

Success Story:

Anne Arundel Community College

The Anne Arundel Community College no-smoking policy began as a request from the Student Government Association. It was then taken under consideration by each of the college's constituency groups, which include the faculty, administrative and support staff. This included a survey to students, faculty and staff, which showed support for the idea, and the formation of a committee and subcommittees that looked at best practices from other colleges in the state and around the country. The college benefitted greatly from other Maryland community colleges that had implemented similar policies, as well as local organizations, especially Anne Arundel and Baltimore Washington Medical Center.

A proposed policy to become a smoke- and tobacco-free campus, as well as tobacco substitutes, was developed and presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration. In the meantime, staff prepared a number of resources, including "Frequently Asked Questions," details of how the new policy would be enforced and resources for smoking cessation. As an educational organization, AACC's emphasis was on informing and educating current students, prospective students, faculty, staff and the many community partners and residents connected to the college about the new policy, and related issues, such as individual rights, facts about addiction and health costs and benefits. To that end, the college held information sessions on a number of these subjects for the benefit of the college community.

At the January 2016 Board of Trustees meeting the new policy was approved to take effect at the start of the new fiscal year, which would kick off July 1. In the interim period, communications were launched that stated "Let's Clear the Air" intended to alert students and the community at large of the pending change. Then, on July 1, the new policy, along with related signage and communications took effect.

The transition was a smooth one, thanks to all of the behind-the-scenes work of the committees and the full involvement of the college's constituency groups. Everyone respected the process and committed to the change to meet the needs of our community by providing an even healthier educational environment.