

## Indiana Colleges and Universities Survey Report

### Introduction

An estimated 20% of the U.S. adult populations are current smokers. Recent trends in adult tobacco use reveal that smoking prevalence among U.S. adults have fallen across all age groups. With an adult smoking rate of 24%, Indiana has gone from ranking second to fifth in the nation for adult smoking prevalence. Despite this decline in national and state adult smoking rates, young adults, 18-24 years of age, have the highest (26%) adult smoking prevalence in the U.S. Likewise, Indiana young adults, ages 18-24, have the highest (34.6%) smoking rate among adults in the state (1).

Young adulthood is a time of transition into adulthood and experimentation. Approximately, one third of young adults attend colleges and universities. Research shows many 18- 24 year olds try tobacco for the first time while in college. High school students who were occasional smokers are more likely to increase their smoking frequency and amount while in college (2). During the 1990's smoking prevalence among college students increased significantly. In 2005, 24% of students enrolled in two- or four-year colleges reported smoking cigarettes in the last 30 days. Only 12.4% of full-time college students reported daily cigarette smoking, which suggest that most students were occasional smokers (3).

Studies reveal that a vast majority of college students describe themselves as “social smokers”, but they do not consider themselves to be smokers. These students only smoke when socializing and they view it as “a harmless pleasure” (4, 5, and 6). Students who are “social smokers” believe they will be able to quit at some future time, which suggest college students who smoke do not fully understand that health risk associated with social smoking (5, 6). By ignoring the risks of short-term smoking, students who are “social smokers” set themselves up for a lifetime of addiction to nicotine and smoking related health problems (4, 5). Social smoking is a common pattern of tobacco use, which sets young adults apart from the general adult population (6).

Social smoking is regarded by researchers as a stage of initiation (6). Social smokers either quit or they become regular or heavier smokers. Studies suggest that more often than not they become regular smokers (7). Social smoking among college students is strongly associated with alcohol use and attending social events (6). The tobacco industry has studied the smoking behavior of young adults and they have developed marketing strategies aimed at getting young adults to become regular smokers. Sponsoring social events at clubs, bars and college campuses is a common practice with the tobacco industry (7, 8). They hire other young adults to distribute free cigarettes and promotional items at these events. College students are receptive to these types of promotions, particularly students that did not smoke prior to entering college (7, 8, and 9).

Studies suggest that smokefree residence halls may be a deterrent to smoking. College students residing in smokefree dorms halls who are non-smokers before entering college are less likely to start smoking (10). According to the Harvard School of Public Health,

2001 College Alcohol Study, “college students who live in smokefree dorms are 40 percent less likely to take up smoking than their counterparts who live in unrestricted housing” (11). Most college students, including those that smoke, support smoking bans. Over three-quarters of students supported smokefree campus buildings, including dormitories. More than fifty percent of students, smokers and non-smokers, both supported bans on tobacco ad and tobacco industry sponsorship of campus events. The majority (71%) of students surveyed supported banning tobacco sponsorship of campus events and tobacco advertising on campus. Students also supported prohibiting tobacco sales on campus (59%) and more than half the students (51%) supported prohibiting smokefree campus bars. Support for smokefree policies was strong, even among non-smoking students (12).

### Methodology

In February of 2007, a web-based survey was developed which consisted of 25 questions regarding tobacco-related policies and available cessation services. Participants for the survey were obtained from a list of public and independent colleges and universities on the website of Indiana Commission for Higher Education. This included 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, with the exception of Ivy Tech Community Colleges. Letters were mailed to administrators at 52 Indiana colleges and universities asking them to complete the survey. Approximately 3 weeks after the initial letter was sent out, follow-up contacts were made via e-mail and telephone to institutions that had not completed the survey.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted us SAS. Thirty (57.7%) of colleges and universities responded to the survey. Of the campuses that participated in the survey 66.7% were private and 33.3% were public institutions. The number students enrolled on their campuses ranged from 100 to 38,000. The survey asked college and university administrators about the existence of smoking/tobacco policies on their campuses. A total of 28 (93.3%) of respondents stated they have a smoking/tobacco policy and the remaining 2 (7%) do not have a policy.

Table 1 shows the responses to questions related to campus building and grounds policies.

Table 1

Smoke free campus buildings (not including residence halls):	Frequency	Percent
Missing	1	3.33
Yes	29	96.67
<b>Smoke free entrance ways (no smoking 20, 30, 50 Ft. in front of building entrances)</b>		
No Response	2	6.67
Yes	21	70.00
No	6	20.00
Some	1	3.33
<b>Smoke free residence halls and</b>		

<b>apartments:</b>		
No Response	5	16.67
All	19	63.33
Some	5	16.67
No Policy	1	3.33
<b>Smoke free fraternity houses:</b>		
No Response	17	56.67
All	3	10.00
Some	9	30.00
No Policy	1	3.33
<b>Smoke free sorority houses:</b>		
No Response	18	60.00
All	4	13.33
Some	7	23.33
No Policy	1	3.33
<b>Smoke free university owned vehicles:</b>		
No Response	3	10.00
Yes	23	76.67
No	3	10.00
Some	1	3.33
<b>Policies exist limiting smoking or tobacco use on campus grounds:</b>		
No Response	2	6.67
Yes	20	66.67
No	8	26.67
<b>Smoke free sporting events:</b>		
No Response	5	16.67
All	15	50.00
Some	4	13.33
No Policy	6	20.00
<b>Smoke free intramural events:</b>		
No Response	3	10.00
All	15	50.00
Some	4	13.33
No Policy	8	26.67
<b>Smoke free campus sponsored events:</b>		
No Response	3	10.00
All	14	46.67
Some	6	20.00
No Policy	7	23.33

Despite having tobacco policies, more than half (66.7) of the colleges and universities reported receiving complaints from students, faculty, or staff regarding tobacco use. One (3.3%) of 30 institutions reported incidents of smoking-related fires on campus.

Table 2 shows how many institutions receive tobacco industry money from advertisements, donations, and research.

Table 2

<b>Does your institution receive any tobacco industry money from research?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No Response	3	10
No	21	70
Not Sure	6	20
<b>Does your institution receive any tobacco industry money from donations?</b>		
No Response	3	10
No	19	63.33
Not Sure	8	26.67
<b>Does your institution receive any tobacco industry money from advertisements?</b>		
No Response	3	10
No	23	76.67
Not Sure	4	13.33
No Response	3	10

The majority of colleges and universities that responded to the survey have policies that prohibit tobacco sales (96.7%) and advertisements (76.7%) on campus. Respondents reported having policies that restrict campus groups from promoting the use of tobacco: 43.3% of campuses indicated having such a policy; 43.3% of campuses do not have a policy; and 13.3% of campuses did not answer the question.

When asked if there are any tobacco treatment/cessation classes available on campus, the participants responded as follows: “No Response” - 10%; “Yes” - 33.3%; “No” - 46.7%; and “Not Sure” - 10%.

The majority of participants in the survey do not have tobacco prevention clubs/coalitions (66.7%) and peer education programs (50%) on their campuses. In addition, participants stated they “maybe” interested in joining a statewide tobacco-free network of college campuses (63.3%) and creating a tobacco control program (53.3%).

Using stepwise logistic regression analyses in which having a tobacco policy on campus was the dependent variable, there were no variables meeting the significant criteria of *p* values less than .05 in the final model. T-tests showed no statistical significance.

This survey was the second one of its kind conducted by Smokefree Indiana. The first survey was conducted during the previous fiscal year (2005-2006). In both years, administrators at Indiana two- and four-year colleges and universities were asked to provide information regarding smoking policies and cessation services on their respective campuses. The same survey was conducted with public and independent colleges and universities listed on the website of Indiana Commission for Higher Education, with the exception of Ivy Tech Community Colleges. When this survey was initiated, Ivy Tech Community Colleges were considered vocational institutions and not community colleges, nor were they listed on the Indiana Commission for higher education website.

Analyses of data from fiscal year 2005-2006 included frequencies; chi-square; t- test and backward stepwise logistic regression. Twenty-seven (51.9) of the 52 institutions responded to the web-based survey. Of the respondent campuses, 17 (63%) were private and 10 (37%) were public institutions. A total of 24 (89%) of respondents stated they have a smoking/tobacco policy and the remaining 3 (11%) did not have a policy. There were no statistically significant correlations.

Comparisons were made between the two survey results. There was an increase in the number of colleges and universities that reported having a tobacco policy. Eighteen of the same institutions responded to the survey during both fiscal years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Indiana colleges and universities with smoking policies were more likely to have policies which prohibit smoking on campus grounds and in university owned vehicles. Also, there was a correlation between private institutions and complaints received from students, faculty, or staff regarding tobacco use on the campus.

### **Discussion**

This study indicated that the number of Indiana colleges and universities with tobacco policies has increased. There is an increase of the number of campuses with policies banning smoking on the grounds. It appears that smoking / tobacco policies being implemented by Indiana colleges and universities are more comprehensive. By limiting smoking opportunities and encouraging cessation, Indiana colleges and universities can prevent students from becoming addicted to nicotine (6).

A third of survey participants reported having cessation treatment programs on campus. Cessation classes should be tailored to fit the perceptions and behavior patterns of college students. Studies have shown that young adults' perceptions of the effects of smoking may be distorted by their belief that smoking socially does not make them a smoker. The best approach to educating young adults about effects of smoking may be to educate them about the short-term rather than the long-term effects of smoking (5).

The result of this survey cannot be generalized to all Indiana colleges and universities. There are more survey responses from independent institutions than public ones. Independent schools include religious affiliated institutions. These campuses may not allow smoking based on their religious beliefs and they may not think cessation services are relevant to their population. In addition, independent schools reported receiving more complaints from students, faculty, or staff regarding tobacco use on campus. It should be noted that independent schools typically have fewer students than public schools.

Commuter and non-commuter institutions are included in the survey. Some of the commuter campuses reported not having resident halls; apartments; fraternity or sorority houses. Questions related to smoking bans in these areas were not relevant to the commuter campuses.

The increase in the number of Indiana colleges and universities with smoking policies could be attributed a State law which requires all public institutions to have smokefree

buildings and the increase in number of local communities implementing smokefree ordinances.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Our findings have implications for Indiana colleges and universities. We know that smokefree policies on college campuses prevent students from smoking. In addition to developing and implementing campus smoking / tobacco policies, campuses should partner with their local communities in supporting smokefree ordinances, which include night clubs and bars. Inclusive smokefree ordinances will help break the connection of drinking and social smoking among young adults (8). Public health efforts need to center around discouraging social or occasional smoking and preventing initiation among college students (13).

Historically, public health efforts focused on reaching youth. The idea was to get children not to initiate. If they did not start smoking before 18 years of age, they would not smoke at all (13). Researchers suggest that public health efforts to reach young adults should mirror those of the tobacco industry. By studying young adult life changes and activities, Indiana colleges and universities can tailor comprehensive tobacco control programs for college students (13).

There are resources available to assist colleges and universities in creating tobacco-free environments. The American Cancer Society developed the *Smoke-free New England Campus Initiative*, which includes a seven step policy plan (14). This program was designed to empower college students to make their campuses smokefree. In addition, the American College Health Association (ACHA) has recommended guidelines to address prevention, policy, and cessation for tobacco control (15). These programs provide colleges and universities the necessary strategies to achieve tobacco-free campuses.

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