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KSU KICKS-OFF HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

On October 16 and 17, Kennesaw State University's campus will be littered with students living and sleeping outside. These students are participating in the sleep-out for KSU's inaugural Homelessness Awareness Week (HAW), which was organized by Dr. Lana Wachniak, Associate Dean of KSU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

When met with skepticism regarding the validity of a sleep-out, Wachniak explained, "We're not naïve. We know that the sleep-out is not real for [students]. It just gives [students] an idea of what it might be like to be homeless." Students will not be allowed to bring anything that can't fit into a small backpack to the sleep-out and cell-phone use will not be permitted either. "If we catch someone using their cell-phone," joked Wachniak, "we'll send them to a treatment center for addiction."

The sleep-out is the culmination of HAW, which kicks-off October 13 with free t-shirts for the first 50 students to sign up for the sleep-out. Throughout the week, activist organizations, such as the Young Adult Guidance Center, Inc., Metro Atlanta Red Shield Services, and The Center for Family resources and Covenant Community House, will lead discussions on how they are engaged in the fight against homelessness and how students can get involved. Student posters about homelessness and works by homeless artists will be on display in the atrium of the KSU Social Sciences building.

Wachniak began organizing HAW last spring, and even though she had no budget to work with, her idea garnered so much support among colleagues and students that HAW was ready to move forward by October. Wachniak is optimistic that the enthusiasm

will continue to build throughout the week of events and that a crowd of students will be sleeping-out, eager to simulate homelessness.

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