

Smoke free campuses survey, conducted by the School of Public Health for the Clean Air Strategy Working Group

INTRODUCTION

Presently, NAIT and McMaster are completely smoke-free campuses. Western University has designated smoking areas on campus, however, they are going completely smoke-free on the 1st of July 2019. A telephone interview which lasted for 30-40 minutes was conducted with individuals responsible for overseeing the policy implementation. The interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim by the interviewer. Below is a detailed summary of findings with associated quotes from participants.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Time taken to develop and implement smoke-free policy

Time range varied between institutions. NAIT developed and implemented the policy *“really quickly”*. The policy was developed and implemented after completing the terms of a grant to offer smoking cessation program. The smoking cessation program was a motivator for the policy decision *“When we completed the terms of the grant, we continued doing it anyway from our resources to continue having a smoking cessation program. ...We realized that if we were going to be assisting students and staff to quit smoking that we should probably have a smoke-free campus at the same time, and so that was implemented really quickly. ...It was like oh! it made sense to have a smoke-free campus and so it was really easy to implement”*.

Western’s discussions and preparations around going smoke-free took two years (2015-2017) while implementation began in January 2018. *“We have been talking about going smoke free at the university since the end of 2015, start of 2016. ...For two years we were doing almost like a business case, it wasn’t like a pressing issue really until 2018 when we all put our foot to the pedal and really started implementing some solid steps”*.

McMaster started a discussion around going smoke-free in March 2017, they launched their communication plan in September 2017 and implemented policy in January 2018. It took them less than a year

Stakeholder consultations

NAIT had minimal or no consultations with students, faculty, staff, community members and external stakeholders. *“I don’t know for sure but I think it was more of a communication of what was happening than a consultation before it did happen. ...We think an advantage for us was that we didn’t have residential communities close to us. We didn’t have those sorts of issues to deal with”*.

Western had a broad and strategic stakeholder consultation through meetings, focus group discussions and workshops. *“We consulted broadly with every student group, ...same thing with staff and faculty, we have 13 unions and associations and we met with every one of them probably on a dozen occasions over the last few years...”*. They also consulted with external stakeholders and community members *“...We met with some of the local neighborhood groups and association just to get their opinions and let them voice some of their concerns”*. Highly involved external stakeholders were the local health unit whom they partnered with to offer smoking cessation workshops. They reached out to the Canadian Cancer Society

for advice. Also consulted were Leave the Pack Behind (an organisation under the Ontario government), local officials, municipal politicians and their local transit “...our local transit company which run all of the buses that go through campus and even when there is an external stakeholder that uses the campus quite often, we consulted as well”.

McMaster had some level of consultation with external stakeholders. They involved individuals affiliated with the university. Individuals like institutes that do research on McMaster, different businesses on campus. They got feedback from community members through their director of public and government relations. they did not consult with government “*We didn’t contact with government, we worked with Hamilton public health and they provided input into the policy development and planning*”. Other stakeholders that were involved in the policy development include “*student union, graduate students, members from different campuses, researchers, faculty members, senior leaders, employee health team, legal relations team, employee wellness, student wellness, Leave the Pack Behind*”.

Type of consultations

A survey targeted at students, faculty and staff was conducted across the main campus and three other campuses affiliated with Western. They learned the proportion of regular and occasional smokers, those in support of a smoke-free campus, and gained insights on implementation approach. An advisory committee was set up to interpret data and provide recommendations. “...*After the survey data, we put together a cross functional group across Western university that consisted of staff leaders, student leaders, every union, every association executive. So that we had this broad team of about 20-25 people, and they were called the future of smoking on campus committee. They would meet regularly to go through the data, trying to interpret the data and then they need a recommendation to our president and vice president group*”.

Western included both smokers and non-smokers, students, faculty and staff in their consultations. They took a participatory approach in consultation “...*We would sit with them in a room and we would talk about what our current policy was, where we want it to go in terms of our future vision and then we would just flipchart any concerns they had. When it got to the point where we were talking about designated smoking areas, we printed a large map that we put on the wall and we had people go up and actually use dots to place where they thought some of these smoking locations should be...*”.

McMaster posted their policy draft online and solicited feedback that way from students, faculty and staff. They hosted facebook events and streamed live discussion videos on facebook to enhance student’s participation through their comments and in-person discussion.

Challenges encountered

NAIT suggested smokers on the sidewalks specifically at bus stops, as their challenge “...*because we don’t have any jurisdiction over the sidewalks, we still have smokers on the sidewalks where there are bus stops and then so is like people still have to walk through that to cross the street and so we still really promote our smoking cessation programs.*”.

Western got push-back through angry emails from smokers. “*People are really happy that we are going smoke free and then other people really feel like they are being targeted. Smokers feel like we are controlling them, and we are telling them how they need to live their life. ...And so we get a lot of push back from them saying you can’t control whether or not I smoke...*”.

McMaster recognised early communication as their biggest challenge. *“I would say our challenge was just communication and also the timing of when we launched because we launched communications in September after students were already admitted and attending school so it was more of a challenge to let students know that we were going smoke free and then the following year when we were doing communications, we communicated to students during the application process so they would know that we were going smoke free. Once we implemented, I think our biggest challenge was continued communication...”*

Unintended consequences

NAIT encountered a reduction in cigarette butt littering around school perimeters. However, they experience a lot of smoking on the sidewalks on main streets.

Western had no unintended consequences *“No, we knew what we were up against...”*

McMaster experienced additional refuse around the edge of campus. They adapted by moving cigarette urns to some of those locations outside campus where students tend to gravitate.

Major resisters and supporters

Both institutions identified smokers as their major resisters. Supporters were smokers who took advantage of the smoking cessation programs, non-smokers, people with health-related issues like asthma, people with first-hand experience of smoking related problems.

Before the launch of the policy at McMaster, some community members identified as resisters. *“Community advocates for what they classify as human rights. It was mostly related to the legalization of cannabis and students not being able to participate in smoking cannabis on campus when it became legalized. It was mostly individuals from the Hamilton community, not McMaster students, staff or faculty members that organized the demonstration”*. Their supporters were *“our entire campus community, staff, student, faculty and other colleges and universities who contacted us to say congratulations...”*

Policy violation

All institutions responded they have had violations. However, they implied that the idea is not to take a punitive approach but to keep creating awareness and promoting the policy

“...is a sort of thing that you more want to promote than actively police. Is not about punishing somebody who is standing close to the building” (NAIT).

“The idea is not to go around campus placing fines on anyone caught smoking. The idea is to keep creating awareness about the policy” (Western University).

“Our officers were trained by Hamilton public health on the approach for cessation and they would approach individuals and talk to them about cessation and let them know about the policy...we do not have fines on our campus” (McMaster).

Impact on surrounding community

NAIT suggested a major impact on people waiting to catch the bus or using the busy street sidewalks. However, they have had no problematic reports or issues. *“Major impact is on other people waiting for the bus as well, but I don’t know of any report of any issues like that but if it became a problem that there were people complaining about smoking then we would do some enforcement there”*.

Western's policy implementation had no impact on surrounding community because they addressed issues beforehand. *"So we tried our best to provide garbage cans and cigarette urns to prevent litter and so far, we have not had any push back from the surrounding community"*.

McMaster also responded they have received no complaints so far.

Highest level of policy authorization

The executive approved the policy in NAIT *"Our policy framework is such that the board has delegated operational policies to executive, so it didn't need to go to the board, that's not our process"*.

On the other hand, the board of governors approved the policy at Western University and McMaster University.

Approach to implementation

NAIT and McMaster did not take a phased in approach to implementation *"We went cold turkey, we said you know today we are a smoking campus, tomorrow we are non-smoking campus"* (NAIT).

Western took a phased in approach *"The first phase started in January 2018, we asked people to be 10m from all buildings, so not just doors and windows which is by Ontario law here. Our second phase was July 1, 2018, we went to designated smoking areas and then our last phase is upcoming, in this July. July 1, 2019 is when we will be completely smoke free"*.

Policy implementers and enforcers

At NAIT and Western, policy is implemented and enforced through the health and safety unit. The peace officers are involved in policy enforcement. The VP administration and provost oversee the policy implementation at McMaster. Policy is enforced through their security services.

Code of conduct

NAIT responded no to this while Western confirmed it is incorporated in their code of conduct for staff but not for students (they intend to include it this summer). McMaster responded the policy is incorporated in their code of conduct for students, staff and faculty.

Stop-smoking supports and programs

Both institutions offered stop-smoking support and programs to students, faculty and staff in conjunction with the implementation of the policy. Components of services offered in NAIT include counselling, personalized quit smoking plans, nicotine replacement therapy products, and providing quit kits. Support is offered through their health service unit.

Western university partnered with their local health unit in London to offer smoking cessation programs, taking confidentiality into consideration *"...participants register through the local health unit and they would come to a location here on campus that we chose, it was confidential, that's why it was run through the health unit..."*. Some components of their support programs include free manualized workshops, one on one consultations with a public health nurse, personalised quit program, support through employee health spending account.

McMaster's staff and faculty have smoking cessation program through their employee and family assistance program. McMaster also changed their employee benefits to include any prescription

medications or smoking cessation. Students have access to smoking cessation programs and aids through student wellness center and Leave the Pack Behind.

All institutions acknowledged these programs and support enhanced the acceptance of the policy and it helped people quit smoking.

Specific programs for cannabis users

NAIT and Western have no specific programs for cannabis users. McMaster responded they do. *“We do have those programs already for faculty, staff and student through EFAPN, our student wellness center. They are already there but we don’t promote that specifically because of our tobacco and smoke free campus that is seen as a separate issue”.*

Promotion and communication of the policy

Both institutions have promotion and communication strategies in place. NAIT handed out promotional materials at various events, sometimes goody bags on campus.

Western run booths at the university community center, they hold various prize-winning activities, share nicotine gum, they also had a one day stand against smoking two years on a row. They partnered with MPH students to help on several occasions. In addition, they hired student smoke-free ambassadors who go around campus every day to chat with students about the policy and point out where the designated smoking areas were located around campus. Policy was also communicated through town hall meetings, health fairs, emails, and social media. Western is communicating their intention to go smoke-free in July 2019, which is the last phase of their implementation.

McMaster created a website, they had social media presence, and *“massive amount of media coverage”* (because they were the first university in Ontario to implement a smoke-free campus policy). They communicated policy through internal emails to employees, staff and faculty members and students. Their security service gave out pamphlets to violators they approached.

All institutions responded the promotion and communication of their policy enhanced acceptance.

Signs and printed materials across campus

All institutions have signage around campus. NAIT who is completely smoke-free indicated their signs read *“a smoke free campus”* rather than *“no smoking”*. Western also handed out postcards through their student smoke-free ambassadors. Postcards had links to the policy website and the list of supports available for smoking cessation, as well as a map of campus showing people the location of smoking designated areas.

Major cost items

All institutions indicated cost associated with putting up signage. NAIT’s added cost was the upkeep of cigarette urns. Western’s biggest cost was hiring the smoke-free student ambassadors who conducted awareness and educational campaigns across campus.

If given another opportunity

NAIT acknowledged it would be difficult than easier to implement the policy now if they had an opportunity to do it all over again. They would consult broadly and implement the policy in phases. *“...It*

would be a lot harder because our framework has developed to become more collaborative and we have probably more consultations and we might have to do more of a phased in approach than we did before”.

Western would hire the smoke-free ambassadors earlier “...We hired them this past august so that they would be here for the beginning of the school year. But it probably would have been beneficial if we had them last spring in the lead of the designated areas, it probably would have helped raise awareness earlier”.

McMaster “would prefer to have more time to implement, making sure that students were able to participate in the whole process”.

General advice and lessons learned

Help people quit smoking “...I think that is just to make sure that you are helping people to quit smoking as much as you are not permitting them to smoke on your property” (NAIT).

Consult broadly “...Make sure that all your stakeholders are really consulted with, all your unions, associations, students, faculty and staff groups and indigenous services” (Western). “Involve as many stakeholders and department across campus” (McMaster).

Tackle the issue from a health and safety standpoint “We really drove it through the joint occupational health and safety committee, ...we are doing this because of the amount of complaints we were getting to the joint occupational health and safety committee about people specifically on campus that were having asthma attacks and things like that because of second hand smoke. We have an obligation under the government to create a healthy and safe work environment for everyone...” (Western).

Take a phased-in approach “You might want to go in a bit more of phasing approach and in a certain like piloting area...” (NAIT).

Communicate regularly and broadly to create awareness “The best learning for us was we did a lot of things to put ourselves out in front of people, so we did a lot of town halls, a lot of health fairs in high traffic areas on campus. And I think communicating regularly and broadly really helped us raise awareness” (Western).

Be patiently promotive rather than punitive “...begin with the end in mind so that you don't expect it to happen overnight and you don't spend all your resources chasing down people who are smoking instead you are more looking at helping people stop smoking” (NAIT).

Set up a large committee that is representative of the people “Put together a large task force or an advisory committee that includes members of student groups, staff group, faculty group, councils, ...also I would say your marginalized communities that is, indigenous services...” (Western).

Have a thoughtful and strategic plan “A whole pile of planning needs to go into this, ...it needs to be very thoughtful and strategic in terms of the phases and the ways that you communicate” (Western).

