Tobacco Free Campus Policy

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Western Kentucky University will be clearing the air in the new year after adopting a tobacco-free campus policy effective January 1st, 2020.

Amy Bingham has more on the transition in this week’s View from the Hill.

It’s been two years since WKU received a tobacco free grant from the American Cancer Society. The Board of Regents approved the policy back in May and now it goes into effect in just a few weeks.

Beginning January first, there will no longer be designated smoking areas on campus.

“We are going to be putting signs up over the break and when everybody comes back in January the signs will be there.”

Dr. Cecilia Watkins helped write the grant to turn WKU into a tobacco free campus.

“What we’re really looking for is to develop a culture of health.”

The most recent survey shows eleven percent of WKU students smoke, but a higher number, 29 percent use e-cigarettes.

“We know there won’t be complete compliance, it will be a challenge for a while. But what we hope will happen is it will eventually become the norm to not smoke.”

“I think a lot of students are excited that there’s gonna be a policy on campus to prevent or prohibit smoking and especially now the common thing among college students is vaping.”

As a member of the task force, Pennington helped organize awareness events on campus.

“In March we had kick butts day it was an awesome event. We had about 100 volunteers, we had students from all different disciplines we had athletes come and help and we collected ten pounds of cigarette butts around campus.”

She says the task force has emphasized from the beginning it wants this to be a positive change.

“We want to be compassionate and let them know there are cessation resources in place on campus for them.”

“We want everybody in the campus population take responsibility for that. If you see someone gently say you know this is a tobacco free campus.”

With the end goal a healthier campus and a healthier community.

“We don’t want people to say I’m not going to WKU because it’s tobacco free, we want them to say I’m going to WKU because it’s tobacco free.”

The complete policy, cessation services and other information can be found on the WKU Tobacco-free website at wku-dot-edu slash tobacco free.

 With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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