

Wellness Council
Proposal to Change the Campus Smoking Policy
Submitted February, 2006

History and Rationale:

Some two years ago, the Wellness Council began receiving complaints from students, faculty and staff regarding the presence of “smoke clouds” around campus buildings and their concern over exposure to second-hand smoke. Over the past two years, surveys have been conducted by the council, in conjunction with peer educators and initiatives within Student Health Services, to begin to formulate an approach to developing a policy that addresses the campus culture at SU. The Executive Staff of the University charged the Wellness Council with the responsibility of establishing a smoking committee and researching and developing a proposed policy. Additionally, the American College Health Association, American Lung Association, and American Cancer Society have all worked to educate the public regarding research that indicates exposure to second-hand smoke as a cancer causing agent. The Wellness Council has researched various campus policies, the recommendations of public health organizations, and surveyed the campus to gather information regarding a proposed policy change at SU. Based on its research and findings, the Wellness Council recommends that the campus smoking policy be changed. It further recommends that the campus consider the proposed policy as a first step in moving toward a smoke free environment.

Method:

The Wellness Council established a smoking subcommittee, which conducted an environmental scan of the entire campus, noting smoking behaviors, opportunities to provide smoking areas, and current issues around smoking and enforcement. It reviewed the existing policy which prohibits smoking within 20 feet of residence halls, as well as smoking within the interior of any campus building. Additionally, the council considered rights of employees under collective bargaining agreements and access to areas for breaks. After reviewing the policies on a variety of campuses, the council chose to pursue two alternative policies, one that prohibits smoking within 20 feet of any campus building, and another, that designates a smoking area for each building on campus. Campus governance groups, focus groups of co-workers, and students were engaged in discussions of these possible policies and feedback was incorporated in the decision-making and policy development.

Proposed Policy:

The council recommends that a designated smoking area be identified for each campus building and that smoking be prohibited at all other entrances. Smoking within 30 feet of any campus building entrance not designated as a smoking area should be prohibited. This prohibited area would begin at the bottom or first step of an entrance. The council has attached a list of proposed entrances that should be used, after conducting an extensive environmental scan, however, individuals who work and occupy buildings may elect to appeal the decision and propose a different area, based on their knowledge of the use of that facility. The appeal would be considered by the smoking subcommittee, with a recommendation forwarded to the campus governance groups for approval of the change. Certain basic criteria, listed below, would be considered in the decision:

Criteria Used to Identify Smoking Entrances

- 1) Avoid using a main entrance to any building
- 2) Since wheelchair users or disabled persons often do not have alternative choices, avoid entrances that provide wheelchair access
- 3) Avoid entrances adjacent to any air intake units that would pull smoke into buildings (these are primarily commercial units and not residential units)
- 4) Look for covered areas, whenever possible, to use as the designated area, providing protection from the weather for smokers
- 5) Make sure individuals entering a building have a choice of not walking through a designated smoke area if they wish not to
- 6) Where there does not seem to be a viable area, have building occupants develop their own recommendation, for approval

Proposed Suggestions for Designated Smoking Entrances

Admissions House – north end of porch, away from main entrance

Architecture/Engineering Building – no covered area

Alumni House – rear porch (there is a covered area as well as open area)

Beacon House – No covered area except for front entrance; have occupants develop plan

Blackwell Library – no covered areas accessible to general public; if using front porch, must use north front corner, away from main entrance and wheelchair ramp.

Camden House – back porch

Devilbiss Hall – loading dock (rear)

Foundation Center – back porch

Faculty House – no area that avoids main entrance; use Camden House next door

Fulton Hall – north wing entrance (entrance away from food court)

University Center – no covered areas; use patio on southeast corner adjacent to lounge area

Holloway Hall – 1) front entrance by Perdue School, small covered porch; 2) north courtyard outside of Perdue school; 3) north side of rose garden in rear of Perdue school (air intake units on south end of garden prohibits smoking on this end)

Honors House – gazebo in back yard

Henson Science Bldg. – Main Hall, south side, off food court area

Maintenance Building – East Corner of loading dock on south end of building (away from loading dock doors and south entrance to building)

Maggs Gym – swimming pool entrance (building users are generally directed to west entrance where card swipe control is located).

PACE (Center for Public Affairs) – Nothing – use back porch on Student Art Center or develop own plan

Philosophy House – small side porch or rear courtyard (allow them to make decision)

Power Professional Buildings – lots of continuous covered porch areas extending the length of all buildings; use less frequented areas away from entrances

Center for Conflict Resolution – garage

Student Art Center – rear porch

Tennis Center – no covered areas; allow occupants to develop plan

Theatre/Web Development - side porch (even though there is an air unit, it is residential, and does not act as an air intake)

Enforcement issues:

The council recommends that an aggressive educational campaign be initiated to make faculty, staff and students aware of the designated smoking areas for each building. Signage to designate the area will be developed and displayed. Positive social norming, by all members of the campus community, can help create buy-in for the campaign, and educate smokers about the available areas without a true “enforcement” having to take place. Smokers who were surveyed seemed to respect the rights of non-smokers not to have to be exposed to second-hand smoke, while non-smokers seemed to respect the rights of smokers to smoke. This spirit of mutual respect for individual rights can be promoted as a model for other issues on campus. The council garnered a great deal of feedback from all campus constituents who believed that, eventually, with each new class, the policy will “grandfather” itself in, until it becomes the norm.

Placement of urns, benches, and other ways of creating smoking areas, will help to clearly identify smoking areas. Each building may choose to promote designated smoking areas through its own awareness campaign, as needed or desired.

Resources and support:

This proposal is being submitted to each of the campus governance groups for approval. That endorsement or non-endorsement will be forwarded to the executive staff for decision. Upon approval, the Wellness council will seek grant funds from the Wicomico County Health Department, the College Consortium for Tobacco control, or other appropriate agency to secure funding for signage, urns and supplies to create smoking areas, and a public awareness campaign.