

Proposal to make Trinity College Dublin a smoke-free Campus

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. Young people are more likely to smoke with 28% of 18-24 year olds and 30% of 25-34 year olds smoking.ⁱ

Benefits

A ban on smoking throughout the campus would denormalise smoking. Amongst young people, the most frequently cited reason for starting to smoke is the influence of friends.ⁱⁱ A ban would create a supportive environment for those who don't smoke or those who want to quit. Supportive environments have been shown to be an effective means of discouraging smoking in workplaces and schools.ⁱⁱⁱ A tobacco free campus would provide a healthier, cleaner and safer environment for smokers and non-smokers alike^{iv} and help to uphold the rights of non-smokers to an environment free of tobacco smoke. College users will benefit from a cleaner environment with fewer discarded cigarette butts and packaging to be handled.^v Removing tobacco from College may reduce the cost of insurance against fires. The public image of the College as a socially and environmentally conscious organisation would be consolidated and our reputation at home and abroad enhanced. A College-wide exploratory survey (26 April – 1 May) indicated that a majority of the College community (54%) support College becoming tobacco free. Trinity has the opportunity to lead the third level educational sector in becoming tobacco free. A start-date in 2014 would coincide with the 10 year anniversary of the 2004 smokefree workplace legislation enacted in Ireland, the first country to legislate for smokefree workplaces. We have unofficially been informed that UCD, UCC and NUI Galway are investigating the possibility of becoming tobacco free. One of Trinity's hospital sites, St James's has been a tobacco free campus since 2012 and Tallaght Hospital is in the process of becoming tobacco free.

Negatives

The recent exploratory survey of support for Trinity becoming tobacco free together with follow-up emails from College community members indicated that there are barriers to overcome in order for Trinity to become tobacco free. Although a majority of people support Trinity becoming tobacco free, over one third of the general community and 86% of smokers did not. There is a danger that smokers will feel marginalised and that they will feel that their right to smoke in the open air is being denied. There might be a negative image portrayed if groups of smokers gather on the public streets around the entrances to College. One of the committee members has been informed anecdotally that some sites have experienced a noticeable increase in discarded chewing gum following the introduction of no-smoking policies. Although College policy does not officially allow for staff smoking breaks, people do take them. Amongst those who do, there may be significant lost time for workers who are permitted to leave the site to smoke and resentment among non-smokers that smokers are being given extra 'time off'. There will be a loss of revenue from cigarette sales to the Student Union shops. There are concerns for the safety of residents who wish to smoke late at night if they were required to go out on to the public streets. (Some sort of on-campus provision will be required to prevent this.) Covert smoking may take place within buildings with a resulting increase in the risk of fires within buildings. It may prove difficult to enforce.

How to achieve a tobacco free campus

Once a decision in principle is made, a wide-scale information and consultation campaign will be launched across the College Community. This would include information leaflets/emails, interactive web information, Town Hall meetings, consultation with representative bodies such as Students Unions, Trade Unions, Sports clubs and Societies and a parallel campaign of smoking cessation supports. The assistance of outside agencies such as ASH Ireland, HSE, Department of Health and the Irish Cancer Society among others would be enlisted.

Who will do this

The project sponsor is Prof Shane Allwright. The project implementation team will initially comprise:

- Prof Joseph Barry, Professor of Population Health Medicine
- Dr David Mc Grath, Director, College Health Centre (Chair)
- Mr John Coman, College Secretary
- Ms Martina Mullin, Health Promotion Officer (Project Manager)
- Mr David Grouse, Safety Representative, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
- Student Representatives, TBA
- Mr Tom Merriman, College Safety Officer

The team will enlist the support, advice and assistance of other College Officers and Departments including Human Resources, Communications, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Web Design Office, Buildings Office and others. College Societies and Sports Clubs will be involved, especially in the information and promotion campaigns.

The team will report to the College Safety Committee.

Resources required

The resources required for the project have not yet been quantified but will include:

- A part-time Health Promotion Assistant (half-time for 6 months)
- Costs relating to communications and publicity
- Costs relating to hosting information meetings
- Smoking cessation courses and supports
- Nicotine replacement therapies
- Signage
- Public announcement facilities
- Removal/relocation of ashtrays and stubbing bins
- Chewing gum removal equipment
- (Possibly a small number of smoking shelters)

Timetable

Approval in principle by College Safety Committee	May 2013
Approval in principle by Board	May 2013
Launch of Smoking Policy	June 2013

Development of detailed project plan	August 2013
Launch of Information campaign	Sept 2013 (Orientation Week)
Consultation period	Oct/Nov/Dec 2013
Information campaign	Jan 2014
Smoking cessation and quit support	Feb 2014
Final policy approval by Board	March 2014
Physical interventions (signage, markings, stubbing bins etc.)	April/May 2014
Implementation of Smoke-free Campus	June 2014

Tom Merriman on behalf of the sub-group
College Safety Officer
April 2013

ⁱ National Tobacco Control Office (2013) Ireland: Current Trends in Cigarette Smoking. Downloaded on the 02 May 2013 from http://ntco.ie/fig1.asp?image=acc_2010Charts/Chart_1.2.jpg

ⁱⁱ Oh DL, Heck JE, Dresler C, Allwright S, Haglund M, Del Mazo SS, Kralikova E, Stucker I, Tamang E, Gritz ER, Hashibe M. (2010) Determinants of smoking initiation among women in five European countries: a cross-sectional survey. *BMC Public Health*. Feb 17;10:74.

ⁱⁱⁱ IOM. Growing Up Tobacco Free: Preventing Nicotine Addiction in Children and Youth. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1994.

^{iv} Lee, J., Ranney, L., Goldstein, A.O. (2013) Cigarette butts near building entrances: what is the impact of smoke-free college campus policies? *Tob Control* 22:107-112

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