



WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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TO: Board of Governors
West Liberty University

FROM: Robert S. Gall *RSG*
Faculty Senate Chair

DATE: April 4, 2012

SUBJECT: Comments on Draft Policy 47: Tobacco Use and Guidelines

While a couple of faculty endorsed the proposed policy as written, most faculty who commented had problems with or questions about various parts of the draft. One faculty member, expressing the belief that we should not “be dictating what people do with their bodies for the sake of cleaning up the campus”^{*} and finding it hypocritical to say we “have a responsibility ... to provide a ... healthful environment” while WLU will not let us take any green initiatives, thought the entire policy needs to be scrapped.

Others were more specific regarding items they found troubling. One comment was that “it seems inconsistent to introduce the policy with only the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke and then ban all tobacco.” That total ban worried others. One person questioned the ban on electronic cigarettes, since that person is not aware of any health problems associated with either electronic cigarette use or second-hand exposure to electronic cigarettes. Someone called “the restriction on smokeless tobacco and the vague wording of ‘tobacco-like substitutes’ troubling” because 1) it is not clear whether that also would include nicotine gum or patches and 2) “it’s hard to argue that second-hand snuff is bothering anyone.” The same person also noted that “the way the policy is stated, it’s a violation to have tobacco in a car parked on WLU property,” which means that the policy “is written in a way that makes it almost certain to be violated” (“Smokers are NOT going to throw away the cigarettes they have inside their cars before driving onto campus.”)[†] Perhaps “use of these products” should be banned in cars instead of the mere existence of the products.

One faculty member worried that “making the campus completely smoke free will only result in students sneaking cigarettes in their dorm rooms—creating a fire hazard.” Hence the suggestion from another faculty member that “there should be a designated

^{*} As another faculty member put it: “Everyone should know by this point that the reason the President wants this policy is because of butt litter, although that’s not mentioned.”

[†] Reviewing the policy, however, it is not clear (to me) that the policy is banning the existence of these products. The emphasis seems to be on tobacco *use*. Perhaps Section 1.5 is misleading on this point.

tobacco area away from the public for people who wish to smoke or use other forms of tobacco” since it is not reasonable to expect that everyone will choose to stop.

Others sought clarification of specific sections. A couple of faculty had questions regarding Section 2 of the policy, which they found inconsistent. As one faculty member put it:

Are houses that are on school property, but not occupied by anyone associated with the University, exempt? Or are these buildings occupied by employees or students or anyone else associated with the University? If so, why do rules apply only some of the time? It should be a condition of living there, regardless of their association. This needs to be campus wide, especially if they are so concerned about the health of their employees, students, etc. as described in The Statement.

The other faculty member addressing this section added that “smoke-free housing will be less expensive to maintain in the long run.”

Finally, the issue of assistance in Section 4 seems to be in need of clarification. One comment found the entire section too “ambiguous” and in need of specifics. Along those lines, one faculty member, though liking the idea of a smoke-free campus, thought this was a policy that needs to be done in steps. During the first year, there would voluntary compliance, educating the campus community about the new policy by highlighting it in a mass marketing campaign. That would be followed by a second year in which violators are “required to pay a fine or spend an hour or two picking up tobacco trash around campus.”

Thank you.