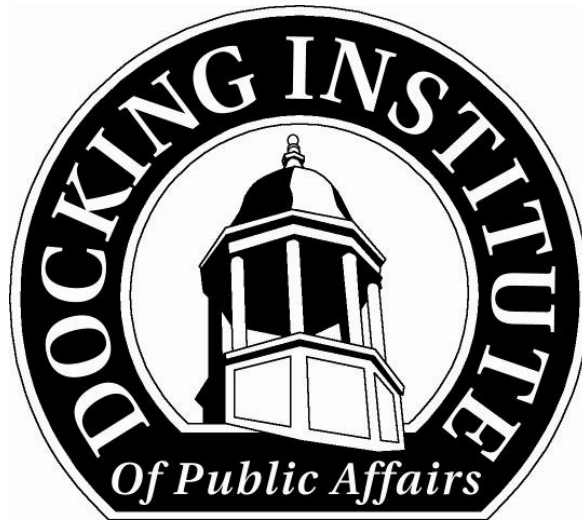


# Information Groups Summary

**October 2014**



Prepared For

**The FHSU Tobacco Policy Task Force**

Prepared By

**The Docking Institute of Public Affairs**

**Copyright © January 2015**  
All Rights Reserved

# Information Groups Summary

## ***Introduction:***

Ty Patterson visited the FHSU campus on October 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> of 2014 to engage with members of campus community to discuss tobacco usage and tobacco policy. Ty met with 14 groups and 91 participants representing administrative leaders, administrative support staff, athletics, custodial staff, faculty, physical plant staff, residential life staff, student government representatives, unclassified professional staff and the University Police. All faculty and staff were invited to attend the information meetings via an email sent on October 15<sup>th</sup> and announcements to department heads.

Note-takers from the Docking Institute of Public Affairs were present at each meeting. To ensure confidentiality of participants, I am providing a summary of the discussions.

## ***Key Comments from Ty:***

- Ty's approach is to making sure a tobacco policy matches the needs of the campus as a whole with an understanding that successful tobacco policy is dependent upon the culture of each campus.
- As such, any change to tobacco policy is dependent upon change to the campus culture.
- A university should set policies that enhance the lives of students, faculty and staff (and the larger community).
- Tobacco policy (whether current policy or a new policy) is also dependent upon an educated constituency.
- As such, education is vital. We all need to learn more *and educate more* about 2<sup>nd</sup> hand smoke, 3<sup>rd</sup> hand smoke, other forms of tobacco use – and who is using what – to better understand what policies are appropriate. We need to consider the non-traditional world of the university (not just the 9-5 workers/students).
- Policy is easy to set but compliance is difficult. Advocates of a new policy are often hard to find when policy enforcement comes into play.
- Continuous evaluation of a policy is important. Without continual evaluation and reassessment of what is working and what isn't, the policy will fail.
- Ty's basic policy outline:
  - Formulate a clear policy
  - Set policy
  - Educate public about policy
  - Seek compliance
  - Evaluate policy (continuously, and modify other steps as necessary)

- Ty stressed that his purpose (with the informational meetings) was to “get people talking and thinking about tobacco policy.” He then asked the participants if they understood current FHSU tobacco policy and if they had any opinions about tobacco policy and tobacco usage. Aggregated comments follow.

### ***Aggregated Comments:***

- Current FHSU Tobacco Policy:
  - Initial comments from most participants in each group were supportive of the current FHSU tobacco policy.
  - All participants understood current policy to mean that tobacco smoking is to take place in parking lots only. Most participants felt that smokers were generally following this rule. However, most also felt that smoking does occur in other areas.
  - There seemed to be some confusion among some participants whether or not chew tobacco and vaping were allowed in other areas (other than parking lots) on campus – such as the quad and the rodeo grounds.
  - Some participants felt that people from off campus and from outside the US were more likely than others to violate current tobacco policy out of lack of awareness of the policy. A few asked if the current policy applies to parents and others visiting the campus.
  - Many participants stated that current tobacco policy “is just fine” and that tobacco usage is “not a problem” on campus. Many of the same participants added that they experience breathing second-hand “smoke while walking across campus,” “see cigarette butts and chew on sidewalks,” and “see people smoking outside of buildings (and not in parking lots), especially in winter.”
  - After discussing these issues, some participants suggested that people were not generally aware of the current tobacco policy and/or are not following the rules set by the policy.
  - Ty suggested that this might be a sign that current policy is not working as well as people generally think. Most participants agreed with his assessment.
- Second-Hand and Third-Hand Smoke:
  - Initial comments from most participants in each group were that second-hand and third-hand smoke was not a problem on campus.
  - Many of the same participants provided examples of “following smokers on Jellison Bridge” or “on the quad” and breathing in second-hand smoke.
  - Many also felt that they could smell smoke on students (or other students) in class. A few stated that second-hand and third-hand smoke is bothersome. One mentioned that second-hand smoke causes severe allergic reactions.

- Ty asked participants to consider this apparent contraction – there seems to be nearly universal agreement that second-hand and third-hand smoke is “not a problem” but, at the same time, many of the same participants provided examples in which second- and third-hand smoke seemed problematic.
- Smoke-Free or Tobacco-Free Campus
  - There was no initial support for a smoke-free or a tobacco-free campus.
  - Participants expressed concerns with a smoke-free or tobacco-free campus tobacco policy. Comments included:
    - Tobacco users would leave trash and tobacco refuse in the yards of campus neighbors if they had to leave campus to use tobacco.
    - People would violate a smoke-free or tobacco-free policy; enforcement would be problematic.
    - Students would leave the residence halls with either policy.
    - Students and faculty might leave and seek schooling/employment elsewhere with either policy
    - Tobacco usage is an “individual right.”
    - Visitors and parents might be “turned off” to FHSU if not allowed to smoke during orientation tours.
  - While most participants were skeptical of effective policy change, a few noted that smoking was once allowed in campus offices and that campus facilities used to sell beer – and that policy changes were seen as unmanageable at the time. However, things “settled down” and change “was not as bad as people predicted.”
  - Ty reiterated that he is stressing that tobacco policy should reflect culture and any policy change would need to be based upon cultural change – not simple top-down enforcement. As such, any policy change would not happen overnight. He told participants that he is telling the task force that education and evaluation are keys to policy success.
  - Ty said he does NOT recommend that a university “slap a policy in place” without first studying the issue and educating the campus and the larger community about the policy – current or new.
- Policy Founded on Respect – Others, the Environment and Human Rights
  - As noted, many participants - tobacco users and non-users alike - expressed concern about not wanting to “trample on the rights of tobacco users.”
  - Ty asked participants to consider that statement - “is using tobacco a ‘right?’ Do people really have a ‘right’ to use tobacco?” He pointed out that all institutions establish rules and conditions, and “we do not think of every condition as taking

away anyone's 'rights'." Pets are not allowed in on-campus housing, for example, but the argument that the university is taking away someone's "right" to have a pet is not made. "The word 'right' is often used when new policy is considered but the term is probably misapplied in most cases."

- Ty offered "respect for others" as an alternative to thinking about "rights." "When asked about smoking behavior, for example, most smokers will tell you that they do not smoke around their kids or other loved ones. Why is that? Probably because they respect the people they love." Ty suggested that "respect for others" is a foundation for effective tobacco policy. "Here is something to consider – if all tobacco users were respecting others and following the current policy, the university would probably not be considering a change to the policy."
- Ty suggested that "respect for the environment" is another thing to consider with talking about tobacco. "From discarded cigarette butts on campus all the way up to the way that tobacco plantations damage farmland that could be growing food" are other things to consider when discussing tobacco policy.
- Finally, Ty asked people to consider the "human rights issues" involved in tobacco growing and processing. "Most of the tobacco grown and harvested comes from China – and the workers live in very poor conditions." About "89 percent of children aged 5 to 14 years old work in the tobacco fields of Malawi." Ty suggest that "these are things that most people do not know but might want to consider when thinking about using tobacco."
- In summary, Ty suggested the inclusion of respect for others, the environmental impact of tobacco, and human rights in discussions of tobacco usage and policy.
- Ty concluded his remarks by reminding participants that the purposes of the information meetings were to "get people talking about tobacco policy" and about what is the "right policy for FHSU." He asked participants to discuss these issues with coworkers and fellow students and provide their thoughts to Task Force members.

Mike Walker  
Docking Institute of Public Affairs  
mwalker@fhsu.edu  
785-628-5563