

AR 25 In Support of Co-Sponsoring the University of Texas Tobacco Talks

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WHEREAS, According to the latest Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, the rate of tobacco use among Texas adults was 23.7% in 2008, while the smoking rate was at 18.5%; furthermore, in 2009 the adult smoking rate in Texas is 17.9%, and the use of smokeless tobacco for Texas adults in 2009 was 3.8%; and¹

WHEREAS, Within the city of Austin, between 2004 and 2007, adult cigarette use by gender is 31.8% for males and 16.5% for females, which is compared to the year of 2009 in which the statistics show 21.7% for males and 15.3% for females; and²

WHEREAS, The conversation of Tobacco use at The University of Texas at Austin is extremely pertinent to the times as local groups are becoming more active in their advocacy for/against a tobacco free Austin City; and

WHEREAS, The “Student Government passed a resolution in March [2010] that expressed their desire to make UT a generally smoke-free campus over a seven year period, with exceptions to smoking at games and in certain areas;” and³

WHEREAS, Beginning immediately, an Austin City sister institution, the “Austin Community College will join the ranks of more than 500 colleges and universities by becoming a smoke-free institution;” and⁴

WHEREAS, An Austin City sister institution, the Huston-Tillotson University, claims in university policy, “smoking and tobacco use of any kind is prohibited on all Huston-Tillotson University owned and/or leased locations/premises; all internal and external areas, including private space within residence halls, and parking lots; all entrances and exits; and all company owned and/or leased vehicles;” and⁵

WHEREAS, In regard to the nearby institution, Texas State University, “the university prohibits smoking and the use of all tobacco products on all university property;” and⁶

WHEREAS, The University of Texas in Arlington, Brownsville, and The University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio are recognized as entirely smoke-free campuses; and⁷

WHEREAS, “New signage designating all 2700 of Capital Metro bus stops in Austin, including 150 at UT, as tobacco free zones will be installed...”; and⁸

Final Version

WHEREAS, A survey taken by Texas Public Health shows the breakdown of overall policy support at the University of Texas at Austin was, 51% supported a full tobacco ban, 26% supported a smoking ban and 23% supported no ban; and⁹

WHEREAS, The University of Texas at Austin Student Organization Safety Board (SOSB) provides information and hosts events to help foster a culture of safety among students and organizations at The University of Texas at Austin; and¹⁰

WHEREAS, The SOSB is to host *Tobacco Talks*, a series of events occurring the week of February 5th-11th 2012; and

WHEREAS, The intentions of the SOSB are to address a general audience of students; and most specifically target student tobacco users, students with a strong stance for/against tobacco use, and freshmen living on-campus; and¹¹

WHEREAS, The first of the events will take place on Tuesday, February 7th and will include a free-speech wall where students can inscribe their thoughts about tobacco use and will also aim to start a conversation about tobacco in a way that is interactive; and

WHEREAS, The second event will be a forum on tobacco use education and debate panel on Wednesday, February 8th which will include speakers that will be informative and representative of multiple perspectives, and will open discussion on this issue; furthermore, students in attendance will be interactive by asking questions physically and/or electronically via Twitter/Facebook; and students will be encouraged to formulate their own opinion based on multiple considerations; and

WHEREAS, The third and final event will consist of an open house speaker series hosted by The Tejas Club on Thursday, February 9th, and the focus of this conversation will be tobacco use; furthermore, the speaker will present a perspective that includes facts and figures and will encourage students to ask questions and allow listeners to offer their own opinions about tobacco use; moreover, the aim of this final activity will be to ensure that students acquire the facts before solidifying their stance on tobacco use; and

WHEREAS, Holding these events at different venues will ensure that different pools of students receive the message and can engage in this serious conversation; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes that it is crucial for students to be well educated about the effects of tobacco on campus in order to participate in the discussions about this topic on campus; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin chooses to promote *Tobacco Talks* by co-hosting this event along with the Student Organization Safety Board and by encouraging students to involve themselves in the week's events through new media promotion efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, The Student Organization Safety Board, Office of the Vice President for University Operations, Texas Parents Association, Office of Student Financial Services, Division of Housing and Food Services, Division of Recreational Sports, Dean of Students, Faculty Council, Staff Council, Graduate Student Assembly, The Tejas Club, University of Texas Police Department, University Health Services, UT Wellness Network, the LBJ School of Public Affairs, and the Schools of Nursing, Natural Sciences, Social Work and Pharmacy.

¹ Texas Department of State Health Services Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board, October 2010

² Texas Department of State Health Services Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board, October 2010

³ The Daily Texan: "ACC institutes smoking ban" by Jody Serrano, October 7 2011

⁴ The Daily Texan: "ACC institutes smoking ban" by Jody Serrano, October 7 2011

⁵ Huston-Tillotson Campus Community Policies and Procedures: Policy Manual Volume II, section 2.3.4, revised November 11 2011

⁶ Texas State Tobacco Policy: UPPS No. 04.05.02, effective date April 04 2011

⁷ American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation: Report on U.S. Colleges and Universities with Smokefree Air Policies, January 2 2012

⁸ The Daily Texan: "Cap Metro to discourage smoking near bus stops" by Megan Strickland, November 18 2011

⁹ An unofficial small quote from the summary of the current report taken by Texas Public Health, President Matthew Haviland, January 12 2012

¹⁰ Dean of Students: Student Organization Board Home Page <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/pses/utsosb.php>

¹¹ Dean of Students: Student Organization Board Home Page <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/pses/utsosb.php>