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MEMO

To: Members of the Madison Alcohol License Review Committee

From: Susan Crowley, Director, PACE Project
Aaron Brower, Ph.D, Principal Investigator, PACE Project

Re: Drink Specials Update

Date: September 21, 2005

A very disturbing trend is occurring in the downtown area with the start of the fall semester and the arrival of 40,000 students back to our community. Licensed establishments are offering deeply discounted drinks including free alcohol, in an attempt to lure young adults to their establishments.

The type of drink special in 2005 is also different from previous year advertising in that it specifically targets young adult students. Drink special advertisements include promotions such as ½ off everything with a student ID, a Thursday night liquor exchange where supply and demand sets the price every 15 minutes for call mixers, and opportunities to win free books. The number of mixed drinks and beer advertised as \$1 or lower has doubled from the same period last year. Two establishments are offering free beer, either with a coupon or as a happy hour enticement.

In our continuing role of monitoring drink pricing, PACE staff counted the number of drink special advertisements that appeared in the Onion in 2004 and 2005. In 2004 there were 9 advertisements for drink specials in the Onion's September 1-8 edition. That number jumped to 23 in 2005.

For the second week of classes, Sept. 9-15 editions, there were 9 advertisements for specials in 2004 versus 13 in 2005, for a 27% increase. Friday and Saturday night drink special advertising between 2004 and 2005 grew by 67%.

While a number of factors are contributing to the very competitive nature of the downtown tavern industry, the lack of leadership on this issue is creating a dangerous situation for the downtown area and both the students and general community that frequent the area. These ads are specifically targeting young adults, by advertising in their newspapers and promoting the many opportunities to save money on alcohol simply by virtue of their student status.

This race to the bottom has got to stop. It is time to establish standards regarding the discounting of alcohol that do not unfairly target the young adults of our community.

Cc: Joel Plant, Madison Alcohol Policy Coordinator