



A PUBLICLY SUPPORTED  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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March 6, 2007

Dear College Presidents:

It recently came to my attention that the American Lung Association of Oregon has launched a statewide "Tobacco-Free College Initiative". We think this is a great idea and would like to offer our support by sharing our story of success and lessons learned in becoming a tobacco-free campus. We are proud of this achievement and now enjoy a healthier campus environment for students, staff, and visitors.

On November 21, 2005, our Board of Trustees passed a policy making Clark College the first 100% tobacco free campus in the state of Washington, and one of the first 100% tobacco free campuses in the nation. This change in policy occurred using a shared governance model, including over two years data gathering from students, staff, and faculty.

In May of 2004, a student survey showed that 88% of students were unhappy with our tobacco policy. The policy at that time prohibited smoking in buildings and within 20 feet of a door window, or air intake area. Once given the forum to voice their opinions, students complained about walking through "clouds" of smoke to enter a building, cigarette butts on the grounds, and many described adverse health reactions due to the secondhand smoke. Given that so many of our students voiced legitimate concerns about second hand smoke, and the fact that cigarette smoke is a Class "A" carcinogen, we realized we had a responsibility to change our policy and protect our students and employees from secondhand smoke.

Initial surveys showed the campus to be split between becoming tobacco free or having dedicated smoking areas. However, once the decision was made to change our policy, the campus community began to express a desire for a tobacco free campus. After taking into account the cost of building and maintaining smoking shelters, it became apparent that a tobacco free campus would be the easier to implement and the more cost effective of the two choices. Also, as part of our data collection three separate surveys resulted in over a 2/3 majority in favor of a tobacco free campus over designated smoking areas.

Our policy is enforced 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on all property owned by the college.

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Students and staff who wish to smoke may do so on the sidewalks bordering the college, which are on the property of the city of Vancouver. Prior to the institution of the new policy, every effort was made to assure students, employees and community members were informed of the upcoming change. During the first quarter of our new policy, we operated under the philosophy of "educate before enforcement". Those in violation were reminded of the policy, and provided information.

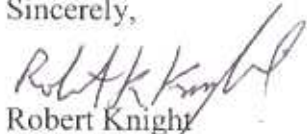
To date, this philosophy has worked quite well. The policy was instituted on April 3, 2006, and as of today, we have not issued a single citation. The transition to a tobacco free campus was completely uneventful, and there has been no loss of enrollment or community use of our campus facilities.

We will soon be building a second campus, which will open 100% tobacco free.

We invite you to visit our tobacco-free campus any time, or to call if you have questions about our process of becoming tobacco-free. If you would like more information about the process of becoming a tobacco-free campus, please contact Mary Deal, Health Services Officer at 360-992-2264, or Rebecca Wale, Environmental Health Manager at 360-992-2251. If we can make your process smoother by sharing our lessons learned, that would be our pleasure.

Best wishes to all of you in your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert Knight  
Interim President  
Clark College