



Response to Charge S-1706 - Sale of Alcohol in Stadiums

April 13, 2018

Charge S-1706:

Consider the rationale and RUSA resolution on the potential sale of alcohol at Rutgers stadiums. Explore the issue, and make recommendations, as appropriate.

Background:

The sale of alcohol in stadiums is becoming more prevalent each year throughout major college football stadiums for a number of reasons. The revenue from beer sales is a major factor. The University of Texas reported \$3.1 million in revenue, with \$1.3 million in profit from its 2016 season. However, revenue is not the only driver. With attendance to college football declining in general, many colleges are selling beer in stadiums to draw and keep their fans coming.

Considerations:

The Committee viewed this Charge in the context of protecting our students, and felt strongly that any recommendation must support their best interest. We reviewed the positions of many peer Universities and spoke with several Rutgers officials to elicit their input, guidance and opinions.

We recognized the potential legal and social implications and were fortunate to have had the opportunity to speak with Patrick E. Hobbs, JD, LL.M., our Rutgers Athletics Director and former Dean of the Seton Hall School. Additional, thoughtful guidance was also provided by Michael Szul, Senior Associate Athletic Director for Finance, Administration and Planning.

Findings:

Based on our discussions, comparisons to our BIG10 peers, and the experiences of other institutions, there is valid support for permitting alcohol sales. See references included herein. In 2015, The Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) passed a resolution supporting this measure.

The Committee considered the potential advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages:

1. Increase revenue through sales, advertising, etc.
2. Increase attendance
3. Discourage game day binge drinking
4. Enhance safety for attendees at events

5. Follow example of peer and aspirational peer universities such as Air Force Academy, Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio State, and Purdue
6. Fund worthy causes such as student scholarships

Disadvantages:

1. Potential liability
2. Potential to upset alumni
3. Risk of the perception of encouraging drinking, with consequent adverse publicity

Should the sale of alcohol be permitted at the stadium and potentially other Rutgers athletic venues, the committee developed several guidelines and conditions:

1. Adhere to strict rules of the New Jersey State Alcohol Control Board
2. Start with beer sales only; consider wine license in future
3. Encourage beverage competition, specifically including New Jersey craft beers
4. Develop training program for personnel to ensure safety and assurances of alcohol sales and monitoring
5. Utilize plain clothes police for scrutiny in stadium
6. Two-beer limit
7. Card everyone
8. Stop sales at an appropriate time prior to end of game
9. Create alcohol free zone with security
10. Establish and encourage a designated driver program
11. Commit revenue generated for use in worthy causes, such as student scholarships.
12. Generate revenue to support mental health counseling (RUSA)

Resolution:

Be it resolved that the Rutgers University Senate would endorse the sale of alcohol at the stadium and other athletic venues under strict guidelines and conditions.

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References:

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https://www.wvgazettemail.com/sports/beer-boosts-concession-sales-at-wvu-football-games/article_53e994fe-4d75-5389-9c81-8aed07df98a0.html
 4. Big 10 Schools sale of alcohol 2106 status:
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 5. “RUSA is fighting for your right to buy alcohol in Rutgers Stadium”
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- RUSA Fall Semester Report 2017 – Presence of Alcohol in Stadiums:
<http://ruassembly.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RUSA-Fall-Semester-Report-2017.pdf>
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 8. Merlo LJ, Hong J, Cottler LB. The association between alcohol-related arrests and college football game days. Drug Alcohol Depend. 106(1):69-71, 2010.

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