

OSU Tobacco-Free Campus Policy



Tobacco Stops Here

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University Health Services/Seretean Wellness Center Tobacco Education Program

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Summary of Tobacco Policy at OSU

October 2006: SGA senator, Danielle Toussaint, authored legislation that proposed a tobacco free campus. The recommendation passed: Yes 21, No 9.

OSU Seretean Wellness Center and University Health Services had received a grant from the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust in July 2006 to address tobacco cessation and prevention in students. A goal of year 3 was to introduce a 24/7 no tobacco use policy.

In November, 2006 both, Faculty Council and Staff Advisory Council passed resolutions in support of the tobacco free campus. There was significant discussion about enforcement by both groups, but overall supported the policy.

In December, 2006, then President, Dr. David Schmidly, convened a task force to assess the policy and implementation. Representatives from SGA, FC, SAC, Residential Life, University Police, Center for Health Sciences, University Health Services and Human Resources meet on 4 separate occasions to discuss how and when the policy should be implemented. The group also investigated other campuses that had become tobacco free and sought counsel from them. The recommendation was also forwarded to OSU Legal Counsel for their consideration.

In March, 2007, the Tobacco Task Force recommended to administration that the 24/7 no tobacco use policy be adopted in July 2008. The Task Force recommended that there be up to 5 designated tobacco use areas on campus. The “designated areas” was a source of discussion among the Task Force. Several members felt that these areas had proven to be difficult to control, a source or increased litter, and loitering.

In March, 2007, Dr. Schmidly resigned and it was up to Interim President, Dr. Marlene Strathe to continue the tobacco free cause. To her credit, she did so without hesitation, moving the policy forward through committees and the administrative maze.

In March, 2008, Burns Hargis was appointed as OSU President. He also supported the policy and in doing so had the number of designated smoking areas changed to only one, at the North edge of campus. The policy went into effect on July 1, 2008.

Tobacco Use Prevention Program

In October 2007, OSU launched the tobacco use identification process, a comprehensive approach for campus tobacco use reduction, combining evidence based tobacco education/cessation programs with efforts to create a physical, social, and policy environment that supports tobacco-free campus.

The goals of the program are to:

1. Work with Oklahoma State University leadership groups to create and promote policy to eliminate tobacco use on campus.
2. Identify tobacco use as a major health problem that needs to be addressed.
3. Provide an opportune setting for interventions that help OSU students make healthful choices about tobacco use.

Major activities/events organized:

1. Brought tobacco prevention national speaker to campus
2. Implemented the Great American Smoke Out
3. Wrote tobacco related articles on OSU, local newspapers and magazine
4. Implemented the Kick Butt Day
5. Conducted anti-tobacco media campaigns
6. Developed and displayed anti-tobacco messages
7. Organized the "OSU Operation Clean Up" to clean the campus from cigarette butts and computed the human life cost and financial cost associated
8. Obtained campus wide baseline data by administering tobacco use and attitude survey to OSU Students.
9. Screened for tobacco use through University Health Services.

This program also focuses on influencing students by multiple factors: individual factors, peer factors, institutional factors, community factors, and public policy to address the environment in which students make decisions about tobacco use; and promotes and supports healthful decisions about tobacco use.

The program has developed a Wellness State tobacco education and prevention module for freshmen. The development and ultimate delivery of this module will increase awareness and knowledge about tobacco and the harmful effects of using tobacco.

Along with tobacco-free campus policy, the single most important step in addressing tobacco use and dependence is screening student for tobacco use. The program screens University Health Services (UHS) patients to identify and assess the tobacco use status of every student who comes to the UHS and provides appropriate intervention, by either assisting the students in quitting or by providing motivational intervention.

The UHS medical staff and the tobacco health educator assist student tobacco users in setting a quit date and select the appropriate treatment. See identification tool at the end. Student tobacco users are referred to the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline where each tobacco user is assigned to a quit coach who will help in the quitting process. The OSU tobacco health educator makes follow up calls in a monthly basis to monitor the progress of every student.

This program received an internal yearly evaluation from the OSU Marketing Head Department and an external evaluation from University of Oklahoma (OU) Health Science Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

Lessons learned

Through the process of making OSU a tobacco free campus the following are important issues we feel important to keep in mind.

- Support from the student governing bodies and their constituents is as critical as the support of Administration in all aspects of the process. A key factor is support from the President of the university as well.
- Support services should be in place to assist with cessation programs for individuals prior to the effective date of the policy.
- Notification of the policy to all faculty, students, and staff should be timely in nature, but early enough to allow adequate time to access support services.
- Mass marketing of the policy should utilize all types of communications and directed not only to those on campus, but to potential visitors as well.
- An electronic venue providing detailed information regarding the policy, including the policy itself, frequently asked questions, how to report violations, cessation services, etc. is recommended. This should include contact information for individuals to express issues and concerns or ask questions regarding the policy.