## POINTS OF VIEW

## Tragedy at U-M can lead to positive outcome We don't send our children to college to die. Yet nationally in 1997, more than 30 college to die. Yet nationally students perished in alcohol-related incidents. These ranged from falling to the responsibility of enforcing the legal drinking age of incidents. These ranged from falling to the responsibility of enforcing the legal drinking age of control to the percentage of students who don't drink at all also grew from 156 percent to 19 percent. The Harvard study tells it like from 156 percent to 19 percent.

C don't send our children to college to die. Yet nationally in 1997, more than 30 college students perished in alcohol-related incidents. These ranged from falling from windows or balconies, down spirs, into water or choking on their own vomit, according to a survey by the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Prevention.

the Higher Education Center for Alco-hol and Drug Prevention.

'As I write this, it seems clear that although she wasn't legally drunk, alcohol contributed in some way to the tragic death of Courtney Cantor, a June graduate of Andower High School in Bloomfield Hills. Cantor apparently fell through a small win-dow of her sixth-floor University of

Michigan dorm room sometime between 3 and 5 a.m. Friday. And since this 18-year-old West Bloomfield freshman was seen drinking at Phi Delta Theta fraternity

Thursday is Bar Night in Ann Arbor – and at other colleges – where many students get an early start on the weekend. But those who aren't old enough to drink legally at bars which ring the campuses and who don't have fake ID simply head for some apart-ment or fraternity party, where age

doesn't get in the way.

Or, they remain in their dorms.

A survey published last spring of
Michigan's public universities showed
little progress in efforts to curb student drinking. That echoes a recent Harvard School of Public Health report that shows almost no change in heavy drinking on campuses nation-wide from 1993 to 1997.

who don't drink at all also grew from 15.6 percent to 19 percent.
It's not that colleges like the University of Michigan aren't doing anything. They ofter alcohol education
and counseling, sponsor some nonalcoholic events, ban alcohol from
foothall stadiums, provide the choice
of alcohol-free dorm rooms, and prohigh leven genmons.

of atconol-free orient from a, and po-hibit kegs on campus. And they schedule activities to commemorate National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, which ironi cally falls this week.

cally falls this week.

But since the 1960s, when the doctrine of in loco parentis (in the position or place of a parent) became obsolete, most colleges haven't actively pursued or prosecuted underage

drinkers or taken adequate measures to insure that fraternities, sororities and dermitories are truly off limits for

underage drinking.
The Harvard study tells it like it is:
So far most schools have directed
their efforts at alcohol education. That simply is not a broad enough

approach.
The entire culture must change.
And it would be best if that change was initiated by the students them-

selves.

It does happen. The death of an Oakland University student following a dormitory drinking party last fall spurred OU student groups, led by the student newspaper, to call for strieter alcohol policies. As a result, the college tightened rules on dorm parties, gave student advisers more authority to enter student rooms to check for underage drinking, and this



week will acknowledge National Col legiate Alcohol Awareness Week in d

legiate Alcohol Awareness Week in a meaningful way.
It was reported that all U-M frater-nities and sororities suspended events planned for last weekend. But, I won-der, will tonight be Bar Night as usual for underage drinkers?
Judith Doner Berne, a West Bloogh-field resident, is former managing edu-tor of the Observer & Eccentric News-

## Universities require trade-offs in order to maintain quality

or some years now, I've been chewing on this idea: When the chewing on this idea: When the historians of the future get around to writing the history of America in the 20th century, they are apt to conclude that the signature range of our senious at the bar area. mark of our society was to have creat-ed and supported seriously excellent public universities.

Think on it.

Think on it.

Before the rise of our great public universities – the University of Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne State universities are all good examples here in Michigan – higher education in America was provided largely by private colleges, mostly on the East Coast, which served a tiny elite, mostly WASP and overwhelmingly male. In the middle of the 19th century, maybe 4 percent of the total population ever got to college.

Late in the century, public universities started on a course of opening the doors to higher education to all kinds of people not previously let in kinds of people not previously let in

kinds of people not previously let in. U-M was one of the leaders, first accepting female students in 1870.

In the 1920s and '30s, public universities started admitting all kinds of able students previously scorned by the privates. Kids from rural America, especially the Midwest. Jewish kids, at that time subject to quota by Ivy League universities. Kids from working families who were prepared Minority kids, seeking validation that skin color was no bar to educational achievement.

In the years following World War II, countless returning veterans received, in effect, college tuition vouchers as a result of the GI Bill. Public universities admitted hundreds of thousands of veterans, perhaps the most successful affirmative action program in the history of our

Today, two out of every three high school graduates get some kind of post-high school education. Nearly 40 percent of those who leave high school now graduate from a college or university. This vast transfer of intellectual



capital from a tiny elite to nearly a majority of our entire population has made America truly the land of oppor-tunity and is very probably the under-lying source of America's astonishing economic performance during the past

decade.

And it was the public universities of this country that that led this remarkable opening up of the system by stepping up to their moral obligation to provide access to all qualified Americans.

Americans.
The case of U-M is particularly instructive. The University of Michi-

gan has for years been captive to the creative tension between its moral obligation as a public university provide college access to the widest possible spectrum of our population and its undoubted quality as among

the finest universities in America.

This has led to all kinds of complex trade-offs.

On the one hand, well-aware that high tuition means that kids can no high tuition means that kids can no longer work their way through college the way they could 30 years ago, U-M has sought to keep tuition as low as possible and to provide as much financial aid to every student as possible. For example, it is U-M's policy that for any undergraduate student who is a Michigan resident and in seed anglenic standing but with good academic standing but with demonstrated financial need, the university will provide a way – grants, scholarships, leans, jobs, whatever – to get that student through school.

On the other hand, the university rightly avoids the simplistic stunt of tying tuition increases to the rate of inflation. For a university whose rood academic standing but with

greatest attribute is the outstanding quality of its faculty, arbitrarily reducing its ability to pay to attract and retain professors is to risk that quality that makes U-M great.

quality that makes U-M great.
Instead, U-M has chosen to find other ways to maximize income, so as to keep tuition increases as low as possible. Last year, for example, the university ended a capital fund drive that raised \$1.4 billion, the largest ever in history by a public university. Part of the money from that drive will endow professorships that will assistin recruiting world-class faculty. Maintaining quality and at the same time cherishing the moral dimension entailed by its public

dimension entailed by its public nature is the hardest challenge at U-M. It's not easy. But it's essential.

Phil Power, in addition to being chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper, also is a regent of the University of Michigan and is seeking re-dection this fall. He welcomes your comments, either by woise mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1850, or by e-mail at ppower@conline.com.



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