

## **CSCC Recommendation on Proposed Tobacco-Free Campus Policy**

### **March 2, 2018**

#### **Background and Charge:**

In February 2017, CSCC was charged with “gather[ing] campus input on whether TCNJ should become a Tobacco Free Campus.” As a result, and using the work done by the Healthy Campus Program Council (HCPC) as a starting point, CSCC created and circulated a Qualtrics survey to the entire campus community in Fall 2017 and held a campus-wide open forum on 29 November 2017. The feedback from the open forum and the survey fulfilled the second part of the charge, in which CSCC was instructed to “seek testimony from the campus community in the form of public fora as well as through electronic communication.” Members of the CSCC also attended a meeting of the New Jersey Strategic Advisory Group on Tobacco Prevention on 26 January 2018, jointly coordinated by the New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDH).

#### **Survey Findings:**

A total of 1328 members of the campus community responded to the Qualtrics survey ( $n=944$  students,  $n=130$  faculty,  $n=190$  staff,  $n=64$  undeclared). The bulk of the respondents are not tobacco users (78% Students, 89% Faculty, 86% Staff). The vast majority (96%) who are tobacco users oppose TCNJ becoming a tobacco-free campus while 34% of non-tobacco users support this proposal.

Overall, 73% of survey respondents indicated they are aware of the existing smoking policy at TCNJ. Ninety percent of tobacco users, 69% of non-tobacco users, 76% of on-campus students, and 67% of students living off campus are aware of the current smoking policy. The majority of the student population (65%), faculty (55%) and staff (63%) are satisfied with the existing smoking policy. The vast majority of smokers (78%) and non-smokers (61%) on campus are satisfied with the current smoking policy; however, satisfaction with the current enforcement of the smoking policy is much lower, with only 43% of the campus community being either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. The low satisfaction regarding enforcement of the current policy holds true across the campus community (45% students, 37% faculty, 37% staff, 36% non-smokers), with the exception of tobacco users, 72% of whom were satisfied with enforcement of the existing policy.

When asked “If TCNJ did not become a tobacco-free campus... Would you support further limiting the use of tobacco products to fewer designated zones on campus,” the majority (55%) of the campus community indicated they support reducing the number of designated smoking zones on campus. Faculty (71%), staff (73%), and non-smokers (66%) heavily support fewer designated smoking zones. The student population is relatively split on fewer designated zones (50% support, 42% oppose) and the vast majority of smokers oppose limiting the use of tobacco to fewer designated zones (83%).

We also observed high response rates to the open-ended survey question by all three campus groups, with 332 students (35% of the population), 56 faculty (representing 43% of the population) and 82 staff (representing 43% of the population) conveying qualitative responses.

An analysis of these responses reveal that 70% of students, 52% of faculty and 51% of staff wrote statements opposing TCNJ becoming a tobacco-free campus.

At the campus-wide open forum, attendees (6 students and 11 staff members) overwhelmingly and strongly opposed TCNJ becoming a tobacco-free campus. Some attendees admitted being addicted to nicotine, while others felt that smoking was a “stress-relieving” tool. A few non-smokers also voiced their opposition to TCNJ becoming a tobacco-free campus. Suggestions included better enforcement of the current smoking policy and providing clearly designated smoking areas for all tobacco users on campus (including contract workers). Some attendees also voiced concerns that a tobacco-free campus policy would ostracize those addicted to nicotine and those in recovery for addiction to other substances, many of whom use tobacco.

**Final Recommendation:**

The CSCC concludes that the data do *not* provide a mandate for developing a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy at this time.

**Suggested Future Actions:**

The survey results, especially the open-ended responses in the Qualtrics survey, suggest the following future actions:

- Better enforcement of current smoking policy (i.e., no smoking within 10 feet of campus building entrances) across all areas of campus (e.g., walkways, campus housing, academic buildings, administrative buildings, and retail spaces).
- Fewer designated smoking areas on campus that are well identified, sheltered, and equipped with smoking-related receptacles.
- Engaging in discussion with campus contractors to ensure that all individuals working on campus adhere to current smoking policy.

In addition, based on the information gathered from the NJ Advisory Group meeting on 26 January, 2018, CSCC shares the following:

- Montclair State University is currently in year 1 of a 3-year process to become a Tobacco-Free Campus;
- William Paterson University has created a task force to discuss the possibility of becoming a Tobacco-Free Campus;
- If future campus sentiment is more favorable toward developing a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy, funding for implementing changes at TCNJ may be available from the following agencies:
  - o American Cancer Society
  - o American Heart Association
  - o American Cancer Action Network
  - o CVS Foundation
  - o Truth Initiative Grants