

New year kicks off with new campus smoking policy



Junior Juliana Grassia sits in the court yard, previously known as the smoking circle, in front of Mills Resident Hall on Friday afternoon.

Photo by Jorja Smith - Photography Editor

"I'm a little disappointed, because college is an environment where students get to expand and try new things. I also think by having smoking sections easily accessible and readily available makes smoking less of a taboo."



Eric Zoltners, transfer

"I have an issue with the policy as a nonsmoker, because they sent them so far away off campus, it's unsafe. They don't even put a canopy for the rain. They could get sick."



Titi Adeniyi, sophomore

Policy draws mixed reviews from faculty and students

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Recent adjustments to the campus smoking policy aim to create a healthier student environment by reducing secondhand smoke, according to university staff.

Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs and chair of the smoking policy committee shines some light on smoking policy, the changes and why UNCA is initiating them.

"It goes back to the general legislative session in the spring of 2008," Haggard said. "The General Assembly had new legislation that session. One prohibited smoking in all state university buildings and the other allowed us to restrict smoking from within 100 feet of campus buildings. After forming a smoking policy committee, the policy here was put into effect in January of

2009."

The history of smoking policy starts in 1964, when the first harmful affects of smoking were noted and studied. By 1965 the labeling of cigarette packages was required by law, and in 1969 smoking advertisements were banned completely from TV and radio. The surgeon general declared in 1972 that secondhand smoke was now a topic of concern as well, according to information from the **National Academies Press**.

Many college campuses have done away completely with designated smoking areas for fear of harmful secondhand smoke, according to the National Academies Press.

UNC Asheville's smoking policy committee wasn't formed until 2009, far after the adverse health affects were discovered and made known.

Haggard said he wants to clarify that the smoking

policy itself hasn't actually changed, because it still allows for designated smoking areas on campus. What changed is where the designated smoking areas are located and how many of them remain.

"We did a reduction in the number of designated smoking areas as part of a continuous move towards a more smoke-free environment for members of our community," Haggard said. "Our primary rationale is that there is an abundance of scientific evidence that suggests that secondhand smoke is harmful to people."

The changes have only been in effect for a little over a week, and Haggard said he received little response to the changes from the UNCA community, aside from a few positive emails.

"At first, I thought they were just going to get rid of smoking entirely," said **John Martin**, a junior classics student at

UNCA.

Martin said he is displeased with the changes to the smoking policy, and his main problem with the limitations is the social aspect of smoking, saying it could cause an impediment to social connections.

"It kind of sucks, you know, because during my freshman and sophomore year, that is how I met a lot of people. Outside of West Ridge, there were always a few people just hanging out, and that whole aspect of it is gone now. It really gave people an easy way to make new friends," he said.

The changes point to a healthier environment, but Martin said he still thinks the designated smoking areas are poorly placed.

"I was happy to see that there are still a few, even if they are in bad places. Mills and Founders share a smoking section, there is one in the parking deck, behind Vance

hall, maybe one or two others and that's basically it. No more gazebo. I guess it's better than nothing though," Martin said.

Chief of Police Eric Boyce said he favors the changes to smoking policy.

"The new smoking policy has taken positive steps toward creating an environment that reduces exposure to secondhand smoke," Boyce said.

Section IV of policy number 48 addresses enforcement of the smoking policy, something that Boyce said he encourages everyone to be familiar with.

The enforcement code states those in violation of the policy will be "addressed through the Student Code of Community Standards process, and will be resolved according to the procedures therein."

"I encourage tobacco users to voluntarily comply with smoking in the designated areas," Boyce said.