

Section 4:
**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND
ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESS FOR
HEALTHY CAMPUS COMMUNITIES**

PARTNERSHIPS CREATE CHANGE

Developing a tobacco-free policy for your campus cannot effectively be done by just one person. If a policy is viewed as being just one person's idea, then it is likely not to be supported or followed.



Please note that the term “tobacco” in this document refers to commercially produced tobacco products only and never the traditional tobacco of our Northern Plains American Indians.

In order to develop a truly effective policy, it will take the involvement of people both within and outside of the institution. It takes the backing of faculty, staff, and students in order to create a strong policy that will be supported by the entire

campus community and the community at large. These partnerships will help you reach your desired goal – a healthier environment for all.

Forming a work group, committee, task force, or coalition is a great way to formalize these partnerships and is the best approach to make policy change on your campus. A coalition brings together individuals and organizations with a variety of skills and experience in order to address a specific issue. Communities and institutions need to work

together to change the way tobacco is perceived, promoted, sold, and used. Through advocacy and education, coalitions play important roles such as:

- exposing the tobacco industry’s predatory marketing tactics,
- helping communities develop and implement policies and programs, and
- facilitating the implementation of strong policies.

These advocacy efforts help support the view that a tobacco-free campus or community is the norm. This helps make tobacco less desirable, less acceptable, and less accessible on your campus and in your community.

“ We should be smoke free! We know all horrible side effects of smoking! Stop/reduce this by making SDSU smoke free please! ”

– Marie, student
South Dakota State University

Student Involvement is Essential

Working on tobacco issues on campus can be very inspiring and motivating to many students. This issue presents an opportunity to fight against an industry that targets their generation and has caused so much disease and death to their families and communities. Working on this issue is an opportunity to promote social justice by holding a multi-billion dollar industry accountable for over 50 years of illegal and harmful practices and

for deceiving the public about the health risks of smoking, the addictive nature of nicotine, and marketing to children while they have produced billions in profits.

Building a coalition, core group, or committee to work on your policy takes some time – but don’t worry, you are not alone. There are many groups on campus that may take a special interest in the tobacco issue. The issue of social justice may motivate some groups to join your efforts. Other groups may respond to the fact that the tobacco industry has targeted ethnic groups or women. Concerns about environmental issues may motivate others to get involved with your cause.

Some potential allies include:

- Health education groups
- Student health facilities or wellness center

- Networks of people with disabilities (i.e. respiratory diseases, asthma)
- Sports teams or athletic organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Groups educating the campus about addictions
- Service clubs
- Organizations for students interested in health professions
- Student government
- LGBT organizations
- Regional Tobacco Prevention Coordinator and local coalitions

Building partnerships with campus groups will give your effort strength and voice. Campus groups can be active at varying levels of commitment – not every group can be involved full-time. Some ways that these groups can help include:

- Lending their names by agreeing to be listed as signers of letters to the administration, letters to the editor, etc.
- Providing their membership list so you can distribute information to their members
- Allowing you to use their meeting time as an opportunity to speak about your efforts
- Serving as working members of the group to get petitions signed, visit administrators, write letters as individual members, etc.

There is a lot of information available about establishing, working with, and maintaining coalitions. Section 8 will describe some of these resources in more detail.

What if College Administrators Are Leading the Effort?

On some college campuses, the effort to promote a tobacco-free environment comes from the administration instead of from the student body. That's great! If this is the case on your campus then you don't have to do all of the labor-intensive work to build and maintain a coalition. However, you still need to follow many of the steps outlined in this section in order to build a broad base of support for the policy. Buy-in from all corners of campus is important in order for the policy change to be successful. Remember you are doing more than just enacting a new rule – you are contributing to a wider system of social change and development of social norms in your community. You'll need help to get this done.

Steps for Developing a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

Whether the move to a completely tobacco-free campus is started by administration or by students, it is essential that you allow plenty of time for your coalition or committee to learn about the issues, discuss the solutions and the benefits, and prepare for this change. The process will

“Oglala Lakota College (OLC) adopted a commercial tobacco-free policy about 4 years ago because smoking is not good for your health. I felt it was important to promote good health for the students and staff of OLC. I also thought that having a smoke-free policy in place might lead to fewer people smoking and less cigarette butts littering our campus. Nationwide, there is a movement to become tobacco-free because there is a benefit to your own life and the other people around you. I introduced the initiative because I thought it was important for our college. From there it had to be approved by the board and was then printed in the student handbook.”

– Tom Shortbull
President of Oglala Lakota College

take time – maybe even more than a year. National organizations such as Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights (ANR), American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, the California Youth Action Network and the BACCHUS Network have worked with many colleges across the country to help them develop a strong tobacco-free or smoke-free campus policy and have learned what works and what doesn’t on college campuses.

Momentum for tobacco-free campuses is building. According to [Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights](#), a national leader in smoke-free policies, there are nearly 1,200 campuses across the nation that are 100% smoke-free indoors and out (i.e. no designated smoking areas on campus). In addition, there are over 800 campuses across the U.S. that are 100% tobacco-free which prohibit smoking and all forms of tobacco use everywhere on campus.

There are basically three stages to the process of developing and enacting your campus policy. Section 3 provided you some information about best practices to consider when developing your tobacco-free campus. This section will help you with more of the practical considerations for actually getting your policy passed. Here are some tips gathered from ANR, Smoke-Free New England and the Wake Forest School of Medicine to guide you through the steps:

STEPS FOR ENACTING A TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS POLICY

STEP 1

GOALS:

- 1. Organize a work group, committee or coalition (call it whatever you want!).**
- 2. Assess the status of the campus regarding tobacco use on campus.**
 - **Determine who makes the decisions on campus.** If your policy effort is coming from students, find out who in the college administration has the power to pass a tobacco-free campus policy. Who is the chief administrator? Which other administrators would be involved in the decision-making process?
 - **Decide on policy goals and deal-breakers.** Develop a written policy to present to the decision makers. Several examples of model policy for a tobacco-free/smoke-free university are included in the Resource list in Section 8. Be sure to choose a common-sense start date like the beginning of the year or term. Think about what kind of policy would not be acceptable to your coalition and that you would not support such as designated smoking areas or a building-only smoke-free policy (“the deal-breaker”).
 - **Survey students, faculty, and staff** to determine the level of support, both from smokers and nonsmokers that exists on campus. A simple online survey tool would provide adequate information. Identify any areas of particular concern and work on ways of addressing them. Understanding what people are worried about will help with implementation of the policy as well.
 - **Conduct an environmental scan of the campus** by physically walking around the campus to gather information on where people are smoking on campus, where there is a smell of smoke, etc. A sample survey tool is available [here](#).

STEP 2

GOALS:

1. **Campus has a basic understanding about tobacco use and secondhand smoke.**
2. **Campus has a basic understanding about tobacco industry targeting.**
3. **Campus has a basic understanding about the need for a strong tobacco policy.**
4. **Students begin to demonstrate support for policy.**
 - **Educate the entire campus early on** about the dangers of secondhand smoke and tobacco use, the benefits of smoke-free air, litter problems, and cessation options.
 - Educating the campus is essential in order to pass a strong policy and to help enforce it once it is passed.
 - **Start collecting signatures for petition.** Widespread support from students, faculty, and staff will help convince administrators that the policy is wanted and needed. Collect signatures everywhere – a great place to have a petition is the campus wellness center. Petitions signal the depth of support, but make sure that you can get an adequate number of signatures since 1,000 signatures can mean great support for a campus of 2,500 students but not so much support for a campus of 25,000.
 - **Keep gathering organizational support.**
 - If possible, *get written endorsements* from the student government and other student, faculty, and employee organizations.
 - *Approach other student groups or associations* that may be supportive of a tobacco-free campus.
 - **Get information into the campus newspaper.**
 - Articles about secondhand smoke and tobacco-free policies can increase awareness on campus, leading to stronger support for a new policy.
 - Results of your survey could make a good article.
 - **Hold preliminary meeting with administration (decision makers and influencers).**
 - Meet with the health services or student wellness director.
 - Provide a copy of the draft policy and information about secondhand smoke and tobacco-free policies on other campuses.
 - Find out how the decision making process works. Will there be a public vote? A hearing? Can students and others provide written or verbal testimony? If so, you will want to pack the room and prepare your talking points well.
 - **Get supporters to send emails and letters of support to the appropriate administrators.** Personal stories with accounts of problems with the current smoking policy are best.
 - **Use social networking** to get the word out. Use all the online tools in your arsenal (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc.) to recruit supporters and to let them know when to take action (send emails, letters to the editor, attend meetings or rallies, etc.).

STEP 3

GOALS:

1. **Administration commits to passing (or passes) strong tobacco-free campus policy.**
2. **Coalition or work group representatives are appointed to work with administration to ensure effective policy implementation.**
 - **Finalize collection of signatures** for petition.
 - **Hold event/rally** to demonstrate widespread support for policy.
 - **Meet with administration** to negotiate passage of policy.
 - **Count your votes.** Determine how close you are to passing a 100% tobacco-free campus policy. If you don't have widespread support, continue educating your decision makers and building your grassroots power base until you are ready to ask for a vote

Once Your Tobacco-Free Campus Policy Passes:

- **Congratulations!** Now it is time to prepare your campus for implementation and ensure people follow the new policy. This step takes time and should not be rushed!
- Work with school officials to *help notify everyone of the policy well in advance.*
 - Get information about the policy into your student newspaper and on the college website. Encourage the administration to include information about the policy in materials sent to students and faculty before or at the start of the term.
- **Post signs.** This is a **major** component of compliance. Frame the message in a positive way. People are much more likely to follow the policy when they understand why it is in place and what is required of them to obey it.
- **Make sure there is plenty of information available regarding quitting resources.** The South Dakota QuitLine provides free services for residents. This is a great resource that is available by phone or online. Visit www.SDQuitLine.com for more information on available services and training opportunities. Share information about the QuitLine broadly! Posters and other free materials can be ordered at <http://doh.sd.gov/catalog>. Section 7 will provide more information about cessation.
- **Establish a complaint procedure and enforce the policy** in a non-discriminatory way.
 - Compliance with tobacco-free policies is generally not a problem if you are well prepared, but there may be a short period of adjustment as people become aware of the new policy and how to comply.



Source: University of Wisconsin, Stout Campus

The team at the American Cancer Society's Smoke-Free New England's Colleges and University Initiative developed five important "Lessons Learned" in their work with colleges and universities in the Northeast. These lessons can be helpful here in South Dakota as well. Here's what they found out:

- **Work with student government and other interested student organizations.**

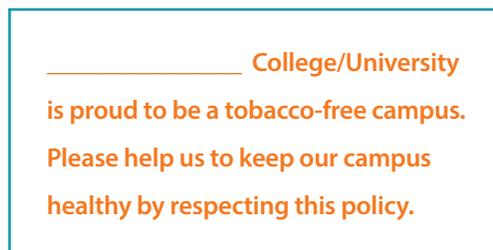
Make sure that students are involved in all stages of policy change. This ensures that the changes are relevant to the students, that they benefit the student body and are, for the most part, student-driven. Tap into the pool of health-related majors (public health, nursing, pharmacy, etc.) – this group is likely to be very supportive of your efforts. But student groups do not all have to be health-focused. For example, campus women’s groups may be enlisted to support tobacco bans, environmental groups for smoke-free air campaigns, and social justice groups for the rights of college employees (especially lower-paid food service employees) to work in a healthy environment. All of these groups have a potential link to a tobacco-free campus policy campaign. Working on these issues gives students real-life opportunities to research, present, and promote healthy policies within the institution’s system.

- **Educate, educate, educate before beginning the process.**

Before enacting a policy and implementing it, make sure staff, faculty, and students understand the reasons behind the change. For example, explaining that smoking in campus housing may trigger a housemate’s asthma attack gives a tobacco-free/smoke-free housing policy social support.

- **Determine enforcement before implementing policy.**

Before implementing the policy, make sure all parties are agreed on enforcement. Without clear enforcement, a tobacco-free policy will exist on paper only. A simple method that has worked with other campus policies was to have business cards printed that said something like:



Students, faculty and staff can hand those cards out to anyone violating the policy. This provides a great way to enforce the policy in a non-confrontational and respectful way. The reverse side of the card could also have information about the SD QuitLine. Other great ideas for enforcement tools can be found at [Maine Tobacco Free College Network](#).

- **Engage existing tobacco control advocates.**

There may be students who were involved with tobacco control activism programs in high school such as Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU). Make sure there’s an avenue for these students to get involved. Also make sure that you tap resources such as the [South Dakota Department of Health Regional Tobacco Prevention Coordinators](#) and local coalitions. These are tremendous assets that can help you find additional support in your community.

A way to help engage students is to let them know that working on smoke-free campaigns is a great way to get experience for a real job and will be viewed favorably by potential employers. Encourage students to continue working in tobacco control after leaving the college atmosphere. There are many job opportunities with state, tribal or non-profit organizations that involve

tobacco control (such as state Departments of Health, tribal health departments, American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, or American Heart Association). Students can include their experience with the college coalition or club in resumes and applications.

Hopefully you have gotten a better idea of how to organize your tobacco-free campus efforts. The most important message is that you need to get support and buy-in in order to implement effective change – no matter if you are a student activist or a college president. Perhaps the suggestions offered in this section will trigger all kinds of ideas for your own college campus. In the next section, we will discuss ways to take actions that support your efforts to make your campus tobacco-free.