

Smoke-Free Campuses in the News

Get colleges to ban smoking

Portland Press Herald

(Reader submission on editorial page)

May 3, 2002

Youth smoking rates on the decline; adult smokers finding more support for quitting and staying quit; worksite exposure to secondhand smoke decreasing dramatically as clean air policies abound!

Among the many headlines trumpeting the success of tobacco control over the past decade, little has been said about smoking on our campuses. That may be because the news on college smoking has been pretty grim. In fact, during the mid-1990s smoking among college students increased by 28 percent, according to a Harvard University study.

States like Maine, Massachusetts and California have taught the country a great deal about community interventions that effectively reduce tobacco use among the general population: higher prices, clean air policies, youth laws and quality cessation methods.

We now need to apply those same lessons to our colleges and universities that have been largely left behind in this tobacco control movement.

One year ago, the American Cancer Society formally launched its "Smoke-Free New England College and University Campaign" in an effort to reduce tobacco use among college students through changes in campus policy and environment.

A core objective of this campaign is to prohibit smoking within and around the perimeter of all buildings, including residence halls, and at outdoor events. In an effort to reduce tobacco use - the leading cause of preventable death and disease - we are ultimately seeking to create college environments that are truly tobacco-free.

Smoke-free college policies are beneficial on many levels. First, they eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, which is known to cause cancer, emphysema, fatal and nonfatal heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and can exacerbate asthma. Even the ventilation experts now acknowledge that no filtration system can eliminate all of the toxins in secondhand smoke.

Second, colleges have gone to great lengths to reduce fire risk, often banning candles, incense and halogen lamps. Given that the careless disposal of smoking materials is the leading cause of civilian fire deaths, fire safety policies should also prohibit smoking and include adequate enforcement measures.

Finally, smoke-free policies assist smokers with quitting, and college students want to quit. One study found that half of current college smokers tried unsuccessfully to quit in the past year. According to an internal tobacco industry document, smokers facing a 100 percent ban on worksite smoking consume 11 per- cent to 15 percent less than average and quit at a rate that is 84 percent higher than average.

Tobacco companies oppose smoking bans because they cut into their bottom line by helping smokers quit. We support bans for the same reason. Though many colleges may find banning smoking to be a bit radical, the truth is that such policies simply mirror the reality of the working world. Many worksites have made their entire campuses smoke-free. Hospitals like Maine Medical Center, school systems and businesses like Oakhurst Dairy have made their grounds 100 percent smoke-free.

Employers ban smoking in order to improve productivity and working conditions while lowering the costs of health care, disability and maintenance. Whatever the motivation, the message is clear: smoke-free policies are becoming the norm because the positive effects far outweigh any inconvenience.

Colleges and universities are deemed to be laboratories of betterment for the individual and society. Many colleges offer academic programs in health services, medicine and health education. Those - including the University of Southern Maine and the University of New England - should be among the first to embrace tobacco control.

The dramatic increase in college smoking cannot be ignored. Community leaders must now partner with colleges and universities to develop strategies for reducing tobacco use on college campuses.

Butts are out at WSU

Winona Daily News

April 23, 2002

Winona, Minn. - Winona State University took 25 steps Monday toward becoming a smoke-free campus.

In an effort to enforce the tobacco policy, which bars smoking within 25 feet of a university building, WSU faculty and students, as well as community members, moved the university's outdoor ashtrays 25 feet from each entrance.

Allowing smoking near buildings forces nonsmokers to walk through a cloud of smoke to get to class, the event's organizers said.

"We need to be respectful of the nonsmokers," said Jim Schmidt, vice president of university advancement.

"It's these chilly days that create some of our problems, as smokers tend to huddle near the entrances of our buildings," Schmidt said.

As he huddled near a newly moved ashtray, smoker Char Taylor said that's true.

"Normally, it's so cold outside that you don't want to have rain pouring down on you or wind blowing up your pants leg," the 22-year-old senior said. "I might be a smoker, but that still doesn't mean I don't have the right not to freeze."

The WSU wellness committee proposed the Earth Day event, after the change in policy made last August.

All tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, are included in the policy, which states that smoking/smokeless tobacco use is:

- **Prohibited in all university buildings.**
- **Prohibited within a 25-foot perimeter of all university buildings.**
- **Not permitted in university motor pool vehicles.**
- **Not permitted within private residence hall rooms.**

Jennifer Erickson, a student member of the wellness committee, said a lot of smokers violate the new policy.

"Hopefully now, with the receptacles moved 25 feet, we'll have a lot of compliance," she said.

Schmidt said the university will use "gentle reminders" to enforce the policy.

Taylor said she'll comply - at least for now. "If it's a cold day outside, I'm going to stand next to the doors," she said.

Smoking banned in all [Brown] U. dorms, dining facilities

The Brown Daily Herald

Spring 2001

Smoking will be banned from all campus residence halls and eating facilities beginning this fall.

The ban is part of a continuing University effort to address health and safety concerns surrounding tobacco use, administrators said.

The new restrictions specifically target existing tobacco use in University housing units and the smoking section of the Ratty.

"We can't ignore the effects of second-hand smoke [as a] health concern for the community [or] the danger of fires," said Janina Montero, vice president for campus life and student services.

The process that led to the Office of Campus Life's decision began during Parents Weekend last October, Montero said, when parents expressed concern to Interim President Sheila Blumstein regarding smoking in the Ratty. In response, Montero said Blumstein asked her to look into the possibility of smoke-free buildings on campus.

Donald Desrochers, director of residential life, said he too has "raised the [smoking] issue for the past three or four years" in response to a growing amount of public health information and increasing demand for smoke-free University housing.

The issue came to a head during a Residential Council (ResCouncil) meeting in December, when the council voted 9 to 1 "to make all of the

interiors of dorms smoke free” and included a recommendation, although not directly under the Council’s jurisdiction, “to make all University spaces smoke free.”

“No one really wanted to say that you can’t smoke in your own room,” said Andrew Lom ’02, chair of ResCouncil. “I don’t want to be taking away people’s right to smoke, [but] I feel worse telling someone you have to have a headache all day.”

Lom said ResCouncil also based its recommendation on the incendiary hazards of burning tobacco.

Casey Marks ’02 offered the only dissenting opinion on ResCouncil.

“It might be the right decision,” he said, but “the decision was made really hastily.”

Marks said ResCouncil’s decision to take “away the right of people to smoke in their own rooms was based on mere speculation” and a more in-depth study was necessary for a responsible recommendation.

Despite differences in opinion, Montero said the proposed changes will be effective next semester.

“This is just a policy change,” said Kate Wolford, project director for the Office of Campus Life and Student Services. Wolford said no campus discussion is necessary for the alteration of clean air policies in residence halls or dining facilities.

Desrochers said he agrees that this issue is “not something that is going to be thrown on the table.”

Brown would not be the first university to ban smoking from its residence halls. Schools as varied as Harvard College, Oberlin College and seven of the 11 Big Ten universities have implemented or will implement residence hall smoking bans by next fall.

In general, institutions’ responses to the issue have varied.

Some schools, such as Yale University, Princeton University and Dartmouth College, maintain regulations that are similar to Brown’s current policy, prohibiting smoking in all public areas but allowing tobacco use in private dormitory rooms. Other schools, like Cornell University, are more relaxed

and allow smoking in common residential areas as long as these areas are "appropriately ventilated."

While universities such as Antioch University have embraced the idea of segregating smokers in dorms, Lom said residential segregation of smokers would create poor living conditions and cause increased damage to University property.

In addition to health and safety issues, a desire to influence student behavior is integral to many universities' smoking policies.

John Richard, regional executive for advocacy media of the American Cancer Society in Rhode Island and southeast Connecticut, advocates residence hall smoking bans for behavioral reasons.

"It is so important for campuses to adopt regulations to make it easier for people who don't want to smoke not to smoke," Richard said.

"Tobacco companies are aggressively targeting college students," he said, and universities need to take "a leadership role" in protecting their students.

Student reactions ran the gamut.

Some students fully agreed with the University's decision.

"There are people in my hall who smoke, and it makes me nauseous," said Lauren Wier '04.

The smoke gets everywhere, and there are butts on the floor, she said. "It's disgusting."

Other students acknowledged the need to ban smoking in the Ratty but disagreed on the necessity of a ban in private dormitory rooms.

"It's no fun to eat with smoke," said Elizabeth Speaker '03, adding that dorm rooms are people's "own private space" and should not be impinged upon by the University.

Other students did not see any merit in the new policy.

"I feel that if people are smokers that is their own personal choice," said Gary Sprague '04.

Sprague does not view second-hand smoke as a threat to his health, and said people who sit in the Ratty's smoking section "and don't smoke obviously don't mind" the current policy.

The new policy would include the addition of inappropriate smoking to the list of punishable offenses in the student handbook, Desrochers said. He said the University will rely on "peer enforcement" and Brown University Police and Security efforts to enforce the new regulation.

To ease the transition to smoke-free dorms, the University is also planning to provide programs on smoking cessation and general health education, Montero said.

In addition to the policies proposed by Campus Life, the University is also looking into smoking bans for faculty and staff spaces as part of its drive to make Brown buildings entirely smoke free, Montero said. These issues, she said, are not under her jurisdiction and will take longer to resolve.

No candles or cigs for Penn State U. dorm residents

Daily Collegian, 2000

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. -- This semester, Pennsylvania State University dorm residents exploring their buildings for the nearest smoking lounge came up empty handed, and students hoping to decorate their rooms with candles were denied. To increase fire safety, officials have banned smoking and the possession of candles anywhere in dorms. "It's a good decision. It's safer," Conal Carr, assistant director of Residence Life and adviser for the Student Fire Safety Commission, said of the new smoking policy.

Laura Klingelhofer (junior-elementary education), an ex-smoker, is glad to see the smoking lounges go.

"The smell of it really bothered me," she said. "I don't want to smell like smoke when I'm walking past."

However, others see the ban on smoking in dorms as an unnecessary intrusion into students' lives.

"The fact that most freshmen are 18 and can legally smoke almost makes it kind of silly that the university is saying, 'No, you can't,'" said Lauren Thomas (senior-management and international business).

Thomas has fond memories of the days she lived on campus and frequented the smoking lounge after dinner with her friends.

"It was more of a social experience, really. It was about making friends and making memories," she said with a smile.

Thomas said if she still lived on campus, smoking in January wouldn't be pleasant. "I would freeze my butt off outside. It would be awfully cold."

She doubted the lack of indoor facilities would cut down on smoking rates.

"The real die-hards are going to be out there with their coats and their smoking mittens with two fingers cut out," she said, laughing.

Carr said upcoming cold weather may tempt residents to light up in their rooms, but he advised against it.

"Our staff are fairly good at noticing it and disciplining accordingly," he said.

This year, Residence Life will be enforcing the smoking ban as well as another fire-safety rule that bans candles in dorms.

"Anything that's lightable or has an open flame isn't allowed," said Diane Andrews, senior associate director of Residence Life.

She said resident assistants won't be searching rooms, but students can be written up if it becomes clear that there is something prohibited in a room.

"Having a candle would be considered a housing violation," Andrews said. "Students would be asked to get rid of it, and/or talk with their coordinator."

She said a lit candle would merit stronger discipline.

Students can keep themselves out of trouble by sending candles home by fall break or removing the candle's wick, Andrews said. "If somebody does have a decorative candle and they cut the wick off, they can have it. Basically it just becomes a decorative ball of wax."

Complete fire safety regulations for dorm residents are listed on the Residence Life Web page (www.sa.psu.edu/RL) and on page 133 of the daybook residents received on their desks.

Southwest Texas State U To Ban Smoking in Campus Buildings by 2001

U-Wire

September 6, 2000

This past summer, the decision was made at Southwest Texas State University for all buildings to be completely smoke-free, and as of the end of classes next spring, that decision will become a reality. The University Council made the decision to pass the ban on smoking in all campus buildings, said James Studer, vice president of Student Affairs. A major argument in support of the smoking ban came from Emilo Coronco, director of the Student Health Center. His informative argument about the dangers of smoking influenced the council's recommendation, Studer said. Coronco was unavailable for comment.

No Butts About It UNH Residence Halls Go Smoke-Free

UNH News Bureau

August 1, 2000

DURHAM, N.H. -- Students living in University of New Hampshire residence halls beginning this September can breathe easier. All 26 halls have gone smoke-free.

Scott Chesney, UNH assistant vice president for residential life, says the move was made in response to students who spoke up in recent surveys. "Increasingly, the percentage of students who say they would be willing to live in a smoke-free environment has risen. This year, it's 81 percent," he says. "It's clear, we should stop promoting the addiction."

The survey, which covers various community development issues, is administered annually to the approximately 4,200 students living in UNH residence halls. The return rate is 95 percent.

Until this year, only six UNH residence halls were designated non-smoking. The university had planned to increase the number each year, but found it couldn't keep up with demand. "We were overwhelmed with requests for non-smoking halls. We heard from parents and students," says Barbara Paiton, director of housing, adding that many were concerned about health problems associated with second-hand smoke.

Chesney explains the new housing rule will be strictly enforced. "On the first offense, the student will be given an informal warning; on the second, he or she will be issued a written warning to be kept on record; the third time, the student will be placed on probation; a fourth offense will result in dismissal from the residence halls."

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UNH Bans Smoking In Its 26 Residence Halls

Union Leader [Manchester, NH]

August 3, 2000

Smoking has been snuffed in University of New Hampshire residence halls. Next month all 26 residence halls will become smoke-free in response to recent student surveys, according to Scott Chesney, the university's assistant vice president for residential life. Previously, only six residence halls on campus were designated as non-smoking. "Increasingly, the percentage of students who say they would be willing to live in a smoke-free environment has risen," Chesney said recently. "This year, it's 81 percent. It's clear, we should stop promoting the addiction."

Frostburg State Bans Sale of Tobacco on Campus

The Baltimore Sun

Wednesday, August 11, 1999

The school has announced that effective Sunday, tobacco products won't be sold on campus. "The whole point for us was an ethical one," said President Catherine R. Gira. In recent years, she said, the college has made about \$60,000 annually from tobacco sales at campus stores while also sponsoring programs to help students quit smoking. Other public Maryland colleges that have stopped selling tobacco products include the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Salisbury State College and Coppin State College.

Colorado State U. Smoke-Free Halls Leave Mixed Student Reaction

U-Wire

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

Starting this semester, all of the residence halls on the Colorado State University campus are completely smoke-free. Reaction from students has been mixed. "I've received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and even from prospective students," McKelfresh said, noting that the proposal for a ban sprung largely from student requests.

McKelfresh points out that the University of Northern Colorado banned smoking cigarettes from its dorm last year and several other universities have done so in recent years. "(Banning smoking) has become a nationwide trend," he said. Hoffman believes that the transition to non-smoking has gone relatively smoothly because many occupants of the dorms are freshmen, and have never had the option to smoke in the past.

UW to Ban Sales of Cigarettes at End of Winter Quarter

The Daily Herald [Everett, WA]

March 1, 2000

SEATTLE -- Cigarette sales have been banned on the University of Washington campus, thanks to a decision by the Student Union Advisory Board that was endorsed by the university. At the end of winter quarter, March 20, cigarettes will no longer be offered at the only two locations on campus that now sell them. The advisory board voted to ban cigarette sales Feb. 15, and Dr. Ernest Morris, vice president of student affairs, made it official last week. University research showed smoking rates had increased 56 percent at the UW since 1993. "I hope that this action prompts students, faculty and staff who smoke or chew tobacco to quit these unhealthy behaviors," said Dr. Alonzo Plough, director of public health for Seattle and King County.

URI to Ban Smoking in Campus Housing

The Associated Press State & Local Wire
December 3, 2000

PROVIDENCE, R.I. Smokers who live on campus at the University of Rhode Island may soon have to choose between their habit and housing. The university is banning smoking in campus housing beginning June 1. School officials want to reduce the number of building fires and provide a healthier environment for the 3,600 students who live on the South Kingstown campus. Some students who smoke say they will adjust but others believe the ban unfair.

"It's stupid," said Rachel Burdi, a University of Rhode Island freshman.

"I'll live off campus."

Junior Blythe Londy, chairperson of URI's Student Affairs Committee, said the ban is "kind of another step in taking away students' rights." The residence halls "are their homes," said Londy, who smokes but lives off campus.

Freshman Jasmine Moorehead doesn't expect a problem.

"I go outside to smoke, just because it bothers people," she told The Providence Sunday Journal. "It's not that hard to do."

School officials say the threat of building fires can't be ignored. "Without question, the potential exists for fire to occur from the careless use of cigarettes," said Chip Yensan, URI's director of residential life.

"We believe that this is another important step in reshaping our community, making it a safer and better place for our new culture for learning," URI President Robert L. Carothers said. Five years ago he banned alcohol at campus events. Smoking is already banned in classrooms, administrative offices and some recently renovated residences.

Carothers noted URI houses the Cancer Prevention Research Center. Its programs have helped people in Great Britain, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada quit smoking. Students -- who spend \$6,645 a year to live in the university's brick dormitories -- learned of the ban last week.

The ban comes at a time when more students than ever are lighting up.

About one-third of the nation's college students are using tobacco products, according to the Harvard School of Public Health. At URI, about 10 percent of the incoming students smoke, said Roger Jadosz, health educator at URI's Student Health Services. That number jumps to about 30 percent after four years of campus life -- including parties, drinking and peer pressure, Jadosz said.

"There's a lot of social smoking," he said. Many students ignore the health risks, including cancer, "because at age 18 to 24, you're immortal," he said.

Three years ago, Salve Regina University banned smoking in its dorms. And this fall, the University of New Hampshire and the University of Delaware banned smoking in campus residences.

"I see no problem with it," said URI sophomore Jamie Bell, who is trying to quit smoking. "If it entails going outside, it could curtail smoking."

Campus News Keene State College

FYI - A message from the President.....

A Recommendation for Smoke-Free Residence Halls

In its theme of wellness, Our Plan articulates Keene State's vision of a safe and healthy campus community. Given this vision, it is appropriate and timely that we consider campus smoking policy. While smoking is not permitted in the buildings and facilities where the teaching and administration of the College occurs, smoking is permitted in some - but not all - of our residential areas. Students in designated areas are permitted to smoke in their rooms, although not in common areas, such as bathrooms, hallways, and lounges.

I have received a recommendation from Anne Miller, associate dean for student affairs, that Keene State College designate all residence halls and peripheral areas to be smoke-free beginning in fall 2002. The proposal has the strong support of the Tobacco Free Task Force, a subcommittee of the KSC Wellness Council.

The rationale for this recommendation is multi-faceted. Smoking is a health issue for both those who smoke and those who are exposed to the smoke of others. However one views the decision to smoke, we must consider the well-being of non-smoking

students as well as employees who work in these areas. Smoking creates safety risks in residence halls, particularly the risk of fire. Finally, smoking presents practical problems: It is extremely difficult to balance smoking and non-smoking housing assignments, and our residential life staff receive many complaints from non-smokers whose roommates have become smokers and from non-smokers assigned to rooms once occupied by smokers.

There is a great deal of persuasive evidence in support of this recommendation. Most of us have become familiar with information about the wide array of serious health consequences of smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke. There is also a growing body of evidence about the addiction process, which suggests that colleges have a special obligation and an opportunity to lessen the amount of tobacco addiction.

We know that the younger a person is when he or she starts to smoke, the greater the likelihood of life-long addiction - and that young adults who have not become smokers by the time of college graduation are unlikely to start.

The college-age population is the target of immense tobacco marketing campaigns and we have seen an increase in the number of college-age smokers in recent years. (This information is drawn from research presented by the Tobacco Free Task Force, whose report may be read in its entirety at www.keene.edu/wellness/tftf.cfm.)

I will accept comments on this recommendation from the entire campus community until October 31. All comments should be in writing and sent to me directly at MS 1504. I will consider all points of view on this matter and make a final decision

regarding this recommendation no later than November 15.