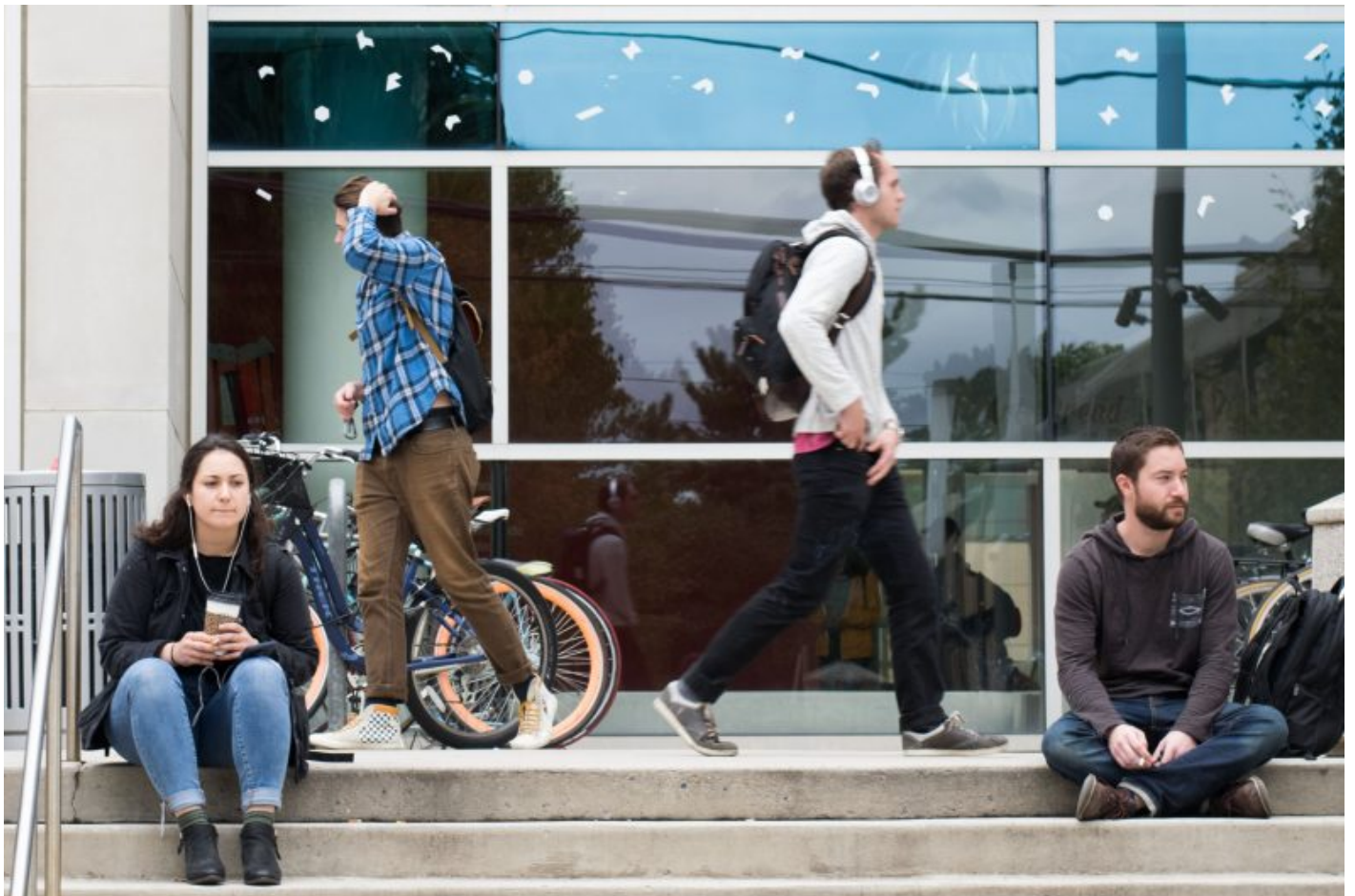


RESEARCH

Temple studying how to be a tobacco-free campus

The university is partnering with Thomas Jefferson University, which has been tobacco-free since 2014.

by [Amanda Treible](#) | 17 October 2017



Students smoke cigarettes on the steps of the Tyler School of Art on Monday. | JAMIE COTTRELL / THE TEMPLE NEWS

The College of Public Health received a \$20,000 grant to study how Temple could become a tobacco-free campus in Fall 2018.

The grant is from the American Cancer Society in collaboration with the Truth Initiative, the CVS Health Foundation and the Tobacco-Free Generation Campus Initiative. CPH formed a task force over the summer to study how to implement the tobacco-free policy.

Jennifer Ibrahim, a CPH associate dean for Academic Affairs and the recipient of the grant, said she received the ACS grant to fund education materials and student workers for the task force.

Ibrahim and CPH's Dean Laura Siminoff created a survey with the task force that was sent out to students, faculty and staff about their smoking habits. The survey was sent out via email on Oct. 2 and closed last week.

A smoke-free campus includes the banning of items, like cigarettes, cigars, vapes and other items that produce smoke. A tobacco-free campus, which the university aims to become, means that any tobacco product would be prohibited, including chewing tobacco, snus and snuff.

As of Jan. 2, there were 1,757 smoke-free campuses and 1,468 tobacco-free campuses in the United States, according to a report by the American Non-Smokers' Rights Foundation.

The task force is still working out how this policy will be enforced on campus and if the campus will be completely tobacco-free or only include combustible items, not including vapes, Ibrahim said.

Ibrahim expects to have prepared the results by the end of the fall semester to share the findings for future steps toward a tobacco-free campus.

At Temple, smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of a "main entrance, exit or operable window of a university building." But Ibrahim said it is difficult to enforce this policy.

"Especially when it's cold or it's inclement weather...[there are] folks standing under the awning so they don't get wet or snowed on," she said.

But the university's urban and open setting, which allows the public to visit Main Campus freely, may be a challenge when implementing a tobacco-free campus policy.

"What we are doing at this point is trying to access what are other local schools and colleges doing in the area, 'What are other schools that look like Temple doing?'" Ibrahim said. "[Thomas Jefferson University] has similar challenges to us in the sense that it is a city-based campus."

Jefferson has been a tobacco-free campus since April 2014. Temple is teaming up with Jefferson to learn about how it enforced this policy.

Jefferson pushes education about the dangers of smoking. It pairs employees who want to quit smoking with other people who have successfully quit.

"The approach and the mindset we want to keep is that we're trying to be proactive and positive," Ibrahim said. "So it's important to recognize smoking is an addiction, and the approach cannot be to punish smokers."

The approach she hopes to take is to inform students and the public not only that the policy exists, but also on why it is in place, Ibrahim said.

According to ACS, 90 percent of smokers start smoking by 18.

"I think [a tobacco-free policy is] good for everybody," Ryan Ashby, a junior civil engineering major said. "Obviously for...years now scientists and doctors have been saying how damaging smoking is to oneself and to others."

Ashby does not smoke, but has family members who do. He said he hopes the tobacco-free policy will encourage people who want to quit to make the step to actually quitting.

"I think it'd be a better thing for me," said Christina Douvartzidis, a freshman university studies major who smokes. "I think smoking less is probably a better option."

Kalie Johnson is a junior East Asian studies major who smokes cigarettes.

"Since I smoke, I'm not particularly happy about [the policy]," Johnson said. "I get stressed out really easily."

Johnson thinks she'll still smoke on campus despite any policy changes.

Ibrahim said she hopes the task force will have options to present to the Board of Trustees by Fall 2018. The Board will have the final say in any new university-wide policy.



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