulted in a story highlighting four different establishments and a "taste test" of at least nine different margaritas.

Apart from drinking games and bars, the stories analyzed also outlined the details of the popular trivia nights in Athens. This is the third sub-theme in this category. The Out and About section is home to many of these stories. The trivia night events are held at various locations around town, including Loco's Pub and Grill, Wild Wing Café, the Taco Stand, Blind Pig Tavern, and Jigsy's. Each of these venues sell alcohol. All of the locations offer prizes to the winners, some which include a gift certificate for a bar tab and free beer.

There were several trivia night articles published during the time period analyzed, but one such article appeared in October and was titled "Trivia brings friends together." References to alcohol include: "Budweiser and Bud Light specials during the game" at Wild Wing Café and "for students 21 or older, there are drawings for beer between rounds" at Amici's. "Useless info could help in the future" appeared in October and references trivia nights: "Even bar-hopping alcoholics have a motivation to follow my philosophy. One evening you may find yourself at trivia night. You can win free beer, if you know the right stuff."

Articles falling under the theme of social training have discussed drinking games, bars and trivia nights. The newspaper staff doesn't stop there. The staff members also write and publish articles about sex and this is the fourth sub-theme of the larger theme of social training. The newspaper devotes a large portion of their editorial page to the subject of sex. The Sex in the Classic City column runs regularly throughout the semester. With each appearance a subject is discussed by a male and a female columnist.

On August 18, 2006, "Guess what? You just became the wingman. Time to fall on a grenade," was published and focused on giving advice to students. The article stated that:

To find the youngest, drunkest people in Athens, go to Bourbon Street, the bar on the corner of Jackson and Broad. It's usually packed with freshmen, which can be both a blessing and a curse, depending on what you are looking for that night.

The article then proceeded to give advice to single men on campus such as "do buy her drinks" but "don't buy too many" and "do enjoy the beverages – it loosens you up" but "don't overindulge." The columnist also advocated for playing drinking games before heading downtown.

The columns appearing in under the headline Sex in the Classic City are usually lighthearted attempts to distribute dating advice to the student population. In one article "Guys: Here's how to pick up a lady," the author implies that ladies are always picked up downtown. He begins his column with "You walk in to a bar and scan left to right looking for your buddies" and suggests one should "get a sidewalk table downtown and watch the body language of other guys flirting with girls."

Sometimes the topics attempt to be focus on the more serious aspects of relationships, such as the concept of compromising. "Concessions essential when dating," written in February, discusses how relationships require compromises such as when one has to "drink cheap liquor instead of top-shelf." The article also talks about how if one purchases a smoothie for \$10 it "better make me skinnier and give a good buzz." And that "playing poker, drinking, going to the club or whatever it is guys do during these testosterone-filled nights represent the male need to regroup, conspire and lament the life they once had without girlfriends." A February Sex in the

Classic City article titled "How to be a manly man" instructed the male reader to "take drinks, not shots."

Published in March, "Nice girls finish last" talks about how girls who send a "shy smile to the guy across the bar gets nothing but a returned smile and a nice view of his back, while the girl who's just thrown her drink at her boyfriend for hugging a gal pal has him chasing after her down Broad Street." In the same edition of *The Red and Black*, the article titled "Guys seek attraction" began with the following sentence: "The vodka-scented ice cube ricocheted across my face and fell to the floor."

One Sex in the Classic City column took on the subject of good manners when dating. "Chivalry, schmivalry" discussed why, in the eyes of a male, chivalry "has gone the way of the virgin on college campuses." The author asks the question, "Why spend the time and money taking a girl to Last Resort, when a 1:45 a.m. Vodka Tonic at City Bar and a 2:15 a.m. smile at the cab stand will get you to at least the same base and often further?"

Another column subject focused on the commitment required for dating. In April, a Sex in the Classic City column titled "Commitment scares guys away" stated that "find a hook-up is only a matter of several tequila shots paired with a bar downtown. I still have faith in the hearts of my opposite sex, but I guess I'll just have to expect nothing more than whistles and drunken offers until the phobias disappear."

Also appearing in April, "Top ten reasons to protect yourself" is full of references to alcohol such as "Maybe it's faith in his partner or her drunkenness, but sometimes the condom is left out of the equation," and "Speaking of embarrassment, imagine you drunkenly take home the sketchy guy from class and inherit whatever he has."

As one columnist with *The Red and Black* was preparing to graduate, he decided to write "Final farewell with confessions" in which he stated that he spent a night "in the bushes on North Campus" with a friend who liked someone else. He wrote that "fortunately for me, Whiskey Bar made sure both that you didn't care I wasn't him and that I didn't care you wished it had been him." The reference made stated that this occurred during the columnist's sophomore year of college.

Articles referencing alcohol and pertaining to the sub-theme of sex also appeared as columns on the opinions page. In May, one columnist wrote an article titled "College isn't providing life clarity" and stated that "Anyone who talks to me for longer than 10 minutes (especially if beer is involved) has heard my ranting and raving against marriage." In response to this column, another columnist wrote "the modern chase has become a barrage of drunken hook ups, crudely remembered make-out sessions and seemingly effortless bar chitchat." The columnist continued with, "Good wine and genuine conversation has been replaced by cheap beer and superficial dialogue, whose sole purpose is to guarantee sexual gratification at the end of the evening."

The fifth sub-theme of social training is music. It's no secret that music is a huge deal in Athens. However, *The Red and Black* often covers the music scene with references to alcohol. The Out and About section of the newspaper, which typically runs on Thursdays, often features events taking place downtown. The stories highlight such bar venues as Last Call for their country music nights and the Arch bar and Aroma's for their wine tasting events as well as other bars that "offer an alternative to downtown" meaning they aren't located downtown. Articles published also inform readers of which venues and bars downtown are being remodeled and discuss the drink specials offered such as \$2 pints of beer. An article published in February

highlighted the second annual Terrapin Jamfest. Terrapin Beer Company is located in Athens, Georgia and a local brewery is scheduled to open in mid 2007.

Another article coupling music with beer appeared in March. "Brew Fest 11" lead: Liquor stores usually are closed on Sundays, leaving patrons high and dry. But for the past 10 years, one Sunday in spring brings the Classic City Brew Fest, a beer festival in which attendees sample more than 100 regional and international beer styles and meet the brewers while listening to live music.

This article was followed by a column titled "Brewfest fun, but not my style" in which the columnist stated "I think something's wrong with me. I don't like beer."

Sometimes the articles published with this theme of social training incorporated more than one sub-theme. "Make the most of college experience" is a column that encourages students to "make traditions with your friends. Whether it is drinking a bottle of wine watching '24' every week" and "go to live music downtown. Although before you go you may want to practice holding a beer and doing the head bob in the mirror." The article also states that one should not "go to the exact same bars with the same group to hear the same music and see the same people Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. At least switch up the bars a bit."

The first edition for the month of May featured two articles highlighting events to take place at downtown bars. The first article publicized live music at Last Call, the only bar in town that allows underage students access, which is no longer in business. The second article publicized one bar taking over the space of another.

Stories referencing music and alcohol weren't limited to the Out and About section of the newspaper. A story appearing in the Variety section referencing alcohol appeared in a September

issue. "Venue blends music, merlot" and highlights The Melting Point and the "half-priced bottles of wine" offered to patrons.

The sixth sub-theme under the larger theme of social training is food. The Editorial Board made a comment on a recently published book by a physician who outlined diets and exercise plans based on blood type. The opinion of the newspaper was: "we suggest a new grading scale based on personality type to achieve a better collective GPA. Those who are outgoing and party often should be highly rewarded for their fervent dancing and supporting local businesses." A separate edition of the Opinion Meter also appearing in March stated the following:

Regular or decaf?

All those years of thinking coffee was bad for you may be in the past. According to some scholarly people at Harvard, there actually might be health benefits to drinking coffee. It seems that every year another food or drink is declared good for you that was previously considered harmful – eggs, chocolate or red wine ring a bell? What's next? Alcohol is brain food? Woo academic rigor!

February saw the publication of an article titled "Festival celebrates food, wine" which informed readers about the Taste of Athens festival in which attendees could "try food and wine from a variety of places all in one setting." Restaurants listed also double as bars, including Amici's and Copper Creek Brewing Company. Three days later an article appeared titled "Latenight restaurants satisfy students' cravings" and the lead stated that "after students quench their thirst for drinks downtown, many want to feed another need – hunger." Students were quoted as saying, "You're always going to have the drunk munchies." The author wrote that "those who have been drinking at the bars most of the night might want to switch to something non-alcoholic

to sober up." Issues with these late night establishments include "belligerent and drunk" customers.

"Late night munchers find solace in Athens" appeared in the same edition and led with: "Almost everyone's been there. It's 2 a.m., the bar's kicked everyone out, many patrons have had one drink (or five) too many and the first thought that comes to mind is, 'I'm so hungry'!" The article steers new students toward places to eat that are near local bars downtown.

The seventh and final sub-theme is the Internet. Throughout this section *The Red and Black* has published stories on games, bars, trivia nights, sex, music and food. However, the writers with the student newspaper have also offered social training in regards to surfing the World Wide Web.

The article Internet and alcohol do not mix" discusses how one person, named Joe, spent nights in the college computer lab "doing one of a few things – sleeping, eating or Facebooking." The columnist then writes that "Joe represents just one of many college students, myself included, who have started the growing trend of intoxicated Internet usage, especially Facebooking while drunk." This author goes on to describe how the "norm" went from drunk dialing a friend to drunk Facebooking a friend and openly admits that "drunk Facebooking is a fine art which myself and countless others have perfected to a tee," followed by "an unintelligible language comes out in a drunken state from lack of coordination or the occasional passing out on the keyboard." The author closes out the column by stating that "All I can say is that it might be wise to think twice before sitting down at that computer after returning from power hour and those 3 SoCo and lime shots."

The Red and Black devotes a lot of space to giving students advice on one topic or another. This social training can be good or bad depending on the actual advice given. The theme

of social training incorporated seven smaller sub-themes which had references to alcohol. These sub-themes are games, bars, trivia nights, sex, music, food and the Internet. With all of the references to alcohol appearing in these articles it seems as though the student newspaper focuses on the party culture in giving advice. The advice on what to do and where to go focuses on alcohol venues. Games to play also focus on alcohol venues and even the mention of food has alcohol references.

Theme 3: Editorial Rebuttal

The Editorial Board writes opinions in the student newspaper in the Our Take section. This section represents the majority opinion of the student staff members serving on the Editorial Board. The group also writes the Opinion Meter, which is a summary of the events of the week. Often, these sections are written in reference to something the administration has said or done, or something major that has occurred on campus recently. Time and again, these sections include sarcastic alcohol references. Sub-themes within the theme of editorial rebuttal include articles appearing in the Our Take section of the paper and the "Opinion Meter." Articles are also written with a tone of ridicule in regards to the administration and others in power positions at the University and also when discussing football.

The Opinion Meter repeatedly puts a sarcastic and humorous spin on the recap of the week's events. Here is one example:

The University's administration make it no secret they want more academic rigor and less drinking and partying.

Unfortunately, not everyone within the University System seems to be in line with this plan. The joker who makes up the Galileo password every so often must be getting his kicks: the current password is pint.

A Librarian wrote a letter, which was published in the Mailbox section of the newspaper, stating that publishing the secret password on the opinion page was not the best idea. The staff members replied by publishing in the Opinion Meter that "we must fulfill our public service duties and inform students that the new password is...Jagermeister."

This satire continues in almost every edition of the Opinion Meter. In one February edition, the staff members commented on a story in which the president and CEO of Radio Shack was caught lying about his past employment history. The comment followed as: "But really, if you're going to lie, then make sure you can back it up. At least saying you're a wine connoisseur (a.k.a. attend lots of happy hours) is credible."

Editions of the Opinion Meter also include a reference to an alcohol advertisement in February. The Editorial Board quoted a joint advertisement from The Firehouse and The Winery. The advertisement stated: "Everybody hates you, nobody loves you, might as well get drunk." The staff went on to comment as saying "looks like we'll be stuck sipping Godivia chocolate martinis with all the other lonely singles for another year." Godivia chocolate martini's happened to be the drink special offered by those two bars for Valentine's Day.

When the staff members at *The Red and Black* aren't employing humor and satire in their editorial section, they write in a way which implies that drinking is common and the norm at UGA. In an Our Take article the Editorial Board writes that thousands of underage students head downtown each night to "drink, and drink, and drink." They also publish such facts as "most University students (88.9 percent) drink."

The Editorial Board published another article in an October edition of Our Take titled "Security breach" and stated: "You don't have to be a naïve University freshman to think underage drinking is a problem unique to Athens and the University." The Editorial Board makes

suggestions on ways to curb underage drinking by making it harder for underage patrons to purchase alcohol. The board also states that "underage drinking is a problem that starts in high school."

The perception that alcohol is the norm on campus also crept its way into an Opinion Meter article. In an attempt to cover politics in Athens, the article featured a short statement in response to a politician's lack of communication with the student press. The following statement appeared in the newspaper:

We have devised a solution to our inability to converse with Athens senatorial hopeful Bill Coswert – key party. We'll bring the beer, his camp can name the time and maybe the University's administration will come to check IDs to make sure no one is drinking underage. That way, Coswert will be able to truly understand what issues his constituency is interested in.

In response to criticism that the newspaper staff received from readers and the administration, the staff members felt the need to discuss the "blame game" of who's responsible for the alcohol and drug problems at the University. While discussing this blame game, they again chose to use words and statistics which painted a picture that drinking is the normative behavior at UGA. A March edition of Our Take put it this way: "the majority of University students drink – many to the point of blacking out – and they enjoy it." The editorial board points out that discussing the issue is the first step to combating it. And staff then encourages students to talk about the issue: "There is an open forum on April 5 to address the University's policy changes and get student input on alcohol consumption on campus. From there it's up to the individual – the individual student, professor, parent, alum, bar owner and fraternity brother – to recognize the problem and promote safe and responsible drinking."

Two days after the previous message appeared in the Our Take section of the newspaper, the Opinion Meter section sang a different tune:

Drinky drinky. On Wednesday there will be an alcohol forum on campus for students to voice their opinions about the University's alcohol policy.

Coincidentally, Terrapin Beer Co. is hosting a beer dinner at Farm 255 that same night. During the event, attendees will eat a five-course meal, with a different beer served at each course.

So which will have a better turn out: talking about alcohol or drinking alcohol? We're guessing the latter.

In April the Opinion Meter took on the administration's new policy stating that first offenders of the alcohol policy would have their parents' notified, be required to attend a mandatory alcohol education class, and be put on probation for that semester and the next two semesters, and summer semester does not count. The opinion of the newspaper was this: "Before you know it, you'll be suspended for other misdemeanors, such as jay walking or parking in a handicapped zone."

A May edition of the Opinion Meter seemed to be written with a bit of defiance:

No more drunk, obnoxious Georgia...students?

University administrators tightened the reins on hard-core football tailgaters and placed harder underage drinking restrictions on students. Despite all of the University's efforts, UGA will probably still be on Playboy's top 10 party schools next year. Athens' traditional party culture won't disappear over the summer.

The Red and Black's Editorial Board expressed its somewhat defiant and defensive opinion regarding the administration's handling of alcohol policy. In the same manner, the staff

members expressed distaste in an early September edition of Our Take article for the way the administration was handling the crusade to try and eliminate or decrease the party culture atmosphere at UGA. The issue was with a letter sent to faculty staff members at the University urging them "not to be afraid to schedule a test on Fridays, consider having an attendance policy, not to joke about alcohol and to refer students believed to have a problem with drugs or alcohol to the University Health Center." The Editorial Board responded to these requests by writing that "Dunn and Bennett should look for other means of ridding the campus of binge-drinking attitudes instead of trying to play hall monitor or overbearing vice principals."

When the staff members weren't publicly shooting down the ideas of the administration, they appeared to mock President Adams. In October the Opinion Meter contained a piece titled "President Adams stood up." The editor wanted to make it known that not enough students turned out to the Open Mic with Mike session and also wanted to offer a tip on how to get more people to attend. "We know how to get a better turn out: offer free beer to students over 21. That's a great way to show support for the University's alcohol policy."

The newspaper staff also appears to make it a point to show the ways in which the new policies of the administration fail. An October edition of Our Take called "On-campus party" lead with "eleven kegs in front of Main Library, so much for killing the party culture" and referred to the gameday policies that were changed to tone down the party culture on campus. Another October Our Take titled "Last call for voters" encouraged students to register and began like this:

There was one story about how a mayoral candidate is considering moving the closing time of downtown bars to midnight.

There was another article about how a University-community coalition is going to make it easier for state lawmakers to prosecute bars' doormen who let in underage customers with fake I.D.s. Take the opportunity to register, vote and make your voice heard to politicians.

In continuing with their public dislike of the thoughts and choices made by President Adams, The Red and Black fired back against him in their editorial pages. President Adams often condemns the paper for its coverage of alcohol. In February the paper stated that "alcohol is all over *The Red and Black*. It is also all over this campus and the surrounding community." They admitted that alcohol is referenced in numerous articles of the newspaper including ones written about fashion. "Since the start of the school year in August, 'alcohol' has appeared in about 120 articles, opinion columns and letters." This article discusses alcohol at football games and the "droves" of students that head downtown or have parties in their apartments. The point is made that "some of the school's largest donors and boosters are the ones distributing alcohol in the Athens community for students and residents." According to this author, who lists donors that are in the business of distributing alcohol, President Adams keeps a file of all of The Red and Black articles which "he says celebrate and encourage student drinking." President Adams told the reporter that the newspaper "glorifies" drinking while the donors request that the alcohol is consumed responsibly. The author admits that the newspaper writes a lot of articles about alcohol and that "we have fun, joking in the Opinion Meter, chronicling new, colorful drinks downtown and telling you how to go drink on a tight budget. I trust that students at this institution understand it is just entertaining banter. Never once has this paper compelled anyone to drink – responsibly or excessively. Our institutional editorials always have suggested any reader that chooses to drink do so responsibly." The author then writes that the University must
"take responsibility for the problem as it opens the campus and parking lots up to excessive drinking by alumni and students six Saturdays each fall. The school can't have it both ways."

Coincidentally, the newspaper published an article during the same month stating that the University would take its crusade to curb the party culture reputation of the university to the next level by discussing new ways to control alcohol on football game days. In May the newspaper began publishing articles announcing the crusade by President Adams to end the use of the phrase the "World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party." According to the newspaper, "the request is part of Adams' push to curb on-campus alcohol abuse and change the University's image as a party school." In October the Editorial Board announced the new name to replace the "World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party." After holding a contest with readers, the game name changed to "The World's Largest Non-Alcoholic University Sanctioned Family-Fun Event and Bowl (no admittance without passing alcohol awareness test)."

In continuing with their coverage of football and in light of recent gameday changes, the newspaper staff published "How to play better on gamedays" in September. The column offered some improvements that the author believed would help make gamedays better for students. The suggestions included the idea that "every female should be dressed up to allure the slightly drunken male eyes." The columnist also wrote that since some of the local bars downtown have dress codes, Sanford Stadium should too.

Other articles which discuss football and incorporate references to alcohol include an article published in February, which states: "thousands of fans – no small number of which are underage – turn back beer after beer until they become a drunken nuisance." The staff members wrote in the Our Take section that creating zones in which alcohol and such are prohibited "would be a good starting-point in any effort to clean up the game day environment on campus."

In referencing the three pillars of the arch, justice, wisdom and moderation, the staff members write that "the third – moderation – is slurped down, crushed and tossed on the neatly manicured lawns of North Campus."

Another football related article appeared in September when a columnist wrote "Seeking the next bulldog legend." This article was more of a letter addressed to an unknown football player outlining everything that they play for once they suit up and step on the field. "You play for the frat boys drunk enough to dance when we win, but sober enough to curse when you lose." A second article referencing alcohol and football appeared in Our Take in September. "The tour de Joe" featured the Editorial Board congratulating Joe Cox for winning the game against Colorado by stating "Joe Cox, if you were 21, we'd buy you a beer."

"Vacationing at a not-so-BCS bowl" appeared in October and gave students ideas on what to do if the Bulldogs didn't land one of the major bowl games. The columnist gave suggestions on fun things to do in cities hosting other bowl games, such as visiting the Jack Daniel's Distillery in Memphis. The columnists also stated that students who use fake IDs to access local bars "can take up the new challenge of trying to get into one of Shreveport's five dockside riverboat casinos." October also saw the article "Fall break, just don't fall broke" in which students were given suggestions on what to do for fall break. Four out of the five suggested destinations came with alcohol references.

The alcohol references in connection with football continued into November, when the Our Take column featured "Start saving up" in which the Editorial Board encouraged students to "start donating your beer, err, milk money to the University so you can get football tickets as an alumni."

Alcohol is even referenced when discussing football coach Mark Richt. "Survival guide for baby Bulldogs" gave freshman advice for college and discussed everything from the president of the University to the mascots. The columnist wrote:

Head football coach Mark Richt will make at least one decision in the next year – and each subsequent year – that will make you and, everyone else, so baffled that you will take up drinking or increase how much you drink to ease the pain. Athens liquor stores love Mark Richt.

The advice continues with an opinion on reading the student newspaper: "Read this paper at your own risk. It has been known to cause alcoholism and gay marriage. Plus, it even started Hurricane Katrina."

In response to the high level of articles referencing alcohol, Vice President for Student Affairs, Rodney Bennett, wrote a letter to the staff of *The Red and Black* on August 18, 2006, stating that "The University of Georgia, through its on-campus programs and partnership with the Community/Campus Coalition, has worked tirelessly to impact the campus climate in such a way that discourages the type of conduct described in the Out and About section of Thursday's Red and Black newspaper." Bennett referenced a news story published that week in which the student newspaper reported on a UGA student who was killed by a drunk driver. Bennett responded as saying;

This is why I am very disappointed that the paper devoted so much space in the second fall issue to glorifying the abuse of alcohol. Make no mistake about it – a story which details an evening of double-digit drink totals, bouts of nausea and memory loss is a story about alcohol abuse. A story which serves as a how-to guide on drinking games for "a naïve freshman" is a story with blatantly promotes irresponsible and illegal behavior.

On August 22, 2006, the Editorial Board of *The Red and Black* decided to comment on the criticism they received. This article appeared in the Our Take section and stated that:

More than a dozen University students were arrested on alcohol-related charges this past weekend. Will the student partiers' punishment be to pick up trash after tailgaters, or will they merely continue partying downtown?

Almost all students who have ever lived on campus know just how easy it is to keep alcohol in their dorm room. Most Resident Advisers just look the other way from clinking backpacks and strangely cylindrical cargo pockets.

On football Saturdays, campus turns into one giant alcohol-soaked party. Good luck finding even one person not drinking.

The Red and Black covering alcohol consumption is not making the problem of a bad party culture on campus worse. It's just an indication there is a problem.

The administration insults its students' moral consciousness when it says *The Red and Black* stories about beer-drinking games encourage students to drink irresponsibly.

In that same issue a staff member responded to the recent criticism. The following are excerpts from the article:

In recent days, *The Red and Black* has been hammered – both publicly and privately – for its decision to print two alcohol-related stories last week.

The cover story, "A picture-perfect downtown," chronicled a night of bar-hopping, with drink totals exceeding double digits.

Another story, "Guide to drinking game basics," outlined how to play the drinking games beer pong and flip cup.

After reading the stories further and reflecting over the last few days, I can easily say both stories went a little too far in their acceptance of drinking.

The drinking game story started with the phrase "If you're a naïve freshman..." It later went on to say "everybody truly wins at flip cup because both the winning and losing teams get incredibly plastered."

One mistake I will admit to is the use of the word "freshman" in a column about drinking. *The Red and Black* in no way condones or sponsors any illegal behavior.

The bar-hopping story mentioned excessive beverage totals and the writer's "memory getting hazy." Whether of legal or illegal drinking age or not, no individual should ever be at the point of blacking out. Also, regardless of any individual's body chemistry, having that many drinks is potentially dangerous, if not deadly.

There is a fine line between acknowledging bars to drink at downtown or drinking games to play and binge drinking to the point of getting "plastered."

I don't see anything wrong with acknowledging the bar scene, drinking games or even what bars have the best drinking specials on what night in the pages of *The Red and Black*.

But some of the behavior exhibited downtown and the reasons behind why one should play those games are flawed. They do not belong in the pages of any newspaper. There is a difference between realizing drinking is something that happens on this campus and encouraging the behavior shown in our articles last week.

Despite this statement from an Editorial Board member, the very next issue of the newspaper contained the Internet article referenced in the previous theme concerning social training. The article highlighted the supposed new trend of drunken Facebooking.

The theme of editorial rebuttals has covered everything from football to politics. The staff members do a good job of giving their opinion on a wide range of topics. However, their opinion more times than not contains an unnecessary alcohol reference. The newspaper staff makes the statement that "the administration insults its students' moral consciousness when it says *The Red and Black* stories about beer-drinking games encourage students to drink irresponsibly." This goes hand in hand with research by Patterson and Wilkins (2005). These media scholars posit that the media has an issue with social responsibility theory because the actual role of a social "arbiter diminishes the moral worth of the individual citizen" (Patterson & Wilkins, 2005, p. 171).

As is discussed in the theory section of this paper, humor in editorial pages is a debatable issue. Some media scholars think that humor should be left off of the editorial pages while others see humor as a way to attract and keep readers (Rystrom, 2004). Yet, *The Red and Black* is free to students. Therefore, the issue is not keeping customers as much as it is entertaining their readers. But, as Flakstad points out, dropping a funny line in the editorial pages for entertainment purposes is not what the limited space of an editorial page should be used for (Rystrom, 2004). Even with Horowitz, who agrees that humor in the editorial pages is acceptable as it brings in readers, states that an "occasional light touch" of humor is acceptable (Rystrom, 2004, p. 219). The satirical alcohol references in the editorial pages of *The Red and Black* is much more than an "occasional light touch" (Rystrom, 2004, p. 219). This method of consistently using satire in the editorial pages can actually decrease the credibility of the newspaper.

On that point, the Editorial Board has consistency issues concerning the message they are sending to students. The Editorial Board makes statements advocating responsible drinking but then turns around and publishes stories that teach students to play beer pong and flip cup – both

of which are drinking games which encourage participants to consume large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time. This amounts to teaching a student how to binge drink and can be seen as extremely dangerous journalism.

The newspaper staff did publish a column apologizing for that article and another article in which a columnist chronicled the details of a night of barhopping in which the alcohol consumption reached double digit drinks. The bar-hopping article and the drinking game article ran in the same Thursday edition. The following Tuesday a staff member issued an apology for the articles, stating that they did cross the line. However, the Friday following the publication of the two stories in question, the Editorial Board made this statement in the Opinion Meter:

The Out and About article on barhopping was meant to be taken with several grains of salt, followed by a shot. *The Red and Black* in no way encourages underage consumption. But, for those of legal drinking age, come join us for happy hour tomorrow.

Theme 4: Advocacy for Drinking

The newspaper staff at *The Red and Black* stated in the editorial pages that "there is a difference between realizing drinking is something that happens on this campus and encouraging the behavior...." That statement was made in reference to published articles promoting barhopping in Athens and playing drinking games. These articles are examples of blatant advocacy for drinking on the part of the newspaper. Other examples of the newspaper staff's advocacy for drinking come in more subtle fashions such as word choices used and statistics chosen for stories.

One such article, "Students advise new Dogs" was published in August and shared advice on alcohol. The issue is that the "new Dogs" referred to are either transfer students or the

thousands of new freshman who come to campus each August. The article doesn't distinguish between which set of "new Dogs" they are referring to with their advice.

Another, "Maintaining balance key to enjoying college life" had one columnist writing: "I've seen the highs and lows of college life – I've gained friends over a pitcher of beer and lost friends over a dollar." The author also wrote: "although new rules have been placed on certain aspects of tailgating, President Adams can never do away with the pre-game tradition of waking up at the crack of dawn saddled with a huge hangover, just to start drinking again." The advice on maintaining a balance continued with: "just think of tailgating as an interpersonal communications class with a semi-unlimited supply of beer...." The columnist finished off the alcohol references by stating: "the nightlife also involves many a drunken and belligerent early morning conversation discussing everything from politics to Paris Hilton, all while partaking in a slice of Little Italy's thick-crust pizza."

In another column that could have been written with absolutely no reference to alcohol, the columnist who wrote "Bachelor seeks love, provides entertainment" states that his "background's about as diverse as the Thursday night crowd at General's" eluding to a bar downtown, while also stating that "I love eating, drinking, and then eating again."

Other than columns, alcohol references also appear in the Variety section. The same columnist who penned both the bar-hopping article and the beer-drinking game article wrote a review of a movie titled 'Beerfest.' Given the title of the movie, the review is full of several alcohol references including that "the humor in 'Beerfest' is tailored to the college crowd, cracking irreverent jokes about beer goggles, drunk hookups, epic hangovers and wild parties that get busted up by the police." The columnist continues by saying that the "humor centers around the consumption of alcohol, even those between the ages of 17 and 20, such as college

freshman and sophomores – who, as law abiding citizens, would obviously not know anything at all about alcohol – will find the film hilarious."

An article on the subject of beer appeared in the Variety section again in April. "New brew makes debut" focused on the new Terrapin beer and all of the other beers available by the hometown brewery. And another article promoting Terrapin beer appeared in September. "Big Hoppy Monster' beer premiers in Athens" appeared in the Variety section. The story opened with a lead that said "With countless bars in the Athens area, University students are not strangers to the numerous and unique beers available any day of the week." The article outlined other beers available by the brewery, and made it known that the newest beer, "Big Hoppy Monster" would only be available for the fall.

The staff members at *The Red and Black* advocate drinking in the articles they write. Alcohol references are weaved through all sections of the publication. The newspaper gave free publicity to Terrapin Beer Company in two articles in one semester and highlighted the fact that the beer would only be available for the fall. The newspaper staff also gives repetitive free publicity to bars downtown. Movie reviews contained alcohol references and even a column on maintaining balance in college was full of alcohol references.

In an Our Take article the Editorial Board recognizes the drinking culture as the staff members agree that thousands of underage students head downtown each night to "drink, and drink, and drink." The Editorial Board also publishes such facts as "most University students (88.9 percent) drink." This adds to the list of stories which contribute to the idea that drinking is the normative behavior on campus. To suggest that drinking is the only thing to do on a campus of 30,000 plus students, with many activities happening daily, creates an environment where students think alcohol is so pervasive that it is unavoidable.

The subtle words the staff members choose and the phrases they print give a tone of advocating consumption. When alcohol references appear in articles that have nothing to do with drinking, it implies that drinking is so embedded in our culture that it relates to everything. Theme 5: Being Big Brother/ Big Sister

The student newspaper often has a way of coming across as a big brother or a big sister to the readers on the UGA campus. The newspaper staff shows the way to the best parties and introduces new students to the party-culture in town. This theme can be broken down into three sub-themes: events, responsibility, and the culture in Athens.

February is the month of Mardi Gras and *The Red and Black* published an article titled "Big Easy parties come to Athens" informing students where to find a local party downtown. The author also published drink specials such as those from Last Call, in which the owner "said there will be no cover tonight and everything in the bar will be \$2 or less, including hurricanes and hand grenades." In the same issue the editors published the following words in the Our Take section:

Beer, beads and breasts may be the mantra for many Mardi Gras partyers, but morals, manners and modesty should be kept in mind.

Students who flock downtown tonight with visions of drunkenness and debauchery should remember to keep the safety of themselves and others a priority.

Drink specials will tempt those with almost-empty wallets, but just because hurricanes are \$2 doesn't mean students should get four.

Student should keep a careful count of their drinks.

Drinking too much too quickly can lead to alcohol poisoning or a harsh hangover the next day.

Numerous articles appearing in the pages of *The Red and Black* discussed the party culture at the University. In March a column ran titled "Drinking culture has deep roots." This column posed the question "how can Athens' 'drinking culture' be tempered and replaced by an environment that promotes scholarship and achievement rather than Thursday night beer pong?" The author goes on to discuss ways in which alcohol and Athens just seem to go together – such as the participation in "The World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party" in which students are given a fall break to have travel time to attend the annual football match-up between Florida and Georgia in Jacksonville, the ad revenue gained by the student newspaper from publishing weekly drink specials at bars, and the idea that the "ACC (Athens Clarke County) seems to turn a blind eye at times to the hoards of underage drinkers who flood Clayton and Broad streets Thursdays through Saturdays. And we can't leave out the students who give away their IDs or provide alcohol to minors."

That column ran in March. In that same month the newspaper staff published "University a great place for students" which stated that "We Georgians are all Polo-clad, iPod lobotomized, beer guzzling, impolite rednecks – but how can we forget all of the great traits of our wonderful university?" One of the "great traits" listed includes "the obvious nightlife. You want bars, we got em'."

In an attempt to offer students advice on what to do other than going downtown, "Alternatives to booze, nightclubs" was published in April. The article lead with: "the Athens experience involves so much more than sludging through drunken college parties and crowding into bars on Clayton Street," and "try restaurant hopping instead of bar hopping on a Friday night." The newspaper weaves their laid-back attitude into several stories and this article offers no exception. While giving students ideas on what to do rather than drink, the author writes:

"And if you're not sleeping off a hangover on Sunday, take time to visit Athens-area parks." The author also wrote, "So let go of the worn-out notion that college is for fall-down, black-out partying, a time to experiment with alcohol, drugs and sex. Get outside and take advantage of the amazing college experience Athens and the University offers – it's sure to be much more unforgettable than passing out stonecold drunk."

Other events occurring downtown were discussed in the newspaper with references to alcohol. In April an article titled "Open mic nights popularized among students" led with this: "For some students, Tuesday night is the new Friday night. On these evenings, members of a growing Athens subculture must decide between softly placed chords or funky guitar licks and iced mochachinos or cold beer." The article was about open mic nights in town.

In summary, this theme of Big Brother and Big Sister included articles about events, responsibility and the culture in Athens.

Theme 6: Irresponsibility

Often the newspaper published stories that blatantly showed irresponsible journalism. The newspaper staff wrote stories which minimize the severity of such issues as hangovers and DUIs.

In an attempt to give the other side of the story, the newspaper staff sometimes publishes articles advocating that the students practice responsibility while drinking. In October students were urged to "take care in party scene" while the columnists states that "we binge drink and most of the time, we make it home, the only consequences of being a lighter wallet and varying degrees of hangovers...People can no longer read the numbers on their watch faces, but feel completely capable of handling a car in the middle of the night. We usually get home in one piece, the only caveat an occasional DUI."

In the next edition, a columnist writes about a trip to visit a friend at Notre Dame. "The logic of illogical college life" states:

Sufficient to say, the emotional hangover this morning was brutal. As everyone laid around enjoying the honeymoon period, we had to pack. For those of you who don't drink, drink "responsibly" or "in moderation," the honeymoon period is when you wake up still drunk. This time is generally more fun that the actual cause of inebriation, because everyone is loose and the stories from the night before come out.

This column has no news value. The author is writing about a trip to visit a friend. There are no links to the University and no newsworthy incident happened while the columnist was there. So, the article must have been published for pure entertainment.

Adding to the list of articles which border on being irresponsible, the newspaper staff also published an article giving students advice on what to do after a night of drinking. "Skip, but don't trip up on excuses," published in October, gave students ideas on what excuses to give their professors when they miss class. "Getting a little inebriated and waking up in someone else's bed with no access to your car is a good reason to miss class. It is not, however, what you tell your teacher." The columnists discusses the idea of killing off multiple family members in excuses to teachers and states that "grandparents are finite in number, but cousins can be plentiful as the Jager bombs that caused your 'illness' in the first place."

In an attempt to be responsible, the same columnist that wrote the bar-hopping article and the beer-drinking game article, along with the article on the search for the best margarita in town also penned "Parties and alcohol can get along." Published in November, this article discusses this columnist's issue with students who choose to drink too much and then don't know how to act. The author uses a harsh tone throughout the article.

Alcohol references are even included in one columnist's review of a holiday spent at home. One Red and Black staff member wrote "Giving thanks Morgan style a bit different" and gave readers an idea of what the Thanksgiving holiday is like at his/her house. The columnist said the family dinner for four is "complete with a few bottles of chardonnay." Once the author gave the reader a description of the holiday at home, the author proceeded to tell us the many things he/she is thankful for. This included "the bar that rhymes with 'Sansmet' downtown where many Friday afternoon happy hours with the R&B's Comedy Troupe have passed blissfully by. Nothing beats \$1 bottles o' beer after a hard week."

The newspaper staff also publishes numerous articles which give the impression that the drinking culture in Athens is just the normal thing to do. In March the newspaper published an article titled "Getting adequate sleep plays crucial role in staying healthy," which appeared in the Variety section. This article lead with "As college students, many of us live our lives at night, whether it's by going to parties, hitting up downtown, or simply staying up late hanging out with friends." The article discussed tips to help students get enough sleep, such as avoiding drinking alcohol, and stated that "Athens is famous for its night life."

Even when discussing entertainment, the newspaper staff has a way of publishing words which make alcohol consumption just seem like the right thing to do. In September a Variety story started out on the front page of the newspaper below the fold. "Butch Walker encourages fun, raucous behavior at his show" was a preview to a concert being held on campus later that evening. The musician is known for wild shows "but when he's playing on a college campus, like he is tonight, he said things could possibly be tamer due to a lack of flowing beverages." Butch Walker was quoted in the article as stating "I have done them before," Walker said about

college shows. 'But it doesn't mean I won't be drunk...Come on, you college kids are professionals,' he said. 'Get wasted before you come.'"

Theme six has discussed several ways in which the newspaper staff subtlety advocates irresponsible behavior. Casual writing on alcohol issues seems to undermine the serious consequences that can follow. If a student is so drunk that they can "no longer read the numbers on their watches" and then drive home, that is a serious issue. However, the manner in which it is handled in the story sends the message that it happens all the time and it is not a big deal. And the only legal repercussion is the "occasional DUI." Those word choices also make it seem like a DUI is not a big deal.

Another article essentially told students that waking up with a hangover is more fun than the actual night of drinking "because everyone is loose and the stories from the night come out." Writing stories giving students advice on how to give a good excuse for skipping class when you're inebriated and telling students you are thankful for various downtown bars and alcohol sends a message that consumption is normal. *The Red and Black* writes several articles and cites statistics which also send a message that alcohol consumption is the normative behavior on campus and that it's okay.

SUMMARY OF ARTICLE FINDINGS

The findings from the article analysis were broken down into six themes: discussion of policy, social training, editorial rebuttals, advocacy for drinking, being big brother or big sister, and irresponsibility. The first theme on policy was broken down into two sub-themes: the administration and the amnesty policy. The second theme on social training was broken down into seven sub-themes. These were games, bars, trivia nights, sex, music, food and the Internet. The third theme on editorial rebuttals included a discussion of the Our Take and Opinion Meter

section and the administration, other individuals in positions of power, and football. The fourth theme discussed the advocacy for drinking with words chosen and statistics used in stories. The fifth theme on the idea of being big brother or big sister to students on campus includes stories on events and holidays, responsibility and the culture in Athens. The sixth theme on irresponsibility included a discussion on hangovers and DUIs.

As quoted in the section discussing advocacy for drinking, the newspaper staff at *The Red* and Black stated in an editorial that "there is a difference between realizing drinking is something that happens on this campus and encouraging the behavior...." However, *The Red and* Black sends a message through the stories published that encourages student drinking. The newspaper is the most read newspaper on campus and *The Red and Black* staff is aware of this because they quote the statistics in their rate card. According to the rate card, 97 percent of students read *The Red and Black* and students are nine times more likely to read *The Red and Black* than any other newspaper available.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Ten staff members at *The Red and Black* were contacted to participate in a one-on-one indepth interview. Seven people responded with a willingness to participate, while two staff members declined the interview, and one staff member never responded to multiple emails and phone calls. The seven staff members who were interviewed endured a 30 to 45 minute interview in which they were asked 12 pre-determined and pre-approved questions. The questions were approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board. Project number 2007-10522-0 was authorized by 45 CFR 46.110(a) on Tuesday, March 20, 2007.

The interview questions focused on the perception of the culture in Athens regarding alcohol use by students, what, if any, formal policies exist in regards to accepting or declining

advertisements, and whether or not formal policies exist to deal with possible dilemmas which might occur between advertisers and the content side of the newspaper. The staff members were also asked if the recent changes by the administration concerning the alcohol policy had any effect on advertising or content, if the recent and tragic death of a student had any effect on advertising or content, and to explain what policies exist to deal with stories on alcohol use by students. Other questions tried to determine what, if any, discussions have taken place concerning recent stories on alcohol use by students and what portion of advertising revenue comes from alcohol. The final question for the staff members interviewed sought to determine what guidance, if any, has been handed down from the publisher and the advisor regarding how to handle stories like the beer pong story, based on the negative perception that *The Red and Black* is socially irresponsible in handling such stories focusing on alcohol use by students.

The majority of the staff members interviewed agreed that the alcohol culture in Athens is widespread and widely accepted. Staff members described the alcohol culture at UGA as a "rite of passage," "rampant," "infectious," and "typical of a college town." One staff member, however, contends that the opinion that Athens is a party town is not necessarily true. The staff member emphasized the viewpoint that other schools have bigger issues with drinking than the University of Georgia. Yet, another staff member stated that there are over 73 bars in Athens and "statistics show that 90 percent of students have an alcoholic beverage once a week, at least once a week." It was also mentioned that it is "not always socially accepted" to go to a party and not consume alcohol.

Concerning the question of whether there are any policies in place regarding accepting or declining advertisements, the blanket answer was a resounding "no." Other than statements in the rate card outlining the right of the newspaper staff to accept or reject any form of

advertisement for any reason, the general consensus is that advertising of any form is accepted. As one staff member put it: "if you want to buy an ad. You buy an ad." Based on the answers from some staff members it also is apparent that there is no plan in the near future to develop such a policy. One staff member contends that: "It's so hard to define policies and procedures that will encompass everything" so the discussion on questionable advertising happens on a caseby-case basis.

If an advertisement does look to be out of the norm, then the staff will take a closer look at it to determine if the advertisement is appropriate for the newspaper. And, if the advertisement does prove to be questionable, then a discussion will take place between members of the Editorial Board. Another staff member stated that questionable advertisements are first sent to the Press Association for approval. An example given was an advertisement which appeared in one edition of the newspaper asking for an egg donor who was Caucasian, athletic, along with a host of other requirements. The staff submitted that advertisement to the Press Association to ensure no legal issues would arise from running the advertisement.

Other than laws set in place by the Press Association and Athens-Clarke County, the newspaper does not have written formal statements for accepting or declining advertisements. What runs in the newspaper is up to the discretion of the editors, according to one staff member. As an example of ACC law as cited by one staff member with *The Red and Black*, alcohol coupons are not allowed as a form of advertisements, however liquor stores can and do advertise a percentage off their prices.

Another staff member referenced the demographics of *The Red and Black* readership when discussing why alcohol advertisements are accepted. According to the staff member, 52 percent of the student newspaper's readership are over the age of 21:

Everyone thinks its all students but you have to also include the faculty, casual readers downtown, and you know a lot of people are here longer than normal. So you might be a sophomore but you also might be 21. You might be taking the six-year route or you might be a graduate student. The majority of our students are over the drinking age. So, to turn down alcohol advertisements based on the demographics of your readership is not very good business.

Just as there are not any formal written policies in place at *The Red and Black* regarding accepting or declining advertisements, there also are no formal policies in place for dealing with dilemmas that might arise from a conflict between the advertising department and the editorial department.

More than one staff member mentioned food and restaurant reviews as a source of conflict between advertisers and staff members. While one staff member stated that during their time with the newspaper there has never been a serious issue between the newspaper and an advertiser regarding a story that ran, another staff member specifically named a local establishment which did disagree with a restaurant review story that ran and subsequently pulled their advertising account.

Another staff member directly stated that those with *The Red and Black* do not let advertisers decide what content they run on the front page. On this same topic, a separate staff member stated that during this individual's time with *The Red and Black* this person has noticed that "we've kind of phased out our food reviews that take care of the restaurant side. We don't really want to write anything bad about restaurants and then lose them as advertisers."

Several staff members stated that they have never been aware of an incident where an advertiser pulled an account because of something that was written in the paper. Yet, this directly

conflicts with the testimony from another staff member who named a specific account which was pulled do to a story published in the student newspaper.

One question concerning advertising in *The Red and Black* also focused on the amount of revenue received from liquor stores, clubs and bars. Several staff members stated that the majority of the advertisement comes from apartments and other forms of housing for students and quite a bit of revenue also comes from University advertising. Because the bars and other alcohol establishments usually run the smaller advertisements, one staff member stated that about 20 percent of the advertising revenue comes from alcohol venues. This staff member also singled out Genco Import Company, The Winery and The Arch Bar as the biggest advertisers among the alcohol establishments.

Many of the staff members interviewed answered this question by saying that the alcohol advertisements make up a "big chunk" of the total advertising, "but not the majority." Another staff member who assigned a numeric value to the total stated that, strictly from reading the newspaper and not having statistics, advertising from alcohol establishments represents 25 percent of the total advertising for the student newspaper.

One staff member answered this question by singling out days of the week which are more popular for alcohol advertisers. This person stated that the most alcohol advertisements run on Wednesday and Thursday because many students choose to go downtown to drink on Thursday and Friday. Since one would assume Friday would also be a big day for alcohol advertisements, based on the previous statement, this staff member noted that clients do not run as many alcohol advertisements on Friday because fewer students are on campus and therefore fewer students read the newspaper.

While answering this question, another staff member discussed the regular appearance of alcohol advertisements above and/or below the crossword and/or sudoku puzzles. This staff member states that the space above and below these puzzles are sponsored by advertisers and sold at a premium, or a higher price. This is done because the staff and the advertisers are well-aware that students are going to be staring at this particular portion of the newspaper for quite some time as they attempt to complete one or both of the puzzles.

While the staff members have varying opinions on whether there have been issues between the content of the newspaper and the advertising accounts, the staff members do agree that the recent changes by the administration regarding the alcohol policy has had some effect on the content, though it has had zero effect on the advertising. According to one staff member the bar business has not "slacked off at all due to the recent alcohol stipulations."

In regards to the effect that the policy changes have had on the content, one staff member stated that the "content has become more aggressive against that stance." This staff member asserts that the administration is taking a paternal stance that will not work with students:

And so I think we have a lot of our students who are fighting, content wise, what the administration is putting forth. Especially the calling of the parents – it seems so 'we're trying to do what's good for you.' The whole point of college is to discover who you are. And break out of the shell and get out from under your mommy and daddy's wings.

Another staff member said that there was a "general feeling in the newsroom that for awhile we were perceived negatively and so now we're trying to make sure we have fair and accurate coverage." Other staff members contend that the policy changes by the administration has led the newspaper staff to try and "be more responsible…and curbed how we handle those taboo, out of the ordinary kind of stories." The articles referenced included the stories on bar-

hopping and beer pong. Another staff member stated that the policy changes by the administration has had an effect on content in that the staff is now more focused on covering crime and underage drinking.

While discussing the issue of alcohol use by students and whether the recent student death has had any effect on content, one staff member stated stories often include statements about drinking responsibly and remembering that the Pillars of the Arch are wisdom, justice and moderation. A second staff member also spoke about moderation and responsibility. "We all agree and we advocate personal responsibility over any kind of like mothering or whatever you want to call it of students."

In an effort to be more responsible one staff member noted that they began including phrases like "oh just kidding" after making jokes in the editorial section concerning alcohol consumption. Along this same line, another staff member stated the following regarding alcohol content in the editorial pages:

Our content stance, I mean some people might be a little bit more sheepish about it – but all we do is we joke – we say this is going to piss Dr. Adams off and that's pretty much it. We're not really concerned. We don't get money from them. We are going to print what sells.

During the interview the staff members were asked if *The Red and Black* has a formal policy in place outlining how to treat stories written about alcohol consumption by students. Every single person interviewed stated that there is no formal policy in place. One staff member stated that there are ethical guidelines, but they are left to be interpreted by the editors, who steer the tone of the content in the direction of their choice. Concerning these ethical guidelines, another staff member outlined that as reporting "the news in a thorough and objective manner."

Another staff member answered this question by stating: "We have no formal policy and I'm beginning to wonder now if we should. This is challenging me to think that we should have a policy."

In one interview, a staff member stated that alcohol stories are seen by the newspaper staff as less of a genre as they are a spectrum. On this point the staff member stated that the stories reference drinking, like the margarita story and the article on drinking games, did discuss how to get drunk inexpensively. Yet, this staff member noted that the staff members were never "championing vomiting or passing out in the streets of downtown Athens." And stories that did take that stance would be discussed to determine if they should be published.

Staff members were also asked if newsroom executives have discussed how to handle stories written about nights of heavy alcohol consumption. Several staff members stated that one change, which has occurred since the fallout from the some of the previously published alcohol stories, is that there is now a discussion involved in the process of publishing a story on alcohol consumption:

Anytime we see stories that involve alcohol or things of that matter it goes from not discussing it at all to discussing what's within it to see if there is a certain irresponsible aspect to the story. So, it has obviously spurred some set of awareness of what those stories mean.

One staff member chose to answer the question about policies in place to deal with stories about alcohol with an opinion on whether these types of stories on alcohol consumption by students represent responsible journalism. Here the staff member is referencing the story which amounted to bar-hopping during a night in which drink totals in the double digits were consumed: "So, is that story irresponsible? I don't know. Maybe. From my perspective. But, if

I'm 20 that's interesting. I'm going to read that because I do that. I go out drinking and I have 10 drinks."

The same staff member made a point to state that the only complaints received about these stories, one of which taught students how to play drinking games, were from the administration. The response from the student body was that these stories are "interesting," and "funny." Concerning student alcohol consumption, the staff member said that:

It's a learning experience for them. That's the one thing I think people tend to forget. Everybody here is new but they all stay the same age. Everyone comes in not knowing certain things and then they learn certain things. And they all learn it at about the same time. And binge drinking for whatever reason is something that people learn to do and learn to live with and learn to talk about or like to talk about it.

This staff member also stated that people who go out and "drink until you can't remember" aren't hurting anyone and that it is that person's right in a free society to engage in that behavior.

Finally, the staff members were asked if the Publisher or the Advisor ever step in and offer advice on how to deal with the stories on alcohol consumption by students in light of the widespread opinion that *The Red and Black* is socially irresponsible in handling them. One staff member stated that the tone of the newspaper is completely up to the students: "Ethics, drinking, sex, partying – that's all us. We decide the kind of tone we want to set." The point was made that the newspaper is published independent of the University, which makes for controversy and a racy paper that is more interesting to read.

Another staff member stated that the primary role of the Advisor is to teach the students how to be writers, reporters, designers and editors, rather than to run the newspaper. The criticisms and comments that are sent to the newspaper staff regarding some of these articles

"teaches [staff members] what it's like. I mean unless you're almost sued by someone, you don't know what it feels like to understand the importance of things that you write, things that you do."

During the interviews, several staff members also stated that the advisor and publisher do not read the stories before they reach the press unless they are asked. Rather, these staff members are there to help critique an already published story on its thoroughness and objectivity.

However, one staff member stated that the advisor and publisher are there to encourage writers to "think through both news stories and columns and understand what impact they may have on the readers" and also to "understand the responsibilities as probably the primary forum for the campus community."

SUMMARY OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Eight staff members with *The Red and Black* were asked 12 questions regarding alcohol consumption and advertising in the student newspaper. These questions included determining their perception of the culture in Athens concerning alcohol use by students, finding out what policies are in place regarding accepting or declining advertisements, and discovering what policies are in place to deal with any dilemmas that might arise between advertising and editorial content. The participants were also questioned on what effect the recent changes to the alcohol policy by the University administration has had on the content and advertising and what effect the recent student death has had on the student newspaper's content and advertising. Regarding statements and codes, the staff members were also asked what guidelines are in place to handle stories concerning alcohol consumption by students and if newsroom executives have discussed how to handle these stories in view of the public criticism received about past stories. Finally, the staff members were asked about the amount of revenue received from alcohol venues and what role the publisher and advisor play in giving newsroom guidance on alcohol-related stories.

The basic consensus is that there is no formal policy in place at *The Red and Black* to guide these young, aspiring journalists on how to handle alcohol and advertising content. Staff members seem to be unaware of past issues with advertisers and content, regarding whether advertisers have pulled their account due to published content. It is interesting to note that one staff member did state that a consistent advertiser with *The Red and Black*, Foster's Jewelry, refuses to have their advertisements placed around other advertisements for bars and bail bondsmen.

Several staff members made statements that before the public criticism about the barhopping and beer-drinking game articles, this issue of alcohol content was never discussed. In reference to specific articles concerning student alcohol consumption, one staff member said that "those stories just kind of ran. Nobody discussed it." After the backlash, articles dealing with alcohol consumption by students are now discussed to determine what, if any, irresponsible content should be removed. However, many other staff members state that these stories are viewed as "interesting" and "funny" by the student-body and the only criticism comes from people who are not the target audience and therefore the story is not meant for them to read.

Other staff members hammered home the point that even though a discussion might take place regarding these stories that discussion does not include the advisor or the publisher. These staff members may read a story before press if asked by a student, but on normal occasion they critique the article for thoroughness and objectivity after publication.

In regard to the recent student death of Lewis Rockwell Fish, some staff members with *The Red and Black* assert that this event has helped spur more responsibility on the part of the newspaper. However, this responsibility comes in the form of attaching the statement "Oh just kidding" to a joke made about alcohol consumption in the editorial section of the newspaper.

Other staff members state that the death caused the University to pass the new alcohol policy, which has given the staff much to write about on the front page and in the editorial pages.

In summary, there are no formal policies in place at the independent student-run newspaper at Georgia's flagship university to deal with alcohol content and advertising. Though these staff members do have an advisor, they are still on their own to run the newspaper and to make the decisions regarding what advertising they accept and what stories they publish. These staff members set the tone for the newspaper and steer the content in the direction of their choice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

This study began with analyzing published editions of *The Red and Black*, the independent and student-run newspaper at the University of Georgia. Newspaper editions available in the Main Library were analyzed for one year of publication, beginning on January 9, 2006, and ending on December 7, 2006. The editions were not available on microfilm and, therefore, the hard copies were analyzed.

Utilizing the method of discourse analysis, the published articles and advertisements of interest were analyzed for theme, tone, and social context. Seven staff members currently working at *The Red and Black* participated in a one-on-one in-depth interview in which they were asked 12 pre-determined questions. Social learning theory, social responsibility theory, and the theory of emerging adulthood were chosen to guide this research.

This research shows that the staff members at *The Red and Black* believe that the content and advertisements appearing in the newspaper do not influence the decisions made by the student-body in regards to alcohol consumption. This research also shows that the newspaper staff advocates drinking with incessant and often unnecessary alcohol references. In addition, this research reveals that the newspaper staff sends a mixed message to students regarding the stance of the newspaper on alcohol consumption.

The staff members at *The Red and Black* stated during the interviews that criticism from the administration regarding the content of the newspaper has suggested that articles on alcohol consumption can influence students to drink. Countering this argument, the Editorial Board makes the claim in the pages of the paper that what appears in *The Red and Black* does not influence the students' choice to consume alcohol.

But, based on what we already know about social learning theory, we know that individuals can and often do imitate what is seen, heard, and/or read in the media. Further research asserts that the presence of a powerful social reinforcer can influence an individual. As the main source of news for the students attending UGA, *The Red and Black* is an example of a social reinforcer. Therefore, unless the staff members at *The Red and Black* have completed their own research to prove that students are not influenced by what they read in the student newspaper, the Editorial Board cannot justly make their claim. On the same note, this body of research is also limited in the ability to firmly make the counter-claim that the articles and advertisements on alcohol consumption appearing in the newspaper does influence students, due to the fact that no student readers were interviewed. But, based on the scholarly research available we can predict that there is a possibility that students are influenced by what they read in the pages of *The Red and Black*.

In the same editorial pages, the Editorial Board stated several times that by implying that the newspaper has an influence on the alcohol consumption decisions made by students the University administration "insults its students' moral consciousness." Relating the research on social responsibility theory to *The Red and Black* we can see that by the administration stepping in to exert a kind of paternal role over the students, the newspaper staff feels as though the administration is belittling the individual student's moral value. This is an interesting argument

since research indicates that the media's biggest issue with social responsibility theory is the idea of an intermediary.

Regarding the issue of policy it appears as though the Editorial Board at *The Red and Black* makes an effort to speak out for the students. They, the journalists, are in the unique position of being part of their target market. Therefore, they speak like a student and they advocate for an amnesty policy on behalf of the student body. However, the manner in which they go about is through criticism and mockery.

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the newspaper content. Throughout the discussion of these themes the issue arose of the newspaper staff normalizing the consumption of alcohol. Members of the newspaper staff write articles about Mardi Gras parties like something newsworthy actually occurred there. The same thing happened that always happens – people drink, people throw beads, people get drunk. That is not news. That is *The Red and Black* normalizing drinking.

Even when the staff members of *The Red and Black* are offering advice on what to do other than going downtown, they still have a way of writing the story to make alcohol consumption just seem like the normal thing to do. And college students want to fit in, they want to be normal. Instead of writing a serious article about things to do around town on a weekend, the staff member has to include alcohol references which are unnecessary. There is no reason to write that way – the story could have been entertaining through some other method. Consistently referencing alcohol is the easy way out. These journalists should challenge themselves to write a serious article with serious ideas for what to do other than drinking and challenge themselves to do so without referencing alcohol. The article will be taken more seriously and the paper will gain more credibility.

Regarding the rate of recurrence of articles related to student alcohol use, White et al. (2005) state specifically in their research that a student having the perception that heavy alcohol consumption is a normative behavior among college students may lead to the start or growth of alcohol and drug use, especially among first-year college students. White and Jackson (2005) reiterate this point in stating that "attending college may represent a special risk to emerging adults, as increases in alcohol availability and acceptance of drinking on college campuses may lead to increases in heaving drinking among students" (p. 182).

This social reinforcement is how individuals learn and this is one fundamental piece of social learning theory, according to research by Tripplet and Payne (2004). Therefore, the consistent references to alcohol and even the subtle advocacy for consumption could, in fact, be a form of social learning for the students at UGA.

It is interesting to note the specific link to first-year students. *The Red and Black* started the fall 2006 semester off with references to "naïve freshman" in stories about alcohol. The first month of school saw the publishing of articles on binge drinking and bar-hopping as a sort of "to do" list for which bars to go to. The newspaper staff should make an effort to be more aware of their word choices and alcohol references especially when the first-year students are making those early connections with people and places on campus. Even Arnett (2005) makes this point that an increase in substance abuse during the age period of 18 to 25 could also be due to the exploration of identity that takes place during this time of transitions.

In order for social learning to occur an individual must have the capability to be exposed to a message, attend to it, remember it, think about it and have the ability to perform that behavior (Harris, 1999). It is quite evident that the members of the newspaper staff are aware of what sections of the newspaper are read the most. The newspaper publishes advertisements

asking for someone to sponsor the crossword and sudoku puzzles. The staff members also openly admit that some students simply pick up the newspaper for these puzzles. Therefore, based on research by Harris (1999) one can assume that students are exposed to the alcohol advertising placed above and below these puzzles and they are able to attend to it for quite awhile based on the amount of time it takes to complete one of these puzzles. Students are also able to remember and to think about what they see and definitely have the ability to perform the behavior. Therefore, one can make the connection that placing alcohol advertisements above and below these popular puzzles may be contributing to the individual's social learning in regards to alcohol consumption.

As Day (1997) states: "the media occupy a pervasive presence in our lives, and it is at least reasonable to conclude that they affect tour behavior in ways yet to be determined" (p. 243).

Often *The Red and Black* publishes articles that are strictly written for entertainment purposes. These articles usually contain numerous alcohol references, subtle or not. But, going back to Kieran (1997) the research specifically states that:

For the public interest, what we need to know to function in a democratic, civil society should not be confused with whatever the public may be interested in. The mere fact that we may be interested in knowing or seeing something does not give us the right to see or hear about it (p. 82).

On the flip side of this argument is the Hutchins Commission's (Patterson & Wilkins, 2005) statement that the role of a newspaper is to provide the readers with a representative picture of society. If the staff members at *The Red and Black* honestly believe that alcohol is such a major part of the life of the student population, then they may feel that they are serving them justly with their alcohol coverage.

However, a discussion should take place concerning the social responsibility and ethics of articles written about substance abuse. The staff members at the student newspaper should analyze their reasons for publishing these stories and see if they are commercial reasons or moral reasons (Frost, 2000).

The method of discourse analysis used for this study allows the newspaper content to be put in social context. During the time period in which the articles were analyzed, the staff members at *The Red and Black* wanted the University president to sit and talk with them about issues such as the amnesty policy. When he finally did, the first time he has in his 10-year history with the university, they publicly thanked him with a reference to alcohol.

In continuing with the discussion of social responsibility theory, which is the strongest theory for this body of research, individuals might argue that the role of a newspaper is to publish news which represents the body of people that it serves. With that said, one staff member stated that 90 percent of the students attending UGA have an alcoholic beverage at least once a week. While that statement may be true, there were no statistics shown to back it up. And even if it were true, the newspaper staff must also remember that social responsibility calls for the media to do just that, to be responsible.

Though the newspaper staff may feel as though they are publishing information which is representative of the newspaper's audience, they should also be sensitive to issues affecting the student body, such as alcoholism, and what role the articles play in perpetuating those issues. The newspaper staff should also be aware of the line that exists between news and entertainment.

One staff member stated that students are on staff for at least two years before they become an editor. Another staff member stated that these new editors are trained one-on-one with the editor whose position they are taking. The majority of the writers for *The Red and Black*

are students at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. According to the staff member, students begin their curriculum in their junior year and therefore, have had at least half of their journalism courses before becoming editors with the newspaper.

Another staff member stated that "most of the very basic training" for employees at *The Red and Black* "is given by UGA since all writers and editors are also students." The concept of ethics and social responsibility is not only taught as an entire course at Grady, but according to the core concepts endorsed by the College, these ideals are woven into every unite and every discussion of every class taught at Grady. However, not all students working for *The Red and Black* are Grady students.

A staff member stated that contributing writers receive "one-on-one time with the recruitment editor which serves as preliminary training." Once this writer advances to become a stringer, the writer endures an online orientation course which specifies the policies of *The Red and Black* employees.

Therefore, it is evident that the staff members who were interviewed for this body of research and the majority of the staff members working at *The Red and Black* have the necessary tools to make the daily ethical decisions involved in running a newspaper. The advisor and the publisher also have journalism backgrounds. With this said, there is no argument to be made that anyone working for *The Red and Black* did not consider the concept of ethics and social responsibility in regards to the alcohol content and advertising appearing in the pages of the student newspaper. If the argument is that the advisor and publisher are serving in "teaching roles," then there is something to be said for that. These staff members should come up with creative ways to discuss controversial issues such as alcohol content and advertisement with the

staff members. The issue of social responsibility is tricky to discuss in that everyone has an opinion on what is and is not responsible.

This leads me to discuss the first posed research question.

RQ1: Does newspaper content in *The Red and Black* portray a positive or negative view of alcohol consumption for students?

Based on research collected – both articles and advertisements – and the interview findings, it is clear that the newspaper portrayed a negative view of alcohol consumption for students during the time period in which the articles were analyzed. While the staff does make an effort to publish stories on safe drinking, they contradict their message by publishing stories on drinking games, bar-hopping, and naïve freshman. The staff members and contributing writers of *The Red and Black* consistently use a sarcastic, humorous and somewhat defiant tone in their coverage of alcohol use by students. Alcohol references appeared in every section of the newspaper, from the editorial pages to the sports pages. Even when the subject seemed to have nothing to do with alcohol, a reference to the substance would often slip in. The high prevalence of alcohol references makes it seem as though all students do at UGA is drink. And upon interviewing several of the staff members it is apparent that they too think that alcohol consumption is "prevalent," "something that everyone does," and something that is "widely accepted."

The University administration has made an attempt to create and enforce policies which promote safety on campus. *The Red and Black* staff made it clear in their coverage that it is up to the students to be responsible and up to the students to change the party culture on campus. The staff members supported this by stating in interviews that the coverage now contains more

advocacy for personal responsibility and moderation. Moderation is one of the Pillars of the Arch. The other two are wisdom and justice.

One staff member with *The Red and Black* wrote a story stating that the newspaper staff has written columns "calling on the University administration to clean up the party culture" and also adequately covered alcohol issues facing the students on campus. In an attempt to right a wrong, the staff member also pointed out that in the same infamous bar-hopping, drinking games issue, the newspaper published a story on Dawgs After Dark (DAD). DAD is a program that is in place to give students an alternative to going downtown. The staff member called this "free publicity."

Based on the research completed, this is the only "free publicity" the program was given during the analyzed time period. However, during that time, at least 22 articles were written which gave the same "free publicity" to downtown establishments. Local bars and DAD alike all advertise in the newspaper. Yet one gets more "free publicity" than the other. The articles on happenings downtown usually appeared in the Variety or the Out and About section. However, in a college town, there is always something going on. It is unlikely that the newspaper staff could not find something else to fill that news-hole rather than reporting on darts, trivia and poker, which happened to take place at a bar that happened to have drink specials for the occasion. Even one staff member mentioned that the music community in Athens seems to take a backseat to stories involving alcohol use by students.

Social responsibility theory states that the media should raise their standards and present the public with information that will give them the ability to govern themselves. The theory also mentions that those in the media should think of the larger picture rather than just themselves when creating the product for the public. Research is on-going but does point out that there is a
strong correlation between alcohol advertisements and the consumption rate and intent to visit the bar.

Although there has been a push to outlaw alcohol advertisements, there has not been such a push to outlaw local bar advertisements, which is what *The Red and Black* publishes. One staff member interviewed stated that there has been a proposal placed before the Athens-Clarke County Commission which would ban drink specials. If this happens, the staff member asserts that it will limit the alcohol advertising appearing in *The Red and Black* as most of the alcohol advertising is for drink specials offered by local establishments.

This leads me to discuss the second research question posed.

RQ2: Do advertisement in *The Red and Black* portray a positive or negative view of alcohol consumption for students?

The alcohol advertisements featured in *The Red and Black* were obviously created to entice students to head downtown and patron local establishments. The advertisements feature giveaways such as free t-shirts and souvenir glasses while touting drink specials as low as \$.50. Advertisements are prevalent for cheap champagne and beer. The alcohol advertisements appearing in the student newspaper portray a negative view of alcohol consumption in that several of the advertisements appear to promote binge drinking. In one example, an advertisement promoted a drink totaling 64-ounces.

The advertisements also entice students to come downtown earlier than they might under normal circumstances by offering drink specials in which the price of the drink increases as the night goes on. Students prefer Thursday through Saturday as their downtown nights, yet advertisements also lure student's downtown on other, less popular, nights of the week with "Ladies Night" advertisements and drink specials.

Staff members interviewed state that the alcohol advertising appearing in the student newspaper represents a large portion of the total, although the majority of the advertising is purchased by apartments and other facilities offering housing to students. One staff member stated that the advertisement from alcohol venues amounts to about 20 percent of the total advertising revenue.

In switching subjects, it is interesting to note that in an interview one staff member stated that at least 52 percent of *The Red and Black* readers are over the age of 21. This staff member stated that faculty and staff at the University as well as patrons downtown also read the newspaper. With this said, the same staff member also made a point that the content of the newspaper pertaining to alcohol, sex, and other general debauchery is not written for an older audience. These types of articles are written by the students and for the students. The contradiction is in saying that writing articles and running advertisements on alcohol is fine because a large portion of the readership is over the age of 21 and in the same breath saying that the alcohol content is not for the older audience, but for the students. Alcohol references are weaved into every section of the newspaper, and therefore, it seems as though there is no content directed toward this older audience.

In regards to the theory of emerging adulthood, a number of columnists wrote articles which highlighted several of the theories' points. As an example, one columnist states in an published article that: "I know that I have about 30 hours of classes left and then – according to my parents – I have to be an adult. I'm nowhere near ready." This columnist is making a point that adulthood, according to the parents, begins around age 22. The columnist isn't ready for that change.

Part of the theory of emerging adulthood discusses the idea that during this in-between state where a person is no longer an adolescent but also is not yet an adult; one might feel as though they have freedom to do whatever they want. But, since they are not yet an adult, they may feel as though they do not have to take responsibility for their actions because they are still learning. *The Red and Black*, probably unknowingly, referenced this theory a lot in their opinion and editorial columns when referencing alcohol issues and the penalties that the current administration attaches to underage drinking. In connection with alcohol consumption, one staff member made the statement that students are learning and that the point of college is to "discover who you are."

One column discussed the idea of creating an introductory course which would be mandatory for all freshmen and would include the topic of alcohol. "Students seem to abuse their ultimate freedom and independence by slacking off, not attending classes and partying too hard. There is no guidance and no babysitter to tell students what to do." However another columnist stated, in regards to the administrations attempt to curb underage drinking, that "We are adults. We left our parents at home."

This contradiction leads me to discuss the third research question posed. This research question will also be re-explored during the discussion of the interviews with some of the newspaper staff members.

RQ3: Do *The Red and Black* editors take a position on student alcohol consumption?

This question has several answers. The main issue is that the staff members send a mixed message to the newspaper readers. One staff member directly stated: "we do not condone underage drinking." This firm statement also appears in some editorials published in *The Red and Black*. In the same editorial space, the newspaper staff has stated that students need to be

responsible and that the newspaper should not and cannot be singled out as an outlet that promotes alcohol consumption. However, the newspaper staff sends a mixed message to the readers by continuing to allow alcohol references into their articles. Therefore, by continuing to allow this unnecessary content, the newspaper staff rightly should be singled out.

During the interviews, one staff member stated that *The Red and Black* staff is attempting to be more responsible with their editorial coverage of alcohol. This staff member mentioned that one way they do this is by adding the statement "oh just kidding" to the end of jokes made in the editorial pages. The staff members also consistently allow the articles in the Variety section and the Out and About section to be full of alcohol references. In addition, a columnist was allowed to go on an escapade to find the best margarita in town and write a story highlighting which bars in town play which genre of music. Alcohol is not the only source of entertainment in Athens and there are other places to go than downtown. Yet, the newspaper pages cite event after event taking place at local bars.

It seems as though the newspaper staff operates under the assumption that as a college newspaper they are here to entertain rather than inform. This assumption was affirmed by one staff member who stated that: "We are going to print what sells." As long as *The Red and Black* continue to win awards for the content they publish, this outlook may not change. In August the newspaper staff announced that the same organization that ranked UGA as a top party school also ranked *The Red and Black* as the sixth best college newspaper (Belew, 2006). "In light of the criticism this publication has received from the University and other publications for being 'irresponsible,' 'junior' or other patronizing and biting adjectives, the prestigious ranking is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Regarding this perception that *The Red and Black* is one of the best college newspapers in the country, the article announcing the honor stated that the newspaper is "making a decent name for ourselves, and the University, on a national level."

This "prestigious ranking" given by the Princeton Review is not actually as prestigious as it sounds. The ranking is awarded based on student opinion, and as the organization states: "does not reflect The Princeton Review's opinion of the college" (Krier & Brand, 2005). In fact, the winning institutions are not chosen by the organization; rather they are the results of a survey completed by students. The Princeton Review solicits the opinion of only 300 UGA students out of the 35,000 plus students who attend this University. These students answer a survey of 70 questions and report their opinions and experiences. Therefore, the opinion that *The Red and Black* ranks as the 6th best college newspaper (Belew, 2006) is no real reflection on a professional opinion of the content of the newspaper. Rather, this is the opinion of the readership (Krier & Brand, 2005).

The newspaper staff jokes heavily about alcohol consumption and then writes serious articles calling for students to be responsible. With these examples, it is evident that the newspaper staff is either confused on the stance that they take regarding alcohol use by students or they are fully aware of the mixed message they send to their readers.

The fourth, and final, research question asks:

RQ4: Does the position of the editors at *The Red and Black* regarding alcohol consumption by students vary from or match the overall tone of the newspaper?

As evident with the previous research question, the newspaper staff sends a mixed message to the readers. The staff denounces underage consumption and heavy use of alcohol in editorial pages, while also using sarcasm and defiant tones when the administration comes down

heavy handed on alcohol use by students. One of the staff members interviewed for this research stated that the staff members make jokes "that are going to piss Dr. Adams off and that's pretty much it." The staff member goes on to say that the staff isn't concerned because they don't receive money from the University. This attitude implies that the articles and editorials are published just to get a rise out of the administration. If this is the case, the newspaper is not serving the audience at all. Rather they are serving their own agenda.

As McQuail (2002) states, social responsibility theory charges the media with elevating their principles to provide their readers with the information and guidance needed to govern themselves. In that sense, *The Red and Black* is giving the students at UGA information on alcohol venues and drink specials in which to use to govern themselves, while also providing guidance on drinking games and where to find the best margarita in town. Plainly stated, the content of the student newspaper could be guiding students toward higher rates of alcohol consumption.

The newspaper content might also be confusing to students as many of the articles falling into the theme of social training are hypocritical. The newspaper staff appears to advocate responsibility when it comes to alcohol consumption. Advocating social responsibility with alcohol is a great message for students. However, publishing that message and then running an article in the very next issue which discusses drunken Internet escapades sends a mixed message to students. The newspaper staff should make a decision in regards to the alcohol content they publish – advocate responsibility or advocate irresponsibility.

The staff members report rapes that occur on campus and mention when alcohol is involved and publish subsequent articles telling women how to be safe on campus. In the same newspaper the staff allows a story to be published in which a columnist essentially tells guys the

dos and don'ts of getting a woman to drink and to go home with him. The columnist gives dating advice which amounts to telling the guys to buy women drinks and drink some themselves. Then, "be a gentleman and tell her you would drive her home if you could. Do not actually know any sober people who could drive her home."

It is hard to take the newspaper seriously when statements are made like that. The newspaper makes the statement that they do not condone underage drinking, yet includes several alcohol references in the wording. The newspaper should take a more serious stance on the alcohol issue. The message that they do not take the alcohol issue seriously is made clear by their repetitive, and unnecessary, sarcastic alcohol references.

It isn't even possible to say that the editorial pages have one stance on student alcohol consumption while the rest of the paper takes a different stance. Staff members writing in both areas seem to be confused as to the stance they really take. If the newspaper staff is going to make an attempt to be responsible in regards to the advertising and content related to alcohol use by students, they should be serious. Writing a serious article and throwing in a cheap alcohol reference at the end does not send a firm message at all. In the same sense, writing a serious article in the editorial pages denouncing alcohol use by students and then allowing an unnecessary column on drunken Web surfing sends a confusing message. The newspaper staff should decide what their stance is and stick to it.

The online rate card for *The Red and Black* clearly states that a large majority of students read the student newspaper, which based on the completed research is shown to present alcohol as a normal necessity for entertainment. With no formal policies in place to guide the staff members on how to handle a serious and controversial issue, these young journalists are left to learn on their own. However great of a learning process this may be, the staff members at *The*

Red and Black should realize that they are learning what is responsible and irresponsible to write and advertise in regards to alcohol at the expense of the students who read the publication on a daily basis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This body of research has several limitations. First, not all staff members working for *The Red and Black* were contacted to participate in this study. A specific group of staff members were selected based on their roles within the newspaper. In addition, not all of the contacted staff members agreed to participate in the study. Ten staff members were contacted and seven staff members were interviewed.

The research could have been strengthened by including interviews from student readers at UGA. It would be interesting to hear the opinion of the student-body opinion regarding the alcohol content and advertising in the student newspaper. I would also be interested in knowing what effect, if any, the students see the newspaper having on the decisions they make regarding choices for entertainment.

In continuing with the study of effects, this research could have also gathered statistics and information about the number of DUI offenses and other alcohol-related offenses at the University to further delve into the alcohol culture in Athens. Analyzed the alcohol-related offenses occurring before these stories appeared and after these stories appeared, in conjunction with student interviews, would help paint a picture of the effects the content of the student newspaper has on readers.

I could have also chosen a longer time period in which to analyze the advertisements and content appearing in *The Red and Black*. It would be interesting to analyze the content and

advertisements appearing before the policy changes and before the death of Lewis Fish and compare those to the current findings.

Also, there is a lot that could be researched and discussed regarding the on-going debate dealing with the censorship of the press. Regulating alcohol advertising and content does censor what is supposed to be a free-press. This issue would open a completely new door of research opportunities.

FUTHER RESEARCH

Much research is still needed to determine what effects the media has on individuals. Stating that content and advertising can have an effect on an individual is not the same as stating that advertising and content does have an effect on an individual. Further research also needs to be completed to determine the role of a campus newspaper in the decision-making process of students.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The staff members currently working for *The Red and Black*, both on the advertising side and the editorial side, should come together and work to create a formal, written statement of policy or code to serve as a guideline for handling alcohol content and advertising in the student newspaper. This controversial issue of alcohol advertising and content needs to be formally addressed.

Policies do exist to outline the procedures and ethical guidelines for content and advertising dealing with alcohol use by students. *The State News* is the independent student-run newspaper of Michigan State University. Though I did not find a specific written policy in which to guide the student journalists in regards to alcohol content, I did find an outlined policy for dealing with alcohol advertising. The policy lists 10 specific guidelines in which the staff members use to determine whether or not to publish an alcohol advertisement. The Web site states that these guidelines are in place due in part to their awareness of an increase in alcohol consumption on college campuses.

I agree that college is a place to learn and a place to grow. However, these young journalists are doing exactly that. They are all learning to be journalists and need to have parameters. Having a simple discussion on the details of a story on alcohol on a case-by-case basis is not enough. And having the discussion after the article has been published teaches the journalist a lesson but does nothing to protect the reader. Allowing a staff made of students to run a newspaper is a great way to learn. But, these student staff members are learning at the expense of an influential student body. And, currently, not enough research exists to definitively prove what effect the media has on our attitudes and behaviors.

Alcohol consumption and abuse is a serious societal issue. In light of this fact, the policy changes made by the University administration, and the recent death of University freshmen, Lewis Rockwell Fish, there is no better time than the present to make these changes within *The Red and Black*.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. What is your perception of the culture in Athens regarding alcohol use?
- 2. What policies are in place regarding accepting or declining advertisements?
- 3. What policies are in place regarding advertising versus news coverage?
- 4. Does the newspaper have a code or statement of policy for dealing with such dilemmas as advertising versus news content?
- 5. Have changes in the administrations' policy had any effect on the content of the newspaper?
- 6. Have changes in the administrations' policy had any effect on advertising?
- 7. What effect has recent deaths in the University community related to alcohol and drugs had on content?
- 8. What effect has recent deaths in the University community related to alcohol and drugs had on advertising?
- 9. Does *The Red and Black* newsroom have a policy statement or code on how to treat stories involving alcohol use by students?
- 10. Have current newsroom executives discussed how to handle such stories, in view of the recent student death and the controversy surrounding P.T. Umphress' columns last semester on how to get drunk inexpensively

- 11. Publisher: What portion of your advertising revenue comes from liquor stores, clubs and bars?
- 12. Publisher and Advisor: Have you ever given the newsroom guidance on how to handle alcohol-related stories, in view of the widespread perception that *The Red and Black* is flippant and socially irresponsible in handling them?

CONSENT FORM

I, _______, agree to participate in a research study titled "Alcohol Content and Advertising in College Newspapers: A Case Study Analysis of The Red and Black" conducted by Wendi Zongker from the Department of Graduate Studies at the University of Georgia (542-8191) under the direction of Dr. Leara Rhodes, Department of Graduate Studies, University of Georgia (542-5025). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to look at social responsibility and ethical dilemmas faced by a young staff of aspiring journalists at *The Red and Black* when confronted with issues related to student alcohol use appearing in both articles and advertising. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Meet one-on-one with the researcher for a one-time interview that will take approximately 30 minutes to 45 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded. The recording will be transcribed and the notes will be kept secure in a locked box until after the final write-up of this research is complete. After the research is complete the tapes will be destroyed. The transcription of my taped interview will contain my identifying number rather than my name.
- Answer questions regarding policies and procedures in place regarding articles and advertisements relating to alcohol use by students.

I will not benefit directly from this study.

I may experience some discomfort or stress when the researcher asks me questions about articles published in the newspaper relating to alcohol use by students.

No risks are expected from participating in this study.

I will be assigned an identifying number and this number will be used on all forms. The Interview Protocol Form containing my name assigned identifying number, and notes from my one-on-one interview will be kept confidential in a locked box until after the final write-up of this research is complete. I will be identified in the write-up as a staff member working at *The Red and Black*. Unless required by law, no individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Once the research is complete and the final product is written, all notes and tapes containing any of my identifying information will be destroyed.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project and can be reached by telephone at: (706) 357-3325.

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
Telephone:		
Email:		
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
Please sign both cop	bies, keep one and return one to t	he researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu