

University Senate butt-out smoking on South Campus

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At Hofstra when one thinks of the governing student body, SGA comes in mind for most and nothing else. However, the University Senate that is comprised of several different committees, including the Student Affairs committee, handles most university concerns and issues that are brought up by members themselves, students, faculty, and external or internal research. Students and faculty members are able to bipartisanly discuss issues and vote on the passing of resolutions at monthly University Senate Meetings, which take place at various sites.

At this past meeting many issues such as dean evaluation, recommendation of professors who demonstrate diversity in teaching, and the possibility of credits for students involved positions on campus were discussed but one other topic was specifically raised and passed by a vote 18-4-5. The issue of completely banning smoking on South Campus passed at the University Senate meeting on Oct. 8 calling for additional amendments if needed. The subject has been discussed at the Senate for a number of years and was brought up again for discussion and vote by the Senate's Planning and Budget Committee after a vast amount of research and unanimous agreement of the ban on south campus by the specific committee composed of all faculty members. According to the Senate, the research consisted of 25-35 universities who had a partial smoking ban.

For now the ban, if fully passed, would be active on the entire side of South Campus excluding the sidewalks of California Ave. and Hempstead Turnpike, which falls under the discretion of the Village of Hempstead.

Chair of the Student Affairs Committee Kenny Corder-Rubinos, who represents the concerns of all Hofstra Students, voted against the passing of the resolution and stated, "Personally as of right now I took it as a compromise over a complete smoking ban on the university, I took it as a step forward."

Kenny stated his concern mostly involved the university notifying students of the ban once it is officially passed. During the meeting, Kenny was extremely verbal about the issue of notification and signage, but was assured by Senate members that there would be a "variety of outreach".

"This is my main issue. I experienced it myself with the smoking buffer zone. The lack of notification and enforcement."

On the other hand, Hofstra senior Rebecca Gianarkis, a senator of the Student Affairs Committee stated, "I'm a non-smoker, there was a lot of smoking on campus and I didn't like it."

When discussion of whether students choose schools based on their smoking policies arose Rebecca stated she visited a school where there was a large smoking environment, which made her decide to not attend and that decision of attendance based on smoking policies could go either way.

Vice President for Student Affairs Sandy Johnson added her feedback on the issue also voting against the proposition by stating, "I don't understand why we would have a ban on South, but not North campus. Academic life happens on all sides of campus."

Sandy was mainly concerned about the health of those on North Campus where other edifices such as residential buildings, the wellness center, and the medical school are located.

In a previous interview, Chair of Planning Budget Elizabeth Venuti stated that the previous 20 ft. smoking barriers were inefficient and could not be implemented by Public Safety correctly.

"After the 20 ft. barriers were implemented, ashtrays were never fully removed on South campus. The move toward a complete smoking ban on South campus would be less expensive by not painting lines for barriers and not putting up signage around each building."

Venuti stated during the meeting, "Moving towards whole smoking bans on campuses we're not unique. We're following, not taking the lead on this."

Students' reaction on the issue ranged on both sides. Nonsmoker Senior Caitlin Stolzenberg stated, "Every time I try to walk to class, I literally get stuck in clouds of smoke and can't breathe. So, I'm happy about the ban."

On the other hand, freshman smoker James Reich stated, "I don't see how they can do that. We're paying to go here and they're taking it away from us."

Sophomore Rachel Caruthers stated, "Honestly, I don't smoke too many cigarettes a day and if I wanted to, I could smoke on the North Side of Campus. Smoking is a bad decision anyways."

Rachel continued on by stating, "It will mean that I have to be more careful, but it is not a big imposition." Senior Kim Petalas, a nonsmoker, was more critical of the new resolution stating, "They don't enforce it now. I don't think they're going to enforce it when it's a full smoking ban."

For the resolution to officially pass and be enacted it must follow the same process as all other resolutions that includes being voted on by faculty, going to the provost, and being approved by the office of the president. The resolution will be voted on by faculty on Oct. 26. This process usually takes a couple of months, but if passed would most likely be enacted by next semester.



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