

# TOBACCO POLICY BRIEF

May 2016

"WE DON'T SMOKE [TOBACCO]. WE JUST SELL IT. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SMOKE FOR THE YOUNG, THE POOR, THE BLACK AND STUPID." –R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY EXECUTIVE

"THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING A SAFE AND HEALTHFUL WORK AND EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND VISITORS." (WAC 478-136-035)

## BACKGROUND

### *THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON HAS A HISTORY OF STANDING UP TO THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY...*

- Winter 2000: UW bans the sale of tobacco products on campus (ASUW Senate Resolution R-98-01)
- Fall 2001: UW bans smoking in residence halls
- Spring 2006: UW limits smoking to designated areas to prevent secondhand smoke exposure and fires
- Spring 2011: UW Medical Center enacts a tobacco-free campus policy to improve health

### *...BUT, IN RECENT YEARS, PROGRESS HAS STALLED.*

- Spring 2013: ASUW Senate votes 'no' on a resolution in support of a 100% smoke- and tobacco-free campus policy (R-19-24)
- Spring 2015: UW Board of Environmental Health & Safety unanimously recommends a tobacco-free campus policy to President and Interim Provost, who defer to elected student leaders
- Spring 2016: National College Health Assessment (NCHA) report from Fall 2015 survey reveals that 85% of UW students are in favor of a tobacco-free policy

## CURRENT POLICY

"Smoking is prohibited in all university facilities, including but not limited to the following locations:

- inside all buildings owned or occupied by the university and/or used by the university's faculty, staff, or students;
- University vehicles;
- at any outside areas or locations, except those designated by the Director of EH&S or in WAC 478-136-035.

Smoking of any kind, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is allowed only at these limited designated sites determined by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety..."

(<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/psosmoking/index.shtm>)

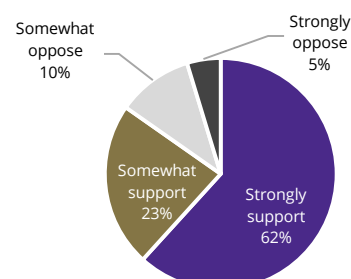
## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make UW tobacco-free by prohibiting tobacco use in all indoor and outdoor areas of the university (with exemptions for traditional ceremonial activities of recognized cultural and/or religious groups)
- Encourage policy compliance, not policy enforcement; allocate campus resources to tobacco cessation services

## KEY FACTS FROM NCHA

- Random sample; 598 students responded
- Eight percent of UW students smoke cigarettes
- Another 8% of UW students recently stopped, or plan to stop, using tobacco (any form)
- Sixty-eight percent of UW students who smoke cigarettes support a tobacco-free campus policy

NCHA Question: "UW policy currently allows tobacco use in designated areas around campus. How supportive are you of UW becoming a tobacco-free environment on all parts of the campus?"



AS OF APRIL 4, 2016, AT LEAST 1,137 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES ARE TOBACCO-FREE, INCLUDING OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, UCLA, UC BERKELEY, THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, AND SEATTLE UNIVERSITY. (NO-SMOKE.ORG)

## TOBACCO FACTS

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States; smoking kills more Americans than alcohol, car crashes, AIDS, fires, drugs, and gun violence, **combined**.
- Smoking causes 1 out of every 3 deaths from cancer.
- The tobacco industry is replacing its dying customers with people of color, sexual and gender minorities, people with mental illness, and low SES individuals by spending \$25 million, daily, on targeted marketing.
- Eighty-eight percent of people who smoke started by age 18, but 99% started by age 26; if a student doesn't try smoking during college, they almost never will.
- Nicotine, the addictive ingredient in tobacco, is just as addictive as heroin.
- People who smoke lose a decade of life expectancy, but quitting at a young age undoes most of this loss.
- Approximately 70% of people who smoke want to quit, but only a fraction of them succeeds each year.

## TOBACCO-FREE BENEFITS

- Supports people trying to quit using tobacco
- Supports people who have already quit using tobacco
- Encourages abstinence from tobacco
- Prevents exposure to secondhand smoke
- Reduces cigarette litter (and cleanup costs)

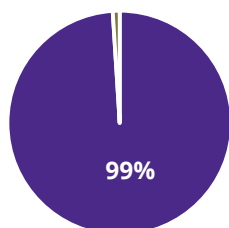
## CONCERNS: ADDRESSED

- **Tobacco use is legal:** There is no "right to smoke." UW alcohol and firearms policies regulate the use of legal products for the protection of the larger community, so the same can be done with tobacco. Meanwhile, a bill raising the minimum age for tobacco purchase to 21 is moving through the State Legislature; this would legalize tobacco purchases for most undergraduates.
- **Tobacco-free policies discriminate against smokers:** Nobody is born a "smoker." Most people who use tobacco say that it was a misinformed choice to start. The current policy does little to help smokers combat their addictions and, instead, favors non-smokers by ensuring fewer run-ins with people who are smoking, perpetuating the "smoker" stigma on campus.
- **Such a policy is not enforceable:** The policy is intended to change the social norms of tobacco use on campus, not to enforce immediate change.
- **Policy implementation is expensive:** Up-front costs can be expected, but the long-term benefits to UW and its students greatly outweigh them.

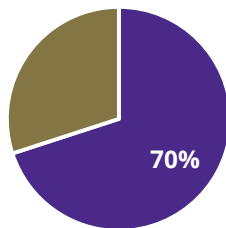
## RESOURCES

- UW Tobacco Studies Program (<http://depts.washington.edu/tobacco>)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Tobacco-free College Campus Initiative ([www.tfcci.org](http://www.tfcci.org))
- University of Kentucky / Go Tobacco-free (<http://www.uky.edu/TobaccoFree/>)

Of people who smoke...

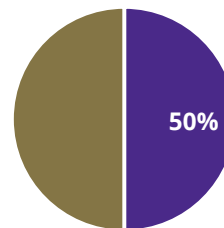


...started smoking by age 26.



...want to quit.

Of people who use tobacco...



...will ultimately die from it.