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## Roseburg-area UCC goes tobacco free

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WINCHESTER — When Umpqua Community College students return to the classroom in a few weeks, the air on campus is bound to be a bit cleaner, less odorous, and perhaps a little less toxic.

All because the campus is going tobacco free beginning the first day of fall term, Sept. 28.

A new campus procedure will prohibit students and staff from lighting up cigarettes or sticking dips of chewing tobacco behind their lips anywhere inside the perimeter of the campus. Those who break the rule will be fined.

"I think what the college is trying to do is provide a healthier environment for students and staff," said Steve Buchko, UCC director of safety, security and custodial services.

The new procedure prohibits tobacco use within the perimeter of the campus — anywhere inside the sidewalk that encompasses most of the grounds — and includes sidewalks, landscaped and recreational areas, buildings and any leased or rented facilities.

Campus officials have installed seven covered shelters located around campus for smokers. Security officers will patrol the campus and will hand out warnings and educate offenders for the first few weeks. After that, those who break the rule will be handed a \$25 citation, Buchko said.

The UCC board decided in spring 2008 to move forward with a tobacco-free campus. Prior to approving the change, campus officials worked with the Associated Students of Umpqua Community College and surveyed students about secondhand smoke and health concerns, UCC President Blaine Nisson said.

"The survey came back very positive in moving in the direction of having a smoke-free campus," Nisson said.

The goals of the new procedure are to create a healthy campus environment and to respect other people's rights to breathe clean air, he said.

For the last couple of years, campus officials have been spreading the word about the upcoming change by speaking to students and staff, plastering the campus with posters and handing out informational pamphlets, Buchko said.

When students return later this month, they will also find signs on campus alerting them of the new procedure and maps identifying where designated smoking shelters are located.

All of the efforts mean that most students and staff members know what to expect come Sept. 28. And for the most part, response to the change has been positive, Buchko said.

"The majority of people are absolutely for this," he said. "There's been some negativity, but the overwhelming majority are saying, 'Thank you for this.'"

Campus officials also worked with the Douglas County Health Department and the Oregon Lung Association to compile information for students and staff and consulted with other community colleges that have implemented similar policies.

Marilyn Carter, health education program manager for the health department, applauded the college's decision.

"We are very pleased with the decision of the Umpqua Community College board and administration for adopting a designated smoking-area policy," she said. "In addition to eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, such policies also prevent youth from initiating tobacco use and they help smokers quit."

Buchko said in the future the college may expand the rule to prohibit tobacco use on the entire campus.

"It's a good thing eventually to get to," he said. "But for now, we don't want to be the smoking police."

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