



TO: Members of the Smoking Policy Implementation Review Team
FROM: Jane Atkinson, Vice President and Provost *JMA*
RE: Smoking policy, implementation, and further action

Last month, Michael Ford, chair of the Smoking Policy Implementation Review Team, asked me to clarify the position of the Executive Council regarding the smoking policy and its implementation to date.

On Wednesday, November 30, the Executive Council reviewed and discussed the changes on campus since the new smoking policy went into effect in August 2010. The previous policy, which prohibited smoking within 25 feet of campus buildings, had proved ineffectual for addressing the problem of second-hand smoke. The new policy restricts smoking to designated sites so that non-smokers can avoid exposure to second-hand smoke.

Now one year and three months into implementation, the policy has had demonstrable and positive effects. Compliance with the policy appears to be high. Reported incidents of smoking in central and highly trafficked areas of campus have virtually disappeared. Non-smokers can be reasonably assured that they will not encounter cigarette smoke in the course of their daily lives on campus. This is a major accomplishment that should give us all satisfaction.

To be sure, there have been difficulties and disappointments as we have implemented the new policy. The College has had to invest in sturdier smoking structures to withstand wintertime winds and rain. We have had to rethink the numbers and location of certain DSAs. Behavioral issues have been a challenge at a few sites.

The executive officers deeply appreciate your hard and thoughtful work in addressing these and other problems that have arisen over the course of implementation. While these problems have been vexing, they should not eclipse the fact that the implementation of the policy has been successful in terms of mitigating the impact of second-hand smoke on campus.

In May, 2009, the original recommendation from the President's Task Force on Substance Use and Abuse was that the DSAs would be used during a one year transitional phase, after which the institution would go smoke-free. Over the course of last year, it became clear that the high rate of compliance with DSAs was due in part to a desire on the part of smokers to show that the campus smoking problem could be successfully mitigated by segregating the activity rather than by enforcing a universal ban. The current

approach works well for non-smokers, although it does not address the health issues to which smokers are subjecting themselves.

The Executive Council discussed once again whether the institution should consider going smoke-free at this time or stay with the current DSA system for now. The Council is not convinced that prohibiting smoking on campus would result in the campus being smoke-free. We would like to see successful models of such an approach at similar institutions before we embark on such a course. We are concerned that the potential result of such an effort may backfire, with smoking going "underground" into the residence halls and into the neighborhood. We are very conscious of our location in a residential neighborhood which would not welcome students and employees stepping off campus grounds to smoke and leave debris in streets and yards. For now, we believe it makes sense to consolidate the gains we've made, continue with the current arrangement and to make necessary improvements to it. And instead of imposing a campus-wide ban on smoking, we favor strengthening our educational efforts to reduce tobacco use among students and employees alike.

Your group is in the best position to identify refinements in our current smoking policy and its implementation. You are also the group to conduct longitudinal research of campus behavior and attitudes regarding smoking that can inform policy decisions. Drawing on campus research, national studies, and best practices, you are the team that can lead our efforts to educate our community about the health risks of tobacco use and resources available to help users end their addiction. Furthermore, we hope you will continue to explore other policy options as these present themselves.

Let me close by thanking you as members of the Smoking Policy Implementation Review Team for your dedication to these efforts, your manifest accomplishments, and your leadership in the important work of reducing the health risks of tobacco use for our campus community.