

Carroll County Times

Drunken driving simulator shows McDaniel students dangers of alcohol By Penny Riordan, Times Staff Writer Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Rory Anderson inched her way ever so slowly toward the car stopped at the stop light in front of her.

“You’re going to rear end them,” her friend Katie Horvath said.

“No, I’m not,” Anderson said, pressing harder on the brake.

The light turned green, and Anderson tried to adjust the wheel slightly to change lanes, but overcompensated and careened toward a building.

A second later, the car crashed.

While the car that Anderson was driving was not real, the experience of attempting to drive drunk was enough to make her think twice about future decisions.

“You don’t realize how hard it is,” Anderson said.

Once Anderson is old enough to drink, she said she did not plan to get behind the wheel if under the influence of alcohol.

“The steering, the braking, everything was so hard,” she said. “You’re overcompensating for everything.”

At McDaniel College, students had a chance to get behind the wheel in an arcade-like game that showed a video of what it would be like to drive while intoxicated. The simulator is from Edu-tainment by Kramer, a Michigan-based company that specializes in interactive entertainment.

When the students got behind the wheel, they found steering, braking and speed would be adjusted with each higher level of intoxication.

The simulator was brought to campus through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that is meant to raise awareness about high-risk drinking.

Since the college received the grant in July, staff and students have put together events that are targeting freshman, who are more likely to drink out of control, said program director Grogan Ullah. Recent alumni have been hired to help design events that attract students such as ice cream socials, move nights and lectures about the effects of alcohol.

“We want to connect the freshman with recent students and alumni to help them make that transition,” Ullah said.

Ryan Brown, a senior who also tried the simulator, said he thinks freshmen are more likely to drink out of control because of all of the freedom they feel like they have in college.

“A lot of freshman, they first come in with this liberty,” he said. “It really just leaves people with not knowing their limits,” he said.

The simulator, he said, was also harder than he expected.

“I didn’t know it would be quite that much of a challenge to drive drunk,” he said.