

Rutgers University Senate
Student Affairs Committee
Response to Referred Resolution: Examining the
Rutgers Smoking Policy (20.1.22) and Smoke-Free Rutgers
Revised March 2017

The Senate referred a resolution regarding the current smoking policy at Rutgers University to the Student Affairs Committee at its November Eleventh meeting. This report and subsequent amended resolution is issued as a response to that referral.

The Student Affairs Committee had been charged previously as follows:

Charge S-1305 – Smoke-Free Rutgers: Examine the desirability, feasibility, impact and means of evolving into a smoke-free Rutgers.

Background

During the November 2016 Senate meeting the Student Affairs Committee was asked to consider a resolution regarding the university smoking policy. Although a smoking policy had been put into place years prior, the effectiveness of the policy was put into question as students continued to face problems of second-hand smoke.

Copy of Referred Resolution

The resolution referred to committee was as follows:

1. There be immediate movement of the smoking urns away from the entrances of buildings to a location at least 30 feet away in order to ensure compliance with the current smoking policy.
2. The University adopt a policy that is enforceable.
3. Students currently smoking be directed towards smoking cessation programs that are available on-campus. Additionally, the university should promote the use of such programs to all members of the Rutgers community including staff, faculty, and students

Committee Deliberations in Regard to this Resolution

In examining the current state of the Rutgers Smoking Policy (20.1.22), the policy remains ineffective. Smoking urns can be found at the entrances of buildings at each campus, which are clear violations of the University policy; this continues to be a problem for students trying to avoid second-hand smoke. There has been some indication that this delay in the movement of the smoking urns is due to new signage being made; however, the current policy does not prohibit moving the urns prior to the creation of the signage and moving the urns may encourage members of the Rutgers community to comply with the current policy. Additionally, smokers can be found in high traffic areas, which further complicates matters for students who try to avoid secondhand smoke. High traffic areas should be identified through appropriate study. Care should be taken to ensure students who wish to smoke have an opportunity to do so, while at the same time minimizing the effect on students who wish to avoid smoke.

Additionally, the current smoking policy is difficult to enforce as little to no enforcement authority is conferred by the policy. The policy does not account for students who live off campus and violate the policy, while they are on campus. While the policy formally provides mechanisms of enforcement against students who reside in residence halls, the current implementation of this policy makes it difficult to enforce the policy when a student violates the policy in a location separate from their residence hall. This difficulty arises because Resident Assistants are currently tasked with reporting student violations of this policy; however, resident assistants are primarily tasked with reporting at a particular residence hall and not on the entirety of the university campus.

Additionally, while the policy tasks department chairs and supervisors with investigating complaints of smoking by faculty, the policy does not require any training on enforcement of the policy by department chairs or supervisors. There is little oversight over any investigation nor requirement an investigation be performed.

Lastly, the current policy requires reporting by third parties. This means that an individual who observes a violation of the policy should report the violation if the policy is to be enforced. To report students, individuals need to contact a “residence life staff member and/or the executive director for residence life.” There is no mechanism for off campus students. To report a staff member one would need to figure out the contact information for a particular individual’s supervisor (information a staff may be reluctant to give). Lastly, to report a faculty member, one must contact the department chair who is charged to “pursue them to resolution.” The Student Affairs Committee believes that it is appropriate to instead designate specific personnel in charge of ensuring compliance with smoking policy. Requiring third parties to report violations of the smoking policies may lead to interpersonal conflicts between individuals. Thus it is best if the university designates certain individuals with reporting requirements under this policy. Not only will this lead to increased compliance with the policy, this will also make the campus safer. The current policies arises due to fire safety regulations and compliance ensures that Rutgers is safe from fire hazards.

Be it hereby resolved, the Rutgers University Senate recommends that:

1. In accordance to the current Rutgers Smoking Policy, there should be immediate movement of the smoking urns away from the entrances of buildings at each of the campuses. Specifically, this includes the required 30-feet radius away from areas such as the entrances to class buildings, labs, dorms, and libraries.
2. Each campus should form a taskforce to explore ways to minimize exposure to secondhand smoke. This taskforce should also design methods of educating the campus community about the dangers of secondhand smoke. This taskforce should include faculty, staff, and student representatives.
3. Appropriate university employees should be provided training in the reporting and enforcement of the current smoking policy.
4. Rutgers should amend the policy to indicate a procedure by which the policy can be enforced against any individual violating the policy while on campus.
5. Rutgers encourage the use of smoking cessation programs that are currently available

on each campus to all members of the Rutgers community including staff, faculty, and students.

Student Affairs Committee 2016-2017

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