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Resolution for recommendation to establish Tobacco Zones on Campus

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Approved by the Senate:

Not Approved by the Senate: 3/14/2013

Approved by the President:

Not Approved by the President:

Faculty Senate adoption and support of the SGA "Resolution for recommendation to establish Tobacco Zones on Campus"

Submitted by: Chad Harmon

2/27/2013

Motion:

I motion that Faculty Senate adopt the Student Government Association resolution that recommends the establishment of "Tobacco Zones" on the Georgia Southern University campus.

Rationale:

WHY SHOULD YOUR CAMPUS BECOME TOBACCO-FREE?

- Tobacco litter desecrates the campus environment
- Access for people with disabilities is threatened (respiratory compromises)
- Prepare students for increasingly tobacco-free work places
- Provide public health policy leadership
- Support health and wellness initiatives
- Compliment institutional sustainability efforts

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS MOVEMENT

- Colleges have had policies restricting tobacco use on their campus for decades
- Lack of enforcement of building perimeter and/or designated area tobacco use policies along with increased evidence of the problem of exposure to second hand smoke (SHS) are primary reasons for making campuses tobacco-free
- There is growing interest in having the campus culture reflect genuine respect for others and the environment, central themes of tobacco-free campus policy

OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

- By making its campuses tobacco-free the institution establishes itself as a leader in public health policy
- This leadership role will encourage others to consider similar policies
- Through establishment of a tobacco-free advisory committee the institution will engage citizens from its service area
- Higher education and other entities from the area will seek assistance with similar policies

Source: The Center Of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Campus Policy, Ozarks Community College. www.otc.edu/tobaccofree. 2010.

Response:

Minutes 3/14/2013: Motion Request (SGA): Faculty Senate adoption and support of the SGA "Resolution for recommendation to establish Tobacco Zones on Campus"
Chad Harmon (SGA) moved the motion and it was seconded.

President Keel pointed out that this particular motion could be problematic from the standpoint of creating zones that are going to have to have some sort of cover. It would not be a trivial task to determine how many zones would be needed on this 670 acre campus, and it would have to be based on where people are working.

Rebecca Ziegler (LIB) noted that some people had pointed out in the discussion of this online that the problems might be solved by enforcing existing policy. She noted that she had seen two existing policies, GSU's and the Board of Regents', and they are not exactly the same, but the gist of them is that smoking needs to take place in such a way that smoke can't be where people have to go through it in order to enter or exit buildings, or where it can get into buildings from outside. She thought it was important that we work out some kind of enforcement that will make this possible because there are some people for whom it really is a health concern to have to breathe other people's smoke coming in from outside or passing through it outside. She thought we needed to be sure of existing policy and determine needed steps to enforce existing policy.

Chad Harmon (SGA) had followed the online discussion and noted that smoking policy is consistently one of the biggest concerns the SGA hears about from students, though the concerns were not just re: health. Whether or not the SGA proposal moved forward, we needed discussion about our current policy and to make sure that we were at least enforcing the Board of Regents' Policy here at Georgia Southern.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) noted that the BOR Policy – and this isn't reflected in Georgia Southern's own policy – has provisions about not being around any access into the buildings, and he believed that trumps our policy, and it would be good to have that

provision in our own policy. He noted it is already in place at Newton, and said it could be brought into play in other locations, though providing shelters might be an issue. Maura Copeland (Legal Affairs) noted that the policy that we have here isn't inconsistent with the Board of Regents Policy, so they actually both are in place.

Our policy just clarifies that you can't have it in the vehicles here on campus. The policy at the Board of Regents is meant to be our policy in conjunction with the Georgia Smoke Free Air Act. That Act makes it a criminal penalty for violating the policy. So there is a punishment for it. A person who is smoking tobacco in violation of that act is guilty of a misdemeanor and the fine is not less than a \$100 and not more than \$500. So it's a law enforcement issue.

Candy Schille (CLASS) asked SGA representative Harmon what he meant when he said student concerns were not just about health. What were the others?

Harmon said some students complained because they had health issues, "but it's just a general complaint from students whether it be because of the medical issue or just . . . the simple reason . . . that that act was created, the Smoke Free Air Act, it's for whatever reason, it's not just for medical issues . . . but it's consistently something [SGA] are hearing from students."

Schille asked for clarification of what the other reasons might be.

Harmon did not know; the complaints were not specific.

Marc Cyr (CLASS) noted that Ms. Copeland had said that our policy regarding smoking in vehicles was a clarification of BOR policy, but that vehicles aren't mentioned in the BOR policy. He didn't understand how our mentioning of vehicles or smokeless tobacco can be a clarification of something that is not mentioned by the BOR.

Jill Lockwood (COBA) thought that the issue is not that our policy contradicts the BOR Policy, but that ours adds something that perhaps the BOR policy does not address: We don't want somebody to go into a University vehicle that reeks of smoke because that could be very obnoxious. But we don't have a policy that contradicts the BOR policy. Cyr asked if it was an allowable extension, then, rather than a clarification. Lockwood said yes.

Cyr then asked when the GSU provisions re: vehicles and smokeless tobacco were added, and by whom. He noted our revised policy was put on the books in April 2012 but did not remember any discussion of that revision by anybody. He further noted that he and Senator Jamie Woods (CLASS) had been talking about this before the meeting; they had been on the committee that wrote the GSU policy that then somehow got

revised, and that committee specifically did not include chewing tobacco because they couldn't see how that presented a secondhand threat.

Moderator Mynard asked if there was anybody in the room with input on how this policy revision was made.

Maura Copeland (Legal Affairs) said that policies are proposed before President's Cabinet and President's Cabinet then votes on the revisions. She could not recall if that's what happened here, but that's what the process general is. She did recall, however, that one concern was "the grossness from chewing tobacco in the vehicles that are owned by the University."

Cyr said he had no problem with restriction against smokeless tobacco, although it didn't make any sense to him,

or against the in-vehicles prohibition, but was just wondering where those revisions came from, and now he gathered it was the President's Council [Cabinet].

John Luque (JPHCOPH) asked SGA Representative Harmon, if this motion didn't pass, what would prevent establishing which buildings are problem areas and making some type of smoking areas that wouldn't be right by the doorways.

Harmon said there's nothing SGA could do, but that's something they could look at.

Candy Schille (CLASS) noted most buildings that she goes to have the ashtrays right by the doors. She suggested moving the ashtrays away from the doors.

Moderator Mynard thought that sounded like a good suggestion, but Teresa Thompson (VPSA & EM) noted that five or six years ago we did that and what happened was that Physical Plant then found that there were a lot of cigarette butts around the doorways.

Robert Costomoris (CLASS) asked if there was any money from the SGA that could be put towards building "smoking huts."

Teresa Thompson (VPSA & EM): "No."

Tony Barilla (COBA) asked, "So if someone gets busted for smoking a cigarette and gets fined we can't use that money to build a smoking hut . . .? isn't that common sense? That's how a lot of city governments survive [via] speeding fines and other things."

Maura Copeland (Legal Affairs) said we wouldn't get that money because it would be "a criminal fine."

Barilla asked if that was “a different pot of money.”

Costomiris (CLASS) said one issue about enforcing this matter is that there are no police foot patrols. Most of the police are in their automobiles most of the time so they don't walk by the places where people are smoking. He wondered if police could ride bikes, walk across campus, or do things like that, and suggested that might help.

Rob Yarbrough (COSM) asked for clarification about who is responsible for enforcing this policy in the first place, since one of the big issues is that the current policy is simply not being enforced. He noted that many folks on the Senate Listserv concluded that problems would not be remedied by a new policy if whatever our policies are, they are not being enforced.

President Keel said that if it is a criminal offense, it's our Public Safety Officers who are responsible for enforcement because they are the only ones that can issue fines or tickets or do arrests. But we have a limited police force who are doing other things, so he figured it was up to all of us to make smokers who might be violating policy aware of that policy, and ask them to comply. He thought eventually this would be effective. But it all comes down to enforcement, and “every single one of us are going to have to be willing to take responsibility in a very nice way: ‘I'd be most grateful if you'd move your smoking away from the building.’”

Yarbrough thought that was a great idea, and asked if we might not have some kind of “information campaign.” Via the online discussion of this issue he had been “disheartened” to find that no one actually knew what the existing policy was. If faculty don't know, we can't expect students to know. He also said that if we put ashtrays by the buildings, that's a sign that it's okay to smoke there even if there is a sign that says no smoking within 25 feet, and so smokers are confused.

President Keel recommended that we put together a very small committee of representatives from Student Government, Staff Council, and Senate, to meet with him and try to come up with some get-the-word-out programs that aren't going to cost a lot of money, and develop signage, if we need to, that is non-intrusive and blends with our beautiful campus. That is, create “a proactive positive education program” to help smokers understand that we respect their rights, but that others don't want that smoke in their faces.

The motion was Defeated.

Robert Pirro (CLASS) wanted it to be on the record that the earlier Staff Council motion vote had been erroneously noted as “unanimous” by Moderator Mynard, but that some people had not voted at all, so the first motion wasn't rejected unanimously.

Attachment: [Resolution for Smoking Zones](#)