

Ohio College and University Tobacco-Free Policies: Progress and Areas of Promise



The number of campus smoking bans has **increased nationally by more than 2,000%** in the past six years. In 2006 there were an estimated 34 colleges and universities with a 100% smoke-free campus; as of July of 2012 there are 774 college and university campuses that have a 100% smoke-free policy¹. These bans specify that all buildings, residence halls, and the entire campus are entirely smoke-free, no exceptions. There are now three states where the law prohibits smoking on all public campuses (Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Iowa-public and private), affecting a total of 128 campuses.

As part of **Ohio's smoke-free workplace law**, all college and university campus buildings are to be smoke-free. While this is an area of progress, this may or may not include campus dorms and residence halls. Based on a sample of Ohio colleges and universities who responded to an online survey, 72% of campuses² had a smoke-free policy that included dorms and residence halls prior to August 2010.

Smoke-free laws and ordinances at a macro level are a vital component in moving postsecondary campuses toward smoke-free and tobacco-free campuses. However, few Ohio colleges and universities reported to be working on a tobacco-free campus policy prior to 2010 – only two campuses reported that these efforts were taking place prior to the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) work with targeted colleges and universities. While **ODH has been providing technical assistance** to campuses interested in modifying policies, there are currently only two campuses that have a 100% **smoke-free** campus policy:

Miami University

Notre Dame College of Ohio

In addition, there are six³ campuses that have a 100% **tobacco-free** policy:

Hocking College

U. of Toledo Health Science Campus

Dwight Schar College of Nursing

Malone College

Mount Vernon Nazarene University

Ohio Christian University

¹American Non-Smokers' Rights Foundation, <http://www.no-smoke.org/pdf/smokefreecollegesuniversities.pdf>

² There were 27 Ohio colleges and universities invited to respond to the online survey in May-June 2012; of the 18 respondents there was an even split between public and private colleges. There are 82 four-year colleges and universities in Ohio, 13 of which are public, as well as 24 community and technical colleges and five independent two-year campuses (<http://pilot.regents.ohio.gov/policymakersguide/campuses.php>).

³ Both ALA and AFNR list Hocking College, Mount Vernon Nazarene University and University of Ohio Health Science Campus as 100% tobacco free; only ALA lists Dwight Schar College of Nursing and only AFNR lists the remaining two campuses.

Campus tobacco bans are a key element of a comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation effort, both to reduce the amount of secondhand smoke as well as student and staff tobacco use. There is evidence that smoke-free bans on postsecondary campuses may be an effective intervention for curbing tobacco use⁴. **Key resources** that have been used by campuses working with ODH include:

Ohio's College and University Policy Action Kit (ODH/OESCA)

BACCHUS Network materials

American College Health Association (ACHA) guidelines

Private colleges were more likely to indicate use of the BACCHUS Network materials and the ACHA guidelines than public institutions. Private colleges were also more likely than public institutions to indicate they were “very likely” to continue efforts toward adopting a 100% tobacco-free campus policy that includes dorms and residence halls.

Both public and private colleges report that **enforcement** is the largest barrier to successful implementation of tobacco-free policies. Additionally, public universities in the sample were more likely to cite the safety of members of the campus community as a barrier (if smokers need to go off campus to smoke – these campuses may be in areas with higher crime rates). However, there is evidence that taking a multi-component approach to enforcement can be effective⁵ by also utilizing signage and materials to remind smokers about the policy.

The national movement of banning smoking and/or other tobacco on postsecondary campuses is on an upward trajectory, and there is **documented evidence that an increasing number of colleges and universities in Ohio have been working toward these bans** in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Health⁶. Passage of a 100% tobacco-free campus ban at Ohio's public universities would support the work currently being conducted by both public and private campuses working with the Ohio Department of Health. Not only would such a ban reduce the amount of secondhand smoke and possibly reduce the tobacco use prevalence of students at Ohio's public institutions, but it would set a model for private campuses considering or working toward a similar ban.

⁴ Seo et al. (2011). The effect of a smoke-free campus policy on students' smoking behaviors and attitudes. *Preventative Medicine*, 53, 347-352,

http://www.mainetobaccofreecollegenetwork.org/things_consider/documents/PreventiveMedicine_EffectofSFCAmpusPolicyonCollegeStudentsSmokingBehaviorsandAttitudes.pdf

⁵ Harris et al. (2009). Enforcing an outdoor smoking ban on a college campus: effects of a multicomponent approach. *Journal of American College Health*, 58(2), 121-126. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19892648>

⁶ Evaluation data collected by Professional Data Analysts, Inc. includes a survey, notes from stakeholder calls, and coding of school policies.