

The University of Akron
Smoking Task Force Survey Results
June 2008

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Summary

The following report outlines the results of The University of Akron 2008 Smoking Task Force Survey. The survey was conducted to assess smoking activity on campus, attitudes toward current smoking policies on campus, and to gauge support or opposition for a strictly smoke-free campus policy.

Members of the university community (employees and students) were invited to participate through announcements on Email Digest and UA Zipmail for Students. The survey was voluntary and primarily web-based although some hardcopy surveys were completed. The survey was non-randomized and respondents were self-selected. The survey was fielded from April 17, 2008 to May 9, 2008. There were 3,004 survey completions: 2,994 web-based completions and 110 paper completions. Whereas there were approximately 27,500 members of the university community at the time of the survey, the overall response rate was about eleven percent.

Respondent Characteristics

As this was a convenience or non-randomized survey, some groups were disproportionately represented compared to the actual university community. For instance, employees, particularly staff and contract professionals, were over-represented in the sample population, while some groups of students, especially freshmen and graduate students, were under-represented.

Of the 3,004 persons completing the survey, just over one-third, 34.3%, were employees of The University of Akron, while just under two-thirds, 65.7%, were students of the university (see Table 1). This compares to the actual university community which consisted of 13.5% of employees and 86.5% of students at the time of the survey.

The majority of students completing the survey were enrolled on a full-time basis, and student respondents were relatively evenly distributed according to class rank (see Table 2). Likewise, the majority of employees of the university completing the survey were full-time. Over half, 53.9%, of employee respondents were staff members, while 27.7% were contract professionals, and 18.4% were faculty.

Table 1 Sample Population Versus Actual Population					
		Actual Population ⁽¹⁾		Sample Population ⁽²⁾	
		Number of Community	Percent of Community	Number of Sample	Percent of Sample
	Freshmen	6,412	23.3%	432	14.4%
	Sophomores	4,234	15.4%	401	13.3%
	Juniors	3,345	12.2%	404	13.4%
	Seniors	4,218	15.3%	426	14.2%
	Graduate Students	4,135	15.0%	312	10.4%
	Non-Degree Students	1,410	5.1%	--	--
	Faculty	1,798	6.5%	189	6.3%
	Staff	1,465	5.3%	555	18.5%
	Contract Professionals	469	1.7%	285	9.5%
Totals		27,486	--	3,004	--
⁽¹⁾ Student data reflects Spring 2008 enrollment numbers; employee data reflects November 2007.					
⁽²⁾ The survey did not distinguish non-degree students.					

When asked to indicate their familiarity with the current tobacco smoking policy of The University of Akron, one-third, 33.3%, of all respondents stated they were very familiar with the current smoking policy. Just under half, 49.6%, of respondents indicated they were somewhat familiar with the university's smoking policy, while 17.1% stated they were not at all familiar with the policy.

All respondents were also asked whether or not they felt second-hand smoke was harmful to a nonsmoker's health. The majority of respondents, 61.1%, indicated they thought second hand smoke was very harmful, while another 30.2% of respondents stated second hand smoke was somewhat harmful. Only 8.7% of respondents said that second hand smoke was not at all harmful to a nonsmoker's health.

Table 2 General Survey Results: Respondent Characteristics				
		Number	Percent	
UA Affiliation	Part-Time Student	295	9.8%	(n=3,004)
	Full-Time Student	1,680	55.9%	
	Part-Time Employee	114	3.8%	
	Full-Time Employee	915	30.5%	
Student Rank	Freshman	432	21.9%	(n=1,975)
	Sophomore	401	20.3%	
	Junior	404	20.5%	
	Senior	426	21.6%	
	Graduate Student	312	15.8%	
Employee Type	Faculty	189	18.4%	(n=1,029)
	Staff	555	53.9%	
	Contract Professional	285	27.7%	
Familiarity With UA Smoking Policy	Very Familiar	999	33.3%	(n=3,004)
	Somewhat Familiar	1,490	49.6%	
	Not At All Familiar	515	17.1%	
Opinion of Second Hand Smoke	Very Harmful	1,835	61.1%	(n=3,004)
	Somewhat Harmful	907	30.2%	
	Not At All Harmful	262	8.7%	
Smoking Status	Non Smokers	2,362	78.6%	(n=3,004)
	Someday Smokers	280	9.3%	
	Everyday Smokers	362	12.1%	

Smoking Activity

Just over one-fifth, 21.4%, of all survey respondents indicated they smoke tobacco products. Of those who indicated they smoke tobacco, over half, 56.4%, stated they smoke every day, while the remainder, 43.6%, indicated they smoke only some days. Students were more likely to indicate they smoked compared to university employees (see Table 3). Among university employees, staff members were more likely to smoke tobacco products compared to faculty and contract professionals.

Those respondents who indicated they smoke tobacco products were asked whether or not they smoke on campus. The majority, 77.6%, of smoking respondents indicated they do smoke on the university's campus (see Table 4). On the other hand, over one-fifth, 22.4%, of tobacco smoking respondents stated they do not smoke on campus. Those persons who indicated they smoke on a daily basis were more likely to indicate they smoke on campus compared to individuals that smoke less frequently. Students were just as likely as university employees to indicate they smoke on campus.

Those individuals who indicated they smoke tobacco products were also asked whether or not they would be interested in participating in a smoking cessation program. Most smokers, 60.4%, indicated they were not interested in a smoking cessation program (see Table 5). However, 15.9% of smokers said they were interested in a smoking cessation program, and another 23.7% of smokers indicated they were not sure. University employees were more interested in participating in a smoking cessation program compared to students. Among students, seniors and graduate students were more interested in smoking cessation compared to those with less education. Among university employees, staff members tended to be more interested in smoking cessation compared to faculty and contract professionals. Persons who smoke on a daily basis were more likely to be interested in a smoking cessation program compared to persons who smoke less frequently.

Table 3 Smoking Activity: By Selected Cross-Tabulations					
		Everyday Smokers	Someday Smokers	Non Smokers	
Overall Survey Population		12.1%	9.3%	78.6%	(n=3,004)
UA Affiliation	Students	12.9%	11.4%	75.7%	(n=1,975)
	Employees	10.5%	5.2%	84.3%	(n=1,029)
Enrollment Status	Part-Time	14.9%	10.2%	74.9%	(n=295)
	Full-Time	12.5%	11.7%	75.8%	(n=1,680)
Student Rank	Freshman	11.6%	11.1%	77.3%	(n=432)
	Sophomore	14.0%	15.2%	70.8%	(n=401)
	Junior	13.4%	9.9%	76.7%	(n=404)
	Senior	14.1%	11.5%	74.4%	(n=426)
	Graduate	10.9%	9.0%	80.1%	(n=312)
Employment Status	Part-Time	9.6%	7.0%	83.3%	(n=114)
	Full-Time	10.6%	5.0%	84.4%	(n=915)
Employee Type	Faculty	4.8%	4.2%	91.0%	(n=189)
	Staff	15.3%	5.9%	78.7%	(n=555)
	Contract Professional	4.9%	4.6%	90.5%	(n=285)

Table 4 Smoking Activity On UA Campus*					
		Smoke On Campus	Do Not Smoke On Campus		
Overall Smoking Population		77.6%	22.4%		(n=642)
UA Affiliation	Student	77.7%	22.3%		(n=480)
	Employee	77.2%	22.8%		(n=162)
Smoking Frequency	Every Day	93.4%	6.6%		(n=362)
	Some Days	57.1%	42.9%		(n=280)
*Only those persons who smoke tobacco are included in these results.					

Table 5 Interest in Smoking Cessation Program*					
		Interested In Program	Not Interested	Not Sure	
Overall Smoking Population		15.9%	60.4%	23.7%	(n=642)
UA Affiliation	Student	14.4%	61.9%	23.8%	(n=480)
	Employee	20.4%	56.2%	23.5%	(n=162)
Enrollment Status	Part-Time	18.9%	60.8%	20.3%	(n=74)
	Full-Time	13.5%	62.1%	24.4%	(n=406)
Student Rank	Freshman	11.2%	59.2%	29.6%	(n=98)
	Sophomore	9.4%	63.2%	27.4%	(n=117)
	Junior	11.7%	64.9%	23.4%	(n=94)
	Senior	18.3%	62.4%	19.3%	(n=109)
	Graduate	25.8%	58.1%	16.1%	(n=62)
Employment Status	Part-Time	21.1%	47.4%	31.6%	(n=19)
	Full-Time	20.3%	57.3%	22.4%	(n=143)
Employee Type	Faculty	17.6%	52.9%	29.4%	(n=17)
	Staff	21.2%	56.8%	22.0%	(n=118)
	Contract Professional	18.5%	55.6%	25.9%	(n=27)
Smoking Frequency	Every Day	20.4%	58.0%	21.5%	(n=362)
	Some Days	10.0%	63.6%	26.4%	(n=280)
*Only those persons who smoke tobacco are included in these results.					

Attitudes Toward Campus Smoking Policies

Table 6 provides two types of results, unweighted results and weighted results. The unweighted results are the results calculated directly from the surveys' responses and consider no outside information. Weighted results were calculated because some demographics were overrepresented in the survey responses. For instance, 10.4% of respondents were graduate students while graduate students make up 15.0% of the university community. The weighted results are statistically adjusted to better compensate for such underrepresentation, as well as overrepresentation, in the survey. The weighted results are not significantly different than the unweighted results from the sample. Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion references the unweighted results.

All respondents were asked their opinion of the current smoking policy of The University of Akron. Possible responses included that the current policy is too lenient, it is too strict, it is fine the way it is, and no opinion. The plurality of respondents, 43.5%, stated that the current campus smoking policy is too lenient (see Table 6). Just under one-third, 33.0%, of respondents indicated the current smoking policy was fine the way it is. Those that felt the current smoking policy was too strict amounted to 5.7% of all respondents. A significant proportion of respondents, 17.8%, had no opinion of the current smoking policy.

Those respondents who indicated they felt the current smoking policy of the university was too strict were subsequently asked how they would change the current smoking policy. This was an open-ended question where the respondent could give any response. Many of the persons who gave a response in this instant were smokers. Key themes in the responses were that smoking should be allowed anywhere outdoors, there should be no outdoor policy, or that the distance-to-door policy should be eliminated or the distance shortened. Some students indicated that smoking should be allowed in dorm rooms. Some simply said they wished the current smoking policy would not become more strict.

Another key theme among those who felt the current smoking policy was too strict, was not a suggestion for a policy change, but rather suggestions to improve the situation for smokers on campus. For instance, some respondents said there should be more options for places to smoke or

more designated smoking areas. Included in the comments were a call for more smoking areas consisting of ashtrays and benches for the smokers as well as possibly sheltered smoking areas for smokers such as huts. Some said smoking areas should be clearly designated.

Those respondents who indicated they felt the current smoking policy of the university was too lenient were also subsequently asked how they would change the current smoking policy. There were key themes in the responses. Many of these respondents asserted smoking on campus should be eliminated all together. Others stated that there should be stricter rules governing where smokers can or cannot smoke. Some said smokers should stay further from the doors of buildings or from areas where people congregate.

Another theme stated by many of the respondents was that the current smoking policy is fine the way it is, but that it should just be enforced properly. For instance, an attempt should be made to get smokers away from the entrances of buildings. Some respondents said there should be more options for places to smoke or more designated smoking areas.

Attitudes toward the current campus smoking policy varied according to various group dynamics. For instance, smokers were more likely to feel the current smoking policy was too strict while nonsmokers were more likely to feel the current smoking policy is too lenient (see Table 7). Likewise, those persons who felt second hand smoke was very harmful to non-smokers were more likely to feel the current smoking policy was too lenient, while those persons who felt second hand smoke was not harmful were more likely to feel the current smoking policy was too strict.

Table 6 General Survey Results: Attitudes Toward Campus Smoking Policies				
		Unweighted Results		Weighted Results ⁽¹⁾
		Number	Percent	
Opinion of UA Smoking Policy	It is too strict	171	5.7%	5.8%
	It is too lenient	1,306	43.5%	45.2%
	It is fine the way it is	992	33.0%	29.2%
	No opinion	535	17.8%	19.8%
Opinion of Indoor Enforcement	Always enforced properly	1,703	56.7%	57.2%
	Sometimes enforced properly	687	22.9%	22.8%
	Never enforced properly	146	4.9%	4.6%
	No opinion	468	15.6%	15.4%
Opinion of Outdoor Enforcement	Always enforced properly	382	12.7%	12.3%
	Sometimes enforced properly	1,066	35.5%	33.8%
	Never enforced properly	1,101	36.7%	37.5%
	No opinion	455	15.1%	16.5%
Likelihood of Filing a Complaint	Would file a compliant	594	19.8%	20.5%
	Would not file a complaint	1,296	43.1%	44.0%
	Not sure	1,114	37.1%	35.5%
Support for Smoke-Free Campus	Support	1,824	60.7%	62.3%
	Oppose	982	32.7%	32.3%
	Not Sure	198	6.6%	5.3%
⁽¹⁾ Proportionally weighted to reflect the actual population of university students and employees.				

Table 7 Opinion of Current UA Smoking Policy: By Selected Cross-Tabulations						
		It is Too Strict	It is Too Lenient	It is Fine The Way It Is	No Opinion	
Overall Survey Population		5.7%	43.5%	33.0%	17.8%	(n=3,004)
Smoking Activity	Non Smokers	2.7%	53.3%	25.2%	18.8%	(n=2,362)
	Someday Smokers	10.7%	14.6%	61.4%	13.2%	(n=280)
	Everyday Smokers	21.5%	1.7%	62.2%	14.6%	(n=362)
UA Affiliation	Employees	5.3%	37.3%	43.0%	14.4%	(n=1,029)
	Students	5.9%	46.7%	27.8%	19.6%	(n=1,975)
Familiarity W/Current Smoking Policy	Very Familiar	9.3%	41.4%	45.1%	4.1%	(n=999)
	Somewhat Familiar	4.3%	52.1%	32.7%	10.9%	(n=1,490)
	Not At All Familiar	2.7%	22.3%	10.5%	64.5%	(n=515)
Opinion of Second Hand Smoke	Very Harmful	0.3%	63.0%	19.0%	17.7%	(n=1,835)
	Somewhat Harmful	9.9%	16.4%	54.9%	18.7%	(n=907)
	Not At All Harmful	28.6%	0.4%	55.3%	15.6%	(n=262)
Opinion of Outdoor Smoking Enforcement	Always enforced	15.4%	2.6%	71.7%	10.2%	(n=382)
	Sometimes enforced	5.5%	36.5%	40.2%	17.7%	(n=1,066)
	Never enforced	2.5%	73.2%	13.4%	10.8%	(n=1,101)
	Not Sure	5.5%	22.2%	31.0%	41.3%	(n=455)

All respondents were also asked their opinion of the current enforcement of indoor and outdoor campus smoking policies. The majority, 56.7%, of respondents stated the indoor smoking policy was always enforced properly (see Table 6). However, 22.9% of respondents said the indoor smoking policy was only sometimes enforced properly, and another 4.9% of respondents asserted the indoor smoking policy was never enforced properly. A significant proportion of respondents, 15.6%, had no opinion as to whether or not the indoor smoking policy of the university is enforced properly.

Respondents were less satisfied with the enforcement of the outdoor smoking policy. For instance, the plurality of respondents, 36.7%, stated the outdoor policy is never enforced properly, while over another one-third, 35.5%, indicated the outdoor smoking policy is only properly enforced sometimes. Only 12.7% of respondents felt the outdoor smoking policy is always enforced properly. A significant proportion of respondents, 15.1%, had no opinion as to whether the outdoor smoking policy is enforced properly.

All respondents were also asked whether or not they would file a complaint if they saw someone violating the current smoking policy. Only 19.8% of respondents indicated they would file a complaint, while another 37.1% of respondents were unsure as to whether or not they would file a complaint (see Table 5). The plurality of respondents, 43.1%, stated they would not file a complaint if they saw someone violating the current smoking policy. Nonsmokers were more likely to indicate they would file a complaint compared to smokers.

All respondents were asked if they would prefer a smoke-free campus. The majority of persons, 60.7%, indicated they would prefer a smoke-free campus, while another 6.6% of respondents were unsure. Nearly one-third, 32.7%, of respondents stated they would not prefer a smoke-free campus. Nonsmokers were more likely to prefer a smoke-free campus, while smokers were more likely to oppose a smoke-free campus (see Table 8). In addition, persons who felt second hand smoke was harmful were more likely to prefer a smoke-free campus as were persons who felt the university's current smoking policy was too lenient or not enforced properly.

Table 8 Preference for a Smoke-Free Campus By Selected Cross-Tabulations					
		Prefer Smoke-Free Campus	Opposed to Smoke-Free Campus	Undecided	
Overall Survey Population		60.7%	32.7%	6.6%	(n=3,004)
Smoking Activity	Non Smokers	74.7%	17.9%	7.4%	(n=2,362)
	Someday Smokers	16.4%	77.1%	6.4%	(n=280)
	Everyday Smokers	3.6%	94.8%	1.7%	(n=362)
UA Affiliation	Employees	57.4%	31.8%	10.8%	(n=1,029)
	Students	62.4%	32.2%	4.4%	(n=1,975)
Opinion of Second Hand Smoke	Very Harmful	86.6%	7.8%	5.5%	(n=1,835)
	Somewhat Harmful	25.5%	64.6%	9.9%	(n=907)
	Not At All Harmful	1.1%	96.2%	2.7%	(n=262)
Opinion of Current UA Smoking Policy	It is too strict	0.6%	96.5%	2.9%	(n=171)
	It is too lenient	94.3%	2.8%	2.9%	(n=1,306)
	It is fine the way it is	25.7%	64.5%	9.8%	(n=992)
	No opinion	63.0%	26.2%	10.8%	(n=535)
Opinion of Outdoor Smoking Enforcement	Always enforced	8.4%	87.7%	3.9%	(n=382)
	Sometimes enforced	58.5%	33.3%	8.2%	(n=1,066)
	Never enforced	84.0%	10.2%	5.8%	(n=1,101)
	Not Sure	53.4%	39.6%	7.0%	(n=455)

Lastly, those persons who indicated they smoke tobacco products were asked whether or not they would continue their relationship (employment or taking classes) with the university if it would become smoke-free. The plurality of smoking respondents, 44.4%, indicated they would continue their relationship with the university if it became smoke-free (see Table 9). However, just under one-third, 32.2%, of smokers stated they would not continue their relationship with the university if it became smoke-free, and another 23.4% were unsure whether or not they would continue their relationship with the university. Those persons who indicated they smoke only some days, or that did not smoke on campus, were more likely to state they would continue their relationship with the university. Employees were more likely to indicate they would continue their relationship with the university, while students were more likely to state they would discontinue their relationship with the university.

Table 9 Likely Relationship With A Smoke-Free UA Campus*					
		Will Continue Relationship	Will Not Continue Relationship	Not Sure	
Overall Smoking Population		44.4%	32.2%	23.4%	(n=642)
UA Affiliation	Student	39.2%	38.8%	22.1%	(n=480)
	Employee	59.9%	13.0%	27.2%	(n=162)
Enrollment Status	Part-Time	39.2%	33.8%	27.0%	(n=74)
	Full-Time	39.2%	39.7%	21.2%	(n=406)
Student Rank	Freshman	45.9%	24.5%	29.6%	(n=98)
	Sophomore	35.0%	41.9%	23.1%	(n=117)
	Junior	36.2%	41.5%	22.3%	(n=94)
	Senior	40.4%	45.0%	14.7%	(n=109)
	Graduate	38.7%	40.3%	21.0%	(n=62)
Employment Status	Part-Time	47.4%	10.5%	42.1%	(n=19)
	Full-Time	61.5%	13.3%	25.2%	(n=143)
Employee Type	Faculty	41.2%	17.6%	41.2%	(n=17)
	Staff	61.0%	11.9%	27.1%	(n=118)
	Contract Professional	66.7%	14.8%	18.5%	(n=27)
Smoking Frequency	Every Day	34.8%	37.8%	27.3%	(n=362)
	Some Days	56.8%	25.0%	18.2%	(n=280)
Campus Smoking	Smoke on Campus	34.5%	39.0%	26.5%	(n=498)
	Not on Campus	78.5%	9.0%	12.5%	(n=144)
*Only those persons who smoke tobacco are included in these results.					