

## **Background Information**

In 1999, the OTC Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to make OTC a tobacco-free campus in 2003; a gradual shift from a campus with designated smoking areas outside and smoke-free buildings to a completely tobacco-free campus beginning August 1, 2003. Need for the tobacco-free initiative was undeniable. The most notable concerns are outlined below:

- Over 600 secondary students attend classes on the OTC campus daily. These students are integrated and unable to be differentiated from postsecondary students, creating a free haven for the illegal tobacco use of minors on this campus;
- OTC is committed as a public learning institution to teaching appropriate health behaviors;
- Missouri has one of the highest rates in the nation for tobacco use at approximately 35% of the population, which translates to over 5,500 tobacco users among OTC faculty, staff, and students;
- “Workplace prohibition” has been proven to be the most effective incentive for smoking cessation according to data provided by the American Cancer Society (ACS);
- ACS data indicates that over 90% of those who use tobacco, desire to quit; and
- The debris and pollution created by open tobacco use on campus negatively affects 15,000 current students and even more community members who use OTC facilities for private and civic functions.

### ***Strategy for Action:***

In response to an overwhelming need, OTC took a four-pronged approach to becoming a tobacco-free campus:

- ***Education/Information***- Education and information was the primary thrust of this Initiative. In cooperation with the American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association, OTC provided a resource room in its Information Commons building to house videotapes, brochures, pamphlets and books. Additional resources are to be housed in the OTC Childcare Center, providing easy access to the parents of our youngest student body. Additionally, permanent campus signage has made it possible to keep the tobacco-free policy known to the campus community.
- ***Smoking Cessation***-OTC uses posters and the college website ([www.otc.edu](http://www.otc.edu)) to keep the campus community informed of smoking cessation assistance available on the campus and in the community. All cessation efforts are designed to enhance learning and affect positive change in the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff and those around them.

- ***Community Support and Involvement*** - The community advisory committee formed to guide the tobacco-free efforts on campus has proven over and over again to be an invaluable resource. The committee is well represented by the local health department, major local healthcare providers, the local chapters of the American Lung Association, Heart Association, and American Cancer Society, and by the civic and business community.

- ***Policy Implementation***-OTC recognized early on that the success of this policy would require the full support of faculty and staff. Seminars, discussion groups, and special events have been planned in conjunction with advisory committee representatives to foster the support of the campus community. Endorsements were assured from the OTC Faculty Senate, the Classified Staff Association and the Student Government Association prior to policy implementation in August of 2003. OTC campus security, in conjunction with faculty and staff and the Student Government Association, actively distributed campus policy brochures along with educational brochures and smoking cessation information. It was the initial intention of the Tobacco Free Committee to avoid punitive implementation in the early phase. Indeed, it is the goal of this initiative to educate the campus community about the tobacco free policy adopted by the OTC Board of Trustees and endorsed by faculty, staff, and the student body. A more punitive approach to implementation was planned for Fall of 2004 and described under enforcement.

#### ***Seeking Support for Change:***

Policy support was sought from students, staff and faculty, administrators, the Board of Trustees, and community constituents. Each faction required a unique approach as follows:

***Students*** – OTC students are paying customers. Respect for their individual rights and needs have driven this effort. Student support has been fostered through a campus wide informational/educational campaign. Posters were strategically placed on campus announcing the upcoming policy and again at the time of policy implementation. Additional information was provided via an annual campus/community health fair, the campus newspaper, and other student publications. A Student Government Association endorsement was requested and granted prior to the date of policy implementation. Perhaps most importantly, the tobacco-free policy became a focus of classroom discussions, student essays, and class projects.

***Staff and Faculty*** – A staff endorsement was requested and granted from the Classified Staff Association prior to policy implementation. Also, an endorsement was requested and granted from the Faculty Senate. Key members of these groups were sought to provide committee representation. It was particularly important to provide this group with a voice to shape policy and implementation.

***Board of Trustees*** – Presidential support and the voice of students, faculty, and staff has provided ongoing momentum for unanimous Board support. The Board has been kept constantly abreast of tobacco-free efforts, as they are frequently called upon to be the voice of the college.

***Community Constituents*** - Inherent synergy of the community college with its diverse constituents is evidenced through the use of advisory committees. OTC has formed a community

advisory committee to guide the tobacco free initiative that is represented by associates of the American Cancer Society and American Lung Association, local business people, and the two major Springfield healthcare providers among others.

***Presidential Leadership*** - Support and leadership of the college President has been paramount to the success of this effort. The tobacco-free policy concept was initially presented to the Board of Trustees by the college President. Initial committee assignments were made by formal appointment from the President. Information and outreach to other college campuses came through the President's office. All necessary funding to date has come from presidential prioritization of the institutional budget.

***Enforcement:***

Policy enforcement has been marked by two distinct phases. From the time of policy implementation through the entirety of the first year, it was the desire of the Tobacco-Free Implementation Committee to take a non-aggressive approach to enforcement. This time was designated for campus "awareness raising" in hopes that students, faculty, and staff would dominate later enforcement efforts among their own peer groups. In this initial phase, policy offenders were given a written copy of the tobacco-free policy. The second phase of policy implementation began the Fall 2004 semester. The second stage is characterized by written citations of policy offenses. A uniform policy was adopted for both student and staff offenders.

***Outcomes:***

A tobacco-free policy has been successfully and uniformly implemented on the main OTC campus and the off-site locations. A strong and active community advisory committee guides the ongoing campus implementation process and provides direction for the Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Policy which was established on their advice.

***Future Plans:*** A priority of the Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Policy in the coming years to secure grant funds. The center will continue to host an annual interactive workshop and provide additional services as required.