

Steps to Passing a Tobacco-free Policy on your Campus

“If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.” ~ Lewis Carroll

Step One Conduct a policy assessment.

Get a copy of your existing campus tobacco-use policy and study it closely. Compare it to the [Elements of a 100% Tobacco-free Campus Policy](#) checklist to see if the existing policies has all the necessary pieces.

If it doesn't, talk to students, faculty and staff to try to determine the following:

- What is the available data regarding tobacco use on your campus, in your community, or at least among college-age adults?
- What is the campus culture/perceived notions of tobacco use, including vaping?
- What is the campus desire for tobacco use/elimination?
- What resources are in place to provide [evidence-based tobacco treatment](#)?
- What is being done to promote successful quitting of all tobacco products as the policy goes into place?
- What resources do you have? What will it take to build support for strengthening your policy?
- What funding do you have/need to pass the policy? (school programs, departments, outside grants)

Step Two: Find and educate allies.

Once you have completed the policy and resource assessment, share the results with other likely allies. Recruit from a diverse and broad base of talent and interests. One art student, one student from the newspaper, a staff person from maintenance, a professor, an athlete, and a parent can each tap into different campus populations and spread the message more effectively. Engage tobacco users who want to quit. Listen and learn from their stories and help them become a part of the solution.

Establish a list of potential partners and allies, such as students studying health careers. Don't forget about community partners such as business owners, clergy and community health officials.

Develop a tobacco use prevention and cessation coalition.

- Recruit at events such as new student orientation, club days and health promotion events.
- Meet with those who provide tobacco cessation assistance in student health and those who develop health benefits for staff to promote a tobacco-free lifestyle and eliminate barriers to effective tobacco treatment.
- Provide trainings on how to quit tobacco use for student health staff and how to support tobacco prevention and cessation among key gatekeepers, such as Resident Assistants.
- Establish official college club recognition and gain a voice on the Student Council and representation in the collection of student club councils.

- Create a social media group for positive, supportive communication and distribution of articles and links.
- Share leadership roles with others.

Combine forces for education.

- Work together to present educational campaigns on campus.
- Use national events such as [The Great American Smokeout](#), [World No Tobacco Day](#) the [1 Day Stand](#) and [Take Down Tobacco Day](#) as springboards to educate your campus about the hazards of tobacco use, building support for policy development.

Step Three:

Determine culture/perceived opinions about a tobacco-free policy.

- Circulate a petition on your campus and at nearby businesses and other public places. A petition can help underscore that the public supports tobacco-free policies.
- Use faculty/student surveys to help you to determine the support for a tobacco-free campus.
- Use faculty, student club or student government resolutions to show support for a tobacco-free policy.
- Use social media to promote the activities listed above and share survey results.

Step Four:

Use our model tobacco policies to help get you started.

Download Model Policies for NC Colleges and Universities: [These are provided as separate word documents.](#)

Community College

Private College or University

UNC-System University

Step Five:

Develop a plan to educate stakeholders.

After you have determined the current tobacco use policies on campus and the current opinions on tobacco-free policies, use this information to develop a reasonably paced education plan. A plan might go as follows:

- Educate the campus about the negative health effects of tobacco use, including vaping, and share data showing that the social norm supports NOT using tobacco, since most people don't;

- Present and post information from your surveys, tobacco-free commitment statements from departments/organizations, tobacco-free petitions, health studies and examples from other colleges;
- Understand what is offered to students to help tobacco users quit, as well as what the college's health insurance offers staff for quitting tobacco use. Work to educate about how to remove barriers, increase access and promote tobacco cessation; and
- Gather more information and more support, building a broad base of support and well-organized facts. Establish your credibility early and be persistent.

Step Six: Prepare for a Board of Trustees meeting.

Once you have your own draft policy, meet with members of the school administration to educate them about the benefits of a strengthened tobacco-free policy. It's important to stress that this policy is something students, staff and faculty want, so use the collected petitions, survey results and signed resolutions to show campus support.

It's a good idea to meet individually with members of the Board of Trustees to educate each about the benefits of a tobacco-free policy and to determine their level of support. If a member is particularly supportive in this conversation, ask them if they would consider being a champion for the measure. Become familiar with the Board of Trustees' procedure for adopting campus policies. Allies on the Board and within the administration can help provide background into board procedures and can help you gauge the level of support.

Remember: Timing is crucial so this must be done in advance of the board meeting.

Before the meeting, identify your spokespeople – students can be especially powerful advocates. Contact your community supporters to invite them to attend the board presentation in support of the policy.

[Here's an example of a Board of Trustees presentation](#) covering success stories from other universities.

Step Seven: Present the policy proposal to the Board of Trustees.

Make your presentation to the board concise, with a mixture of facts and personal stories. If allowed, highlight brief positive statements from different stakeholders such as students, faculty, staff and health professionals. Thank board members for the work they have already done to promote campus health initiatives. You might decide to address the expected arguments of those opposed to the policy. For instance, if concerns about compliance have been raised, explain how easy policy implementation can be when the policy is communicated clearly and regularly.