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Under 21 Nightlife Needs a Revamp

Kevin Rocha, Volunteer Reporter

Seattle University students can agree that there is no safe or lawful nightlife on and near campus for people under 21. When living as a next-door neighbor to bars and clubs, it seems like a twisted joke that the university chose to reside where it is.

The challenges of being below the legal drinking age are shared amongst our underage community. Many students just stay home and lay low to do their assignments, hang with their roommates, or scroll through their phones the entire night. The college nightlife experience is limited on campus and those that want to dance the night away with their friends face highly limited options.



Annabelle DeGuzman-Carino

To understand what nightlife feels like at Seattle U, an anonymous source shared what being underage and going out can look like.

“The nightlife feels very predatory. [Pubs and bars] make you feel very taken advantage of, not gonna lie. It’s kinda gross,” the source said. “Since people know that underage girls attend these bars, they come there just to be with underage girls.”

The impact of being underage limits much of what students can attend. Given that Seattle U already has a reputation for not being a party school, the possibilities dwindle further.

“Sometimes you’re scared of going to certain places because you know that they are not going to let you in because of your age. That is always my fear. And, yes, I do wish I could change [the legal drinking age] but it’s the law,” The anonymous source said.

The 2010 phrase, FOMO (fear of missing out), is a common feeling at Seattle U that cannot be ignored. People are pushed to feel forgotten in their dorms or seek nightlife activities elsewhere to feel included with other people their age and older.

“I think it’s hard since Seattle U is not a party school,” the source said. “Since we do not have a Greek life it can be challenging to socialize. People resort to going to bars underage. It’s more unsafe going to these bars than going to a normal party because you are out there in the wild.”

They elaborated on their experience of going out while under 21 in Capitol Hill.

“I remember being 18 and getting in places and having 30-year-olds hitting on you. It’s disgusting. My friends feel the same. Most people don’t go to [pubs and bars] because it’s just so gross,” the source said

Andrew Pascual, a third-year kinesiology major, believes that there is an unusual vibe to the experience of looking for something to do on the weekends when underage.

“[I would go] clubbing at Trinity,” Pascual said, referencing the 18+ nightclub. “A weird night and an experience. Never leave without your friends or go without a group.”

Pascual also enjoys outdoor dining options and activities.

“After the clubs and pregaming, there would be some nighttime walks with friends. Going to Cal Anderson and seeing the night lights. Getting Seattle Dogs. It’s a must,” Pascual said.

Pascual believes that nightlife under 21 has its pros and cons, and always has a learning curve. He takes a positive note on the sense of being with people who care about you and want to be there with you when you’re out on the town for an extra sense of security.

“Pros: you know your limits once you are of age. The cons are you do not even know how to react [to being intoxicated],” Pascual said. “Nightlife is a learning experience. Stay safe and have fun. Look out for the people you know and love.”

Pascual acknowledges that the nightlife is not for everyone. He stated that the college environment and age group offer a unique experience.

“Everyone has different opinions... The college experience is a learning level where people have to get out of their comfort zone. As long as you’re being smart, wise and safe, that’s all that matters. Life is an experience and we grow”.

Students all share a similar desire to do more with their nights and friends, but many succumb to limits because of age and the lack of spaces that offer a safe and welcoming experience.