



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER



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I am writing as the Health Promotion and Policy Coordinator as well as the chair of the Tobacco-Free FSU Policy Implementation Committee to affirm the policy's benefits to the campus sustainability efforts. As a result of the coordinated and ongoing efforts to educate youth through Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) in the elementary, middle, high schools coupled with continued efforts at the college level to eliminate youth initiation and use of tobacco, the prevalence rates of tobacco use have been steadily decreasing throughout the state of Florida.

In fact, Florida was recently recognized as having the second lowest youth tobacco-use rate in the country in 2013 - 7.5% for Florida. This is less than half of both the current national youth smoking rate of 15.7%, and less than half of the rate for the state of Florida in 2005, just 10 years ago – also 15.7%. This trend is reflected at the college level, with the 30-day prevalence rate dropping from 14.9% and a 5.4% daily use prior to the phased implementation of policy restrictions on tobacco use on campus, down to a 30-day prevalence rate of 9.8% and a 1.0% daily use in the spring of 2014. The daily rate of smoking dropped an impressive 70% immediately after the tobacco-free policy went into effect. Our Facilities Department has also reported a significant reduction in cigarette butts littering and contaminating the campus.

In order to continue this trend and protect the health and maximize the productivity of our graduates through their lifetimes, efforts continue to increase compliance rates, including the proposed pursuit of a voter ballot initiative to eliminate the preemption clause of the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act, thereby allowing for enforcement of the policy. Based on evidence-based research from the CDC, tobacco-free policies not only reduce both the number of students who initiate smoking and increase the percentage of students, faculty and staff who quit, but it also reduces the percentage of students, faculty and staff. There is also evidence that tobacco-free policies reduce the volume of cigarette butts which leech toxins and contaminants in the groundwater and which are inadvertently consumed and harm wildlife.

Tobacco-free campus policy has advanced sustainability efforts for both human and operational resources. The FSU Tobacco-free policy yields social, economic and environmental benefits for the university. Going tobacco-free is a concrete step for reducing hazardous environmental impacts associated with tobacco use.

Sincerely,

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