

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Staff Council

Implementation Suggestions for Possible Smoking and Tobacco Use Restrictions

October 27, 2014

The following implementation suggestions are based on non-represented, UAF staff feedback, collected as part of the '2013 UAF Staff Council Smoke-Free and Tobacco-Free Survey.' Although this survey did not specifically request ideas for implementation, many were provided in the over three hundred comments received. The following summary is based on a thorough review and analysis of these comments.

Implementation of a new policy on smoking and tobacco use at UAF must take into account various facets of life in interior Alaska. This includes modification of physical locations and necessary adjustments to new social aspects of life on campus.

Physical Aspects of Restricted Spaces

As stated by one staff member, "Restricting use to certain areas only works if people actually use those areas." Based on this concept and additional feedback from staff, the physical aspects of restricted spaces for smoking and tobacco use would, ideally, have the following characteristics:

- a. Located outside, away from building entrances, air intakes, walkways, and bus stops
- b. Heated or semi-heated
- c. Provide protection from inclement weather
- d. Comfortable areas that do not ostracize users
- e. Clean areas with adequate resources for proper and safe disposal of cigarette butts, spit cups, and other byproducts
- f. Involve relocation of ashtrays away from building entrances
- g. Allow people to smoke in personal vehicles
- h. Include multiple restricted-use areas on campus, since the further staff members must travel to smoke or use tobacco products, the longer they will be away from their offices and work locations

Social Aspects Related to Implementing Restricted Areas for Smoking and Tobacco Use:

The following suggestions are in regard to implementation in terms of reducing the negative social impact that such changes may have on staff members.

- a. Provide assistance, resources, and educational opportunities to staff members who want to quit smoking and using tobacco products.
- b. Minimally enforce current restrictions

Social Aspects Related to Implementing Restricted Areas for Smoking and Tobacco Use

(cont.):

- c. Provide a cost-effective solution that can be enforced
- d. Implement a policy slowly. Allow time for people to conform to the new policy in a way that is beneficial for both UAF and its staff.
- e. Limit access to restricted areas to those 18 years old and older

Current Problems That May Assist in Developing Solutions

Certain areas of campus were specifically identified in the survey's comments as being problematic due to the amount of smoke people had to walk through when entering building. These included:

- a. Gruening Building and surrounding walkways (11 comments)
- b. Wood Center (3 comments)

These comments, although indicating a problem, have a silver lining. The physical proximity of these two buildings, indicates that the area between, or near, these building may serve as an ideal testbed for establishing restricted areas.

Comments clearly indicate that people smoke in these areas and others are not fond of having to walk through the smoke being generated. Using this area as a testbed allows for the possibility of providing smokers with a more ideal smoking location that can be modified as policy implementation evolves, while simultaneously showing interest and addressing the health concerns of others.

An additional problem, noted by three staff members involved the current use of chewing tobacco, specifically, in classrooms.

Examples of Successful Attempts to Restrict Smoking and Tobacco Use to Designated Areas

Other agencies and organizations have implemented policies regarding smoking and tobacco use similar to those being discussed. As such, it may be useful to draw from the successes and pitfalls others have experienced.

a. Japanese Smoking Huts

A single suggestion to use 'Japanese smoking booths' as models for designing UAF restricted areas may hold the most promise for meeting the needs of the majority of staff. There are a variety of designs with some that could be placed indoors, so as to counter Fairbanks' arctic winters. This idea would, unquestionably, require additional research. Yet, it provides insight into the possibilities that exist. Images of smoking booths can be found online by Googling 'Japanese smoking booth.'

b. Other Suggestions:

i. UAF Geophysical Institute

The Geophysical Institute's current policy on smoking in designated areas was described as successful in one staff member's comments. More research would be needed to determine if the GI's policy would be applicable to other areas on campus.

b. Other Suggestions (cont.):

- ii. SEA/TAC Airport
- iii. Phoenix Airport
- iv. Alaska State Fair – Palmer
- v. Tanana Valley State Fair – Fairbanks
- vi. Fairbanks Memorial Hospital

Further research would be needed to determine if any aspects of other organization's policies are capable of helping UAF meet its goals. Additionally, the policies of some of these organizations may have changed since feedback was collected in Oct. 2013.

Staff Concerns:

Finally, staff do have concerns about what this policy might look like and how it would be implemented and enforced. The following are a few of these concerns.

- a. Many staff commented that they would like to see current restrictions enforced prior to the establishment of new restrictions.
- b. Many staff noted that a new policy would be difficult to enforce, require additional resources, and would negatively impact smokers and tobacco users.
- c. Some staff are concerned that such a policy will further discriminate against some groups, including certain groups of students.

In sum, there are challenges to face when implementing restrictions on an issue that divides staff. These challenges can be overcome by discussion, critical thinking and creativity.