

Smoking ban on the South Campus receives approval by Faculty Senate

Posted by *hofstra chronicle* on Thursday, November 8, 2012 · Leave a Comment

By **Alexandria Jezina**
Staff Writer

University faculty voted in approval of a South Campus smoking ban at a Faculty Senate meeting on Oct. 26. The vote, which sends the ban upward to the Provost's office and to the President for review and approval, may pave the way for a ban on the academic side of campus in the near future.

The proposition for a South Campus smoking ban was introduced and approved by the University Senate earlier last month, on Oct. 8.

Elizabeth Venuti, chairwoman of the University Senate's Planning and Budget Committee, has been researching the feasibility of a smoking ban at the University for several years. In the past, the Senate has rejected proposals for an outright smoking ban across campus and voted in favor of a 20-foot buffer zone instead. Venuti stated that a ban on North Campus is still being discussed as well.

The idea among students that most faculty members do not smoke, at least not on campus, is a common perception. Sayena Gueye is a senior at the University, but is unaware if any large proportion of the University's faculty would be affected by the ban.

"I don't know of any of my professors that smoke. The only faculty member I have seen smoking multiple times was [Professor Scott Jarvis] at the writing center," said Gueye.

Gueye's perception may be part of a larger problem of imbalance in the representation of different sides that would be affected by a smoking ban. None of the faculty members who spoke during the Oct. 26 meeting identified themselves as smokers and many identified them as non-smokers, despite members within the faculty expressing interest in hearing from a smoker's perspective.

Professor Jarvis, a Professor of Writing Studies at the University who is well recognized by students who pass between Gallon Wing and Mason Hall and often see him smoking there, was curious how the ban could impact students' lives differently than members of faculty.

"If you're banning it campuswide on South Campus, students who reside on North Campus will still be able to smoke where they routinely do. I'm not on North Campus very often—[the ban] might be problematic in that it doesn't affect the student population in the same way as it affects the faculty population," Jarvis said.

Though none of the faculty members present at the Oct. 26 meeting identified themselves publicly as smokers, many nonetheless kept the opinions of smokers in mind as they questioned the impact of an expansion of the current 20-foot barrier ban.

Maureen Houck, director of Health Services at the Health and Wellness Center, said that students' perception of their peers includes a larger population of smokers than in reality. She said this idea persists because the same students or faculty are repeatedly seen smoking in popular smoking areas. Houck advised her peers to politely speak to smokers individually instead of enforcing a campuswide ban.

"When I see a student smoking, I ask them to move—we all need to do that," said Houck. "This is a community... I just think that dividing a campus by 'smoking' and 'not smoking' is not the way to go."

Drama professor Richard Curtiss inquired what penalties would be applied if a student or faculty member were caught smoking under the theoretical ban.

"I've been here 16 years, and I don't even know if we can enforce a parking ban," said Curtiss, referring to conflicts between residential, commuter and faculty parking spots on the academic side of campus. "I'm in the drama department, and a lot of drama people smoke... I know there's faculty in my department that would ignore [a smoking ban]."

While members of the University community continue to smoke on South Campus for the time being, there seems to be little public uproar or response from smokers to display protest against the proposition.

For both Houck and Jarvis, the root issue in applying a smoking ban is the fact that, for smokers, even the decision to smoke is not always wholly voluntary.

"If accommodations can be made for [smokers], especially out of the wind and the wet and the cold, that is at least somewhat fairer," said Jarvis.

Additional reporting by Ben Suazo.

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Aakaash Bali · Marketing and Communications Assistant at Hofstra University School of Law
No, no, no, no, no.

We pay Hofstra MORE than enough money to maintain and clean up cigarette receptacles. On top of that, I don't recall ever being notified of a vote on the issue, along with possibly hundreds of other students. Where is our voice? I never got to speak.

I will continue to smoke on campus and now I'll make sure to throw my cigarette butts by the entrances of buildings. If I get told otherwise, I'll use my electronic cigarette. Is Hofstra going to ban those too now?

Completely unfair. Just because we smoke doesn't mean we don't get a voice. We're paying students too. If non-smokers and custodial staff have an issue with us smoking, then please find another school/job to go to. We're not smoking in buildings, and most of us observed the 20-foot buffer zone.

Well, I'm done ranting. I'm going to go light up next to the library entrance now. If anyone wants to join me, feel free.

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Maria Lopez · Tutor at America Reads/America Counts

This is a huge issue in my school right now actually. Honestly I'm for the ban and here's why. We have a 25 foot zone, which no one adheres to. If they followed that rule I would be fine with it but it is not fair that me, a non-smoker, has to breathe in your disgusting smoke every time I leave my dorm or class. For people with asthma or other breathing problem it is absolutely miserable.

I do however agree with you that all of you should have a voice in the matter since you are all paying students.

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Aakaash Bali · Marketing and Communications Assistant at Hofstra University School of Law

Maria Lopez, Rather than outright banning it, enforce it better. The buffer zone would work fine if they were actually enforced. Every one at Hofstra smokes, easily 30%+ of the school's population. What about those people?

It's a majority. Not everyone has asthma or a breathing problem. If they do, then they should treat themselves, not have smokers edgy and agitated all day because they can't light up. Smokers are everywhere, they just "happen" at Hofstra. You can't leave them with no hope. Just because smokers smoke doesn't mean they aren't entitled to the right to smoke out in the open air ya know?

If someone walked out into "disgusting smoke" from classes, does that mean you ban smoking in NYC so people don't walk out into "disgusting smoke" when they leave a restaurant or store?

It's just too big of a ban, none of us got a say in it..

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