

2.4 Tobacco Use Policy Success Stories



Smoke-Free Corridor Policy

the people

The University of Maine at Farmington (UMF), founded in 1863, employs approximately 485 people and accommodates roughly 2,200 students within its grounds. The University's Wellness Committee, consisting of seven individuals from various departments, focuses on creating a healthy work environment for employees.

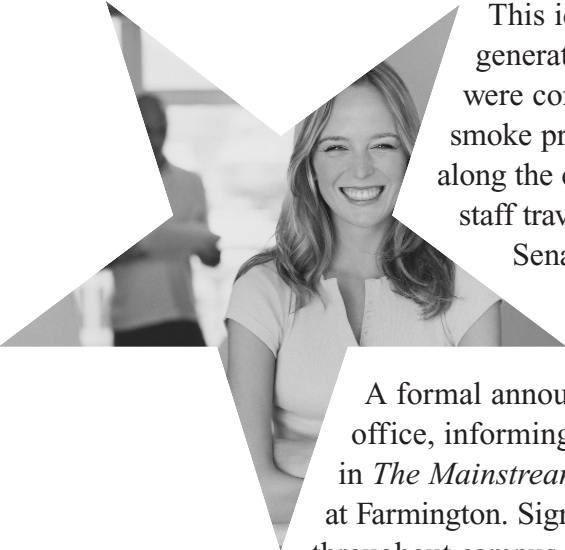
the need

Throughout the last few years the dangers of smoking, as well as the health risks brought about by the presence of environmental smoke, have been brought to the attention of the public. The University wished to eliminate, or at least minimize, the amount of environmental smoke to which faculty and staff, students, and visitors are exposed during a typical day.

the idea

In 2000, UMF developed a policy banning smoking along the central corridor of the campus, creating a Smoke-Free Corridor on which students, University employees, and visitors frequently travel.

the idea at work

A black and white photograph of a young woman with long blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a light-colored top. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or meeting room setting with other people and a whiteboard.

This idea came about as the result of a student initiative, generated in one of the University's health classes. Students were concerned about the amount of environmental tobacco smoke present on campus and suggested a ban on smoking along the central corridor where the majority of the students and staff travel between classes. This idea, endorsed by the Student Senate and presented before the President's Council in 2000, was quickly approved and put into effect immediately.

A formal announcement was sent to the University of Maine System office, informing them of the change, and a news article was printed in *The Mainstream*, which is the newspaper of the University of Maine at Farmington. Signs were also created and placed in strategic locations throughout campus designating the Smoke-Free Corridor.



the cost

The monetary costs incurred for this initiative were limited to the printing of signs for the corridor. Students and staff contributed significant amounts of time on the policy design, as well as on passing the initiative and putting the policy in place.

the results

Although it would be impossible to quantify the results from the implementation of this policy, it made an appreciable difference in the eyes of the employees and students of the University. One student mentioned: “Before they created the Smoke-Free Corridor, I used to have to walk through a cloud of smoke to get to my classes every day. People always used to gather between the buildings to smoke between classes. But ever since they created this corridor, I have noticed a lot less smoke, and it was great to be able to breathe in the fresh air.”

Most agree that people have adhered to the new Smoke-Free Corridor policy, and for the most part have been quite respectful. However, it has been challenging to enforce the policy for those few people who choose to disregard it. Since no one has specifically been appointed to police the corridor there is uncertainty about whose duty it is to regulate the smoke-free rule. The answer is simply that people who care to speak up must volunteer themselves to enforce the policy. The University wants to keep the policy in a positive light, and so prefers peer enforcement over formal law enforcement.

Overall, the results of the Smoke-Free Corridor have been quite positive. Brenda Obert, one of the key leaders involved in aiding this student initiative, states, “It is a step toward changing the culture and attitudes of the campus.” Obert hopes that this initiative may pave the way for an entirely smoke-free campus one day.

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Smoke-Free Corridor (continued)

contact(s)

Brenda Obert , The University of Maine at Farmington, 152 Quebec Street, Farmington, ME 04938, 207-778-7139

Kawika Thompson, The University of Maine at Farmington, 152 Quebec Street, Farmington, ME 04938, 207-778-7494

The UMF Smoke-Free Corridor Policy



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT
FARMINGTON
MAINE'S FIRST CHOICE IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

UMF HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTER

152 QUEBEC STREET
FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938
TEL 207-778-7495
FAX 207-778-7202
WWW.UMF.MAINE.EDU

UMF Smoking Policies (Revised 11-16-00)

In compliance with several Maine laws, UMF has a policy of prohibiting smoking in all University buildings. In addition, as part of the smoke free corridor plan, all handicapped accessible entrances on campus are designated as smoke-free entrances. By fall of 2002, the central corridor from Roberts Learning Center to Merrill Hall will be designated smoke free and will encompass all interior and exterior entrances of the buildings as well as the space found within the corridor. An employee can receive assistance in the cessation of smoking through various programs and certain charges are covered through the University's Group Health Plan. Consult the personnel office for further information.