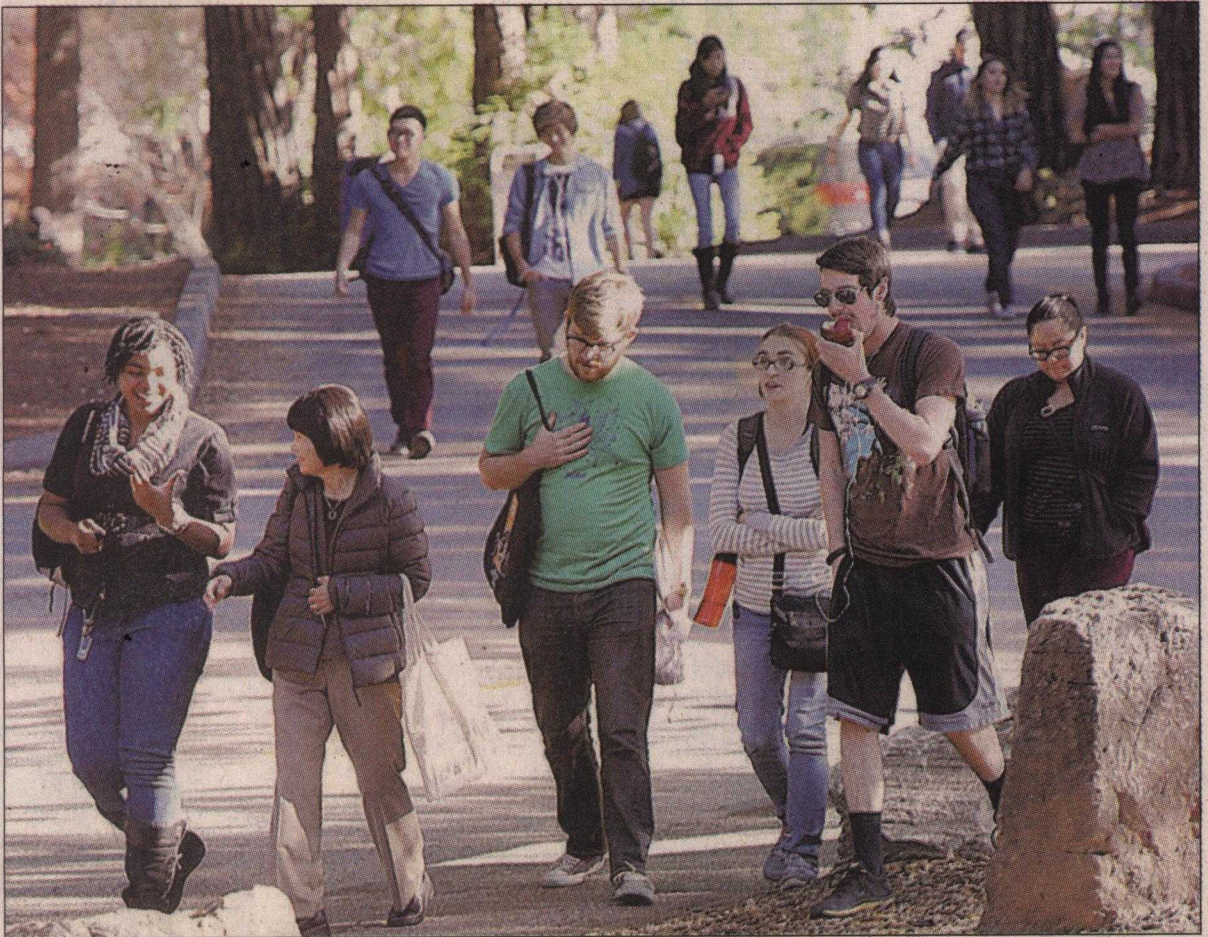


UC Santa Cruz to ban smoking on campus

UCSC - 12-23-13
Rule comes as part of initiative prohibiting smoking, chew and snuff



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Students head to classes on Dec. 2 at UC Santa Cruz where a campuswide smoking ban goes into effect Jan. 1.

By CAT FERGUSON

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✓ SANTA CRUZ — With the turn of the new year, UC Santa Cruz smokers will have to leave campus to light up — or quit entirely.

“The policy applies to everyone on campus, whether they’re students, staff, academics, contractors or visitors,” said Saladin Sale, the director of Risk Services at UCSC.

The move, which begins Jan. 1, is part of a University of California initiative banning tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, from university owned or managed buildings. According to material provided by the UC system, 8 percent of UCSC students smoke, compared with about 20 percent of college students nationwide. About 10 percent of staffers smoke.

“I’ve had more students come in for cessa-

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Meg Kobe, director of Student Health Outreach and Promotion, has put together kits to help students quit smoking that include suckers, hard candies and chewing gum.

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SALADIN SALE, director of Risk Services at UCSC on the campuswide smoking ban

UCSC

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tion support in the past two to three weeks than in the past 10 years," said Meg Kobe earlier this month. Kobe is the director of Student Health Outreach and Promotion. "I've probably had 25 people come in for help. It used to be one or two a year."

To get the word out, the school has placed posters around campus, sent out campuswide emails, and held events to promote the policy. One college gave out s'mores to students who listened to information about the health and environmental impacts of tobacco use.

"I know a lot of people are upset," said Jessica Perrin, a junior at UCSC. "As a non-smoker with asthma, I'm pretty happy though."

Although the school will have the ability to enforce the rule using citations or disciplinary action, it is trying to focus its approach on

explaining to the offenders about the ban and the dangers of smoking.

"I remember the culture change, when smoking was first prohibited in restaurants. It was mostly peer pressure. People came up and respectfully asked people to comply," Sale said. "Our approach to compliance is going to be based on education."

Members of the community who use tobacco products aren't out in the cold. Kobe and her team at Student Health Outreach and Promotion are meeting with any students to help them understand their options, whether it's using nicotine gum on campus or quitting entirely. For those who choose to stop smoking, the department has put together a "Quit Kit," a box filled with hard candies to chew and rubber bands to fidget with during cravings, pamphlets on shaking up routines and phone numbers to call to help kick the habit.

There's even a button for students to wear that says, "Go easy on me. I'm quit-

ting smoking." Those with desperate cravings can call a "quit line," available in six languages, to "talk 'em down," as Kobe puts it.

"If you don't have a plan, your chance of success is not very good," Kobe said. "The idea of white-knuckling it really isn't effective for most people."

The school is relying on education and support, rather than punishment, to change the culture of the school away from tobacco use, Sale said. The plan also doesn't have anything to say about marijuana, or the famous on-campus 4/20 celebration.

"Marijuana is already regulated under federal law. This isn't going to change that at all. I really can't predict what effect on marijuana smokers will be — the focus here is on nicotine," Sale said.

The UC schools are far from the first higher education institutions to ban tobacco products. More than 1,100 other colleges and universities across the country have banned smoking, and about 800 of those have banned all

tobacco products, including chew and snuff, according to Sale.

Human health is not the only thing being protected by the ban. Cigarette butts are non-biodegradable, and contain concentrated amounts of the carcinogens and other chemicals that make cigarettes so dangerous, according to the American Lung Association. They often make their way into storm drains and out to sea.

"Especially on this campus, we're creating such a rich, beautiful environment. It feels like a missed opportunity" not to ban smoking, Kobe said.

Both Kobe and Sale strongly emphasized that the cessation programs aren't about shaming people, they're about helping them make the decisions that are right for them.

"We're going to approach this as an education and research community, with respect for each other. I think UCSC will become a stronger community as we successfully navigate this course change," Sale said.