

## **A TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **THE WAY FORWARD\***

1. Develop a draft Tobacco-Free Campus policy proposal. (Summer 2012)
2. Issue policy proposal for comment by Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Senate. (Fall 2012)
3. Adopt the final Tobacco-Free Campus Policy. (Fall 2012)
4. Target adoption date – January 1, 2013.
5. Establish an “implementation” period.
  - a. Limit tobacco use locations near buildings to one location per building from January 1, 2013 until August 1, 2014.
  - b. Implement a comprehensive communications campaign.
  - c. Fully implement the policy on August 1, 2014.
6. The Tobacco-Free Campus Policy will be a part of the university’s commitment to creating a healthy and sustainable environment for all members of our campus community, and is designed to be positive and health-related.
  - a. Individuals noticing violations of the policy should strive to be non-confrontational and respectful to tobacco users when communicating the policy.
  - b. Tobacco users are expected to adhere to the policy and likewise be respectful to ex-tobacco users and non-tobacco users.
  - c. Enforcement of the policy will be achieved through education, awareness, and a spirit of cooperation.
7. The policy and its expectations will be widely communicated, beginning January, 2013.
8. Tobacco-use cessation programs will be offered to students and employees who wish to stop using tobacco products free of charge, with the exception of prescribed medications that may be required.

\*Adapted from The University of Texas at Austin Tobacco-Free Campus Policy – available at [www.utexas.edu/tobaccofree/](http://www.utexas.edu/tobaccofree/)

## **A TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**

Information and responses to frequently asked questions<sup>1</sup>

### **About Mississippi State University's Tobacco-Free Campus Policy**

Effective August 1, 2014 Mississippi State University will be tobacco-free. The use of any tobacco products will be prohibited in university buildings and on university grounds, including parking areas, sidewalks, walkways, and university owned buildings. In order to allow a period of transition, from January 1, 2013 until August 1, 2014 the University will limit the designated tobacco use areas outside university buildings to one location per building. The university will also utilize that period of time to fully communicate the new policy and its expectations to the entire campus community. The full text of the policy, including the definition for tobacco products and approved exceptions is available at the Mississippi State University Policies and Procedures website. Reference Student Affairs OP 91.301: Tobacco Use on Mississippi State University property.

The Tobacco-Free Campus Policy is part of the university's commitment to creating a healthy and sustainable environment for all members of our campus community and is designed to be positive and health directed. Individuals noticing violations of the policy should non-confrontational and respectful to tobacco users when communicating our policy. Additionally, tobacco users are expected to adhere to the policy and likewise be respectful to ex-tobacco users and non-tobacco users. Enforcement of the policy will be achieved through education, awareness, and a spirit of cooperation.

While the university is not requiring faculty, staff and students to quit using tobacco products, we do expect the policy to be followed while on university property, and we are offering support to our students and employees who wish to stop using tobacco products. Tobacco-use cessation programs will be offered to students and employees who wish to stop using tobacco products through the Longest Student Health Center – Center for Health Education and Wellness. These programs are free of charge with the exception of prescribed medications that may be required.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Why we are going Tobacco-Free?**

The path to becoming tobacco-free began when Mississippi State University adopted a no-smoking policy in the 1980s that banned smoking in all university buildings. In 2006, the non-smoking policy was expanded to ban all smoking within 25 feet of all building entrances, windows, and ventilation systems.

More recently environmental tobacco smoke has been classified as a Class-A carcinogen and toxic air contaminant. The Surgeon General declared that there is no safe level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. National research has shown that tobacco-free environments lead to substantial reductions in the number of people who smoke, the amount of tobacco products consumed, and the number of people exposed to environmental tobacco hazards. Tobacco-free campus policies are becoming more common on college and university campuses throughout the United States. Over 650 campuses are tobacco-free with no or minor exemptions.<sup>2</sup>

In Fall 2011, the Vice President for Student Affairs appointed a Tobacco-Free Campus Task Force with representation from MSU faculty, staff and students. The faculty representative from the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) reported on a 2011 survey of MSU students where over 70% of students surveyed indicated that smoking should not be allowed anywhere on campus. The Tobacco-Free Campus Task Force worked with the SSRC to conduct additional surveys of faculty, staff and students on the issue. In all three surveys a majority of respondents favored more restrictions on the use of tobacco on the MSU campus. In February 2012, the MSU Student Senate passed a resolution supporting moving MSU toward a 100% tobacco-free policy.

The decision to expand our policy to a tobacco-free campus policy was the next logical step in our pursuit of a campus culture of wellness.

### **How will the policy be enforced?**

We are an institution of higher education, therefore education will be key to implementing this policy. We will make people aware of the tobacco-free environment through electronic messaging, signage, notices in event programs and marketing. An explanation of the tobacco-free campus will be communicated to prospective and enrolling students and new employees. Additionally, information will be included in materials distributed to all outside groups that use university facilities.

The expectation is that persons will voluntarily comply with the policy. It is the responsibility of everyone on campus to politely inform others of the new policy and ask that they stop using tobacco products on campus.

### **Does the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy extend to residence hall rooms?**

The policy applies to all university residence halls and apartments owned, operated, leased, occupied, or controlled by the university on the main campus.

### **What about exceptions to the policy?**

Narrowly defined exceptions allow for tobacco use in sponsored research projects, in educational or clinical instruction, for artistic performance in a university sponsored event or religious ceremonial purposes with prior approval by a dean, director, Provost or appropriate vice president. Students or employees may smoke or use tobacco products in their closed personal vehicles while they are parked on the campus.

**Does the policy apply to visitors to campus?**

Yes. Organizers and attendees at public events, such as conferences, meetings, public lectures, social events, cultural events, and sporting events using university facilities are required to abide by the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy. Organizers of such events are responsible for communicating the policy to attendees.

**What resources are available to help those who want to quit using tobacco products?**

Assistance to students, faculty, and staff to overcome addiction to tobacco products is available through University Health Services at the Center for Health Education and Wellness located in the Longest Student Health Center.

**Does the policy apply at university sanctioned events or sporting activities occurring off campus property?**

The Tobacco-Free Campus Policy applies only to university owned, operated, leased, occupied, or controlled property. Events or activities scheduled elsewhere are bound by the policies or rules of the event coordinator or property manager.

**Is the University requiring people to quit using tobacco products?**

No. However, we are encouraging current tobacco users to explore this option. The university is committed to supporting all students and employees who wish to stop using tobacco products with cessation resources. Students, faculty, and staff choosing to continue using tobacco products may do so, but only on their own time and in areas not owned, operated, leased, occupied, or controlled by Mississippi State University. Students or employees may smoke or use tobacco products in their closed personal vehicles while they are parked on the campus.

**Will the use of e-cigarettes be permitted?**

No. The FDA does not consider e-cigarettes to be a safe nicotine delivery system or smoking cessation strategy and their use is prohibited on university property for purposes of this policy. However, other forms of approved nicotine replacement therapy such as gum and patches are available in the campus pharmacy located in the Longest Student Health Center.

**Does the policy prohibit the use of chewing tobacco on campus?**

Yes. The use of all tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco products like chewing tobacco and snuff, is prohibited on all university property or in university vehicles for purposes of this policy.

**Are clove cigarettes permitted?**

No. The use of clove cigarettes is prohibited by the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy. The Centers for Disease Control reports that smoking clove cigarettes is associated with an increased risk for lung damage.

**Will the use of tobacco-free hookahs be allowed on campus?**

No. Hookahs, sometimes called water pipes, are prohibited by the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy. While some tobacco-free smoking materials are available for use in hookahs, there is insufficient research data to document that they are safe for use and that they will not pose a health risk to others.

**Will there be signs to tell people they can't use tobacco?**

Notices bearing the message "Tobacco-Free Campus" and signs with the international symbol for tobacco-free or similar will be posted on the campus entrances and other locations as determined by the Campus Master Plan Committee. However, the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy applies to all university property whether or not a notice or sign is posted.

**What if people do not abide by the policy?**

For visitors, we believe reminders about the tobacco-free campus will be important and the university will provide messaging on university affiliated materials, websites, vendor contracts and for special events. For students and employees, we expect cooperation with a policy that directly supports our ongoing efforts to enhance the health and wellness of the MSU campus for all students, employees, and visitors.

**What should I do if I see someone using tobacco on university property?**

The following are suggested scripts to use as a helpful resource:

**Example Script #1:**

*Situation:* You see a person using tobacco products on MSU property.

*Response:* "Hello. I want to make you aware that we are now a tobacco-free campus. Tobacco products are prohibited on our grounds. We would appreciate if you would not use tobacco products while visiting our campus. Thank you for your cooperation."

**Example Script #2:**

*Question:* "Where am I allowed to smoke?"

*Response:* "This is a new policy, put in place on August 1, 2014. If you need to smoke or use tobacco products you will need to remain inside your closed personal

vehicle or leave the campus. We do have nicotine gum and patches available for you to purchase at the campus pharmacy located in the Longest Student Health Center and in our campus convenience stores while you are on campus."

**Example Script #3:**

*For registration, pre-admission, and office staff who are speaking to students and families prior to an MSU campus visit: "I'd like to let you know in advance that our campus is a Tobacco-Free environment. Use of tobacco products is prohibited on our campus. We do have nicotine gum and patches available for you to purchase at the campus pharmacy located in the Longest Student Health Center and in our campus convenience stores while you are on campus. Tobacco cessation resources are available for enrolled students and staff and faculty."*

**Have other universities implemented tobacco-free campus policies?**

Yes, some as early as 2003, and the number continues to increase. There are now over 650 college and university campuses all across the United States that have enacted 100% smoke- or tobacco-free campuses. Some of the institutions in our region include Delta State University, the University of Mississippi, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Arkansas System, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Florida.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from The University of Texas at Austin Tobacco-Free Campus Policy – available at [www.utexas.edu/tobaccofree/](http://www.utexas.edu/tobaccofree/)

<sup>2</sup>McMillen, Robert (2011). "Why should MSU become a tobacco-free campus." Paper submitted to the MSU Tobacco-Free Campus Task Force.