

Q & A: Smoke-Free Campus Policy AND Cannabis on Campus

June 12, 2018

Key Messages:

- Effective **August 1, 2018**, the University of Regina will not permit smoking or use of tobacco products – including recreational cannabis (marijuana) smoking and vaping – in any University owned or leased building, on leased or owned University property, or in University vehicles, or vehicles parked on University leased or owned property.
- The University is continuing the transition to a completely smoke-free campus that started in 2017 when Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) were reduced from 19 to 3 locations. Now, the three DSAs on campus will be removed.
- The revised policy – to be called “Smoke-Free Campus Policy” – encompasses cannabis (marijuana) smoking and vaping on campus.
- The new Smoke-Free Campus Policy also includes the “Cannabis on Campus” Appendix A which addresses the responsible use of cannabis on campus.
- Under the policy and appendix, growing cannabis plants is prohibited in all University buildings owned or leased, including University residences; and on outdoor University property.
- Additional information about the use of recreational cannabis on campus – such as using edibles – will be shared with our campus community once federal and provincial cannabis regulation details are fully known.
- We are committed to providing a safe and healthy place in which to study, work, visit, and live.
- We recognize the health hazards posed by exposure to second-hand smoke.
- We recognize that smoking is an addiction and we encourage students and employees to access the smoking cessation programs available through their health plans, URSU, etc.
- Tobacco is an integral part of cultural ceremonies and requests for guidance, knowledge or knowledge sharing, therefore it may be burned on campus in accordance with policy GOV-040-020 *Smudging/Pipe Ceremonies*. Smoking or tobacco products used for research purposes, other than Indigenous cultural practices, require a written exception request to this policy made to the Director, Health Safety and Wellness.
- Cannabis may be used or grown for teaching and research purposes where the research meets all regulatory requirements and approvals, and where appropriate protections for health and safety are in place.

Q&A: Smoke-Free Campus Policy

What’s happening with the University’s Smoking on Campus policy?

The University will amend its smoking policy to become smoke-free and tobacco-free on August 1, 2018. This continues the transition to a smoke-free campus that started in 2017 by reducing designated smoking areas from 19 to 3 locations. The Smoke-Free Campus Policy includes smoking and vaping of cannabis (marijuana) on campus. It also includes the appendix on Cannabis on Campus, which addresses the responsible use of cannabis on campus.

Was smoking and vaping cannabis included in your previous smoking policy?

Marijuana was included in the previous policy. In the revised Smoke-Free Campus Policy, the wording is amended to “cannabis (marijuana)”.

If recreational use of cannabis is legal, why can't it be smoked or vaped on campus?

The University began its transition to a smoke-free campus last year, and marijuana was included in that policy. The move to a completely smoke-free campus – including cannabis smoke – is a continuation of that process. Although cigarettes are legal, we don't want anyone to smoke or vape tobacco on our campus. It is the same with cannabis.

Why did you make this change?

We are committed to providing a safe, healthy and clean place in which to study, work, visit, and live. We recognize the health hazards posed by exposure to second-hand smoke and tobacco use. Our move to smoke-free is the next step in that commitment.

What does that mean? You already have a no-smoking policy. How is this different?

This is a continuation of a transition to completely smoke-free. On August 1, we will remove the remaining three Designated Smoking Areas from the U of R campus. It means that smoking – including cannabis - and the use of tobacco products are completely prohibited in all University buildings or vehicles, owned or leased; in all outside areas; and in vehicles parked on University property, owned or leased.

Why are you doing this?

We know smoking and second-hand smoke are public health hazards. “Accountability & Well-Being” is one of our stated values and “Sustainability” is one of our underlying areas of emphasis. Our revised policy puts a greater emphasis on **our** responsibility for the quality of air that we breathe and on providing a clean environment.

We also know from the Canadian Cancer Society that policies for 100% smoke-free campuses not only provide protection from the cancer risks of second-hand smoke, but also discourage tobacco use among young people.

Will there be any spaces on campus where smoking is allowed?

No. The Designated Smoking Areas on the U of R campus will be removed.

What about people who live on campus? Where will they smoke?

The DSAs were part of a transition to a smoke-free campus. Our residences will now be included in our smoke-free campus without exception. We believe there are many students – including residents – who prefer to live in an environment of a completely smoke-free campus.

Last year, you said the DSAs were for residents, recognizing these are their homes and you needed to provide a safe outdoor location for smokers living in residence. What's changed?

Last year, we began the transition to a smoke-free campus and our residents were aware that the direction was towards a completely smoke-free campus. We have made progress in the past year by raising awareness and discouraging smoking by reducing it to three areas. We believe we are ready to move forward and become a smoke-free campus, providing a healthier environment for everyone. We believe there are many students – including residents – who will prefer to live in a completely smoke-free campus.

Was there consultation on this new policy?

We have been researching the issue of smoking in post-secondary institutions since May 2016. A working group doing this research was formed by Health, Safety and Wellness and included broad cross-campus representation from: Facilities Management, Student Affairs, URSU, External Relations, and Residence Services. Their work included an environmental scan of other post-secondary institutions to determine their practices and policies regarding smoking on campus.

The policy also reflects society norms which are shifting away from smoking. This was further emphasized by the City of Regina's research last year that supported their decision to go no smoking. We are continuing on the path we started last year to move toward a smoke-free campus.

As well, research from the Canadian Cancer Society shows that policies for 100% smoke-free campuses not only provide protection from the cancer risks of second-hand smoke, but also discourage tobacco use among young people.

Our move last year to three DSA was a step toward a completely smoke-free campus. We are also part of a growing momentum toward a healthier campus environment. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, there are 23 universities and colleges in Canada that have adopted such a policy, and more are in the process of doing so. In the US, about 2,000 campuses are 100 per cent smoke-free.

How did the past year go when you had three DSAs? Do you have any research? Did smoking practices change?

We believe that our policy and move to three DSAs helped raise awareness and was a positive step toward a safer and healthier campus. Research from the Canadian Cancer Society shows that policies for 100% smoke-free campuses not only provide protection from the cancer risks of second-hand smoke, but also discourage tobacco use among young people. Anecdotally, compliance with the revised policy appeared quite high and we received relatively few complaints about non-compliance.

How will you enforce the smoking policy?

All faculty, staff and students are expected to comply with University policy. We will continue to focus our efforts on promoting a culture change to one of clean air and a clean environment. We would rather create this change through awareness, education, respect, peer-to-peer encouragement, and support.

Therefore, our main focus will be on voluntary compliance through education, signage, and awareness. We believe that's the kind of campus and approach that will work best for everyone – both smokers and non-smokers.

How will students and employees be treated if caught smoking on campus?

We expect everyone – smokers and non-smokers – to be courteous and respectful as we go through this change. We recognize that tobacco smoking is an addiction and many people would like to quit. Cessation assistance is available to those who wish to quit. We want to encourage a culture change – through awareness, education, respect, peer-to-peer encouragement, and support – to one of clean air and a clean environment.

What enforcement options are available to the University? Will you be issuing tickets for smoking?

These are the same as with any policy. We would follow appropriate corrective administrative or non-academic discipline. However, this change will take time, and our main focus will be on voluntary compliance through education, signage, and awareness.

What will you do to help people quit?

We hope everyone who wants to will take advantage of the smoking cessation assistance available to faculty and staff as well as students. The Pension and Benefits Unit of Human Resources can assist University employees in determining coverage for smoking cessation aids. Students can contact the University of Regina Students' Union to determine their coverage for smoking cessation aids.

Smoking Cessation Information

- Employees: Contact Human Resources to find out about benefits coverage for smoking cessation programs. Please contact Angela.Rensby@uregina.ca or call 306-585-4167. Additional resources/benefits information can be found on the Sun Life website at www.sunlife.ca/uregina.
- Students: Contact the University of Regina Students' Union to find out about coverage for smoking cessation programs. Call 306-586-8811 or visit www.ursu.ca

Why is there an exception for Indigenous ceremonies?

Our policy, similar to the City of Regina policy, recognizes that tobacco is an integral part of cultural ceremonies, cultural research and requests for guidance, knowledge or knowledge sharing; therefore it may be burned on campus in accordance with our existing policy on Smudging/Pipe Ceremonies.

Are there any other exceptions?

An exception may be granted for research purposes, other than Indigenous cultural practices. Researchers will be required to make a written request for exemption to the Director of Health, Safety and Wellness.

Won't this negatively affect enrolment and revenue for conferences, residences, international students, or future employees?

We will ensure the policy is clear to potential students, faculty and staff. We have also been clear that the University's intention was to become completely smoke-free. While we may experience an initial reaction to this change, we believe that our offer of clean air and a clean environment will make the U of R an even more desirable place to study, work, live and visit for most people. As well, we are now in a city and broader community that has moved to a smoke-free environment.

Can I tell someone to butt out if they are smoking?

We ask people to be respectful if they choose to inform smokers about the policy or to offer support for smoking cessation programs. This is part of raising awareness.

How do I report someone smoking?

You can call Campus Security at 306-585-4999.

Will smoking be allowed at the Owl on the deck or the sidewalk?

No, our policy is consistent with the City of Regina policy which doesn't allow smoking on decks. We want to encourage clean air in a clean environment, regardless of the building or purpose.

Why can't I smoke outside while I'm watching a soccer or football game?

Our policy is consistent with the City of Regina policy which doesn't allow smoking on or near sport fields or near children.

Why can't I smoke in my car on campus?

We want to encourage clean air and a healthy environment everywhere on our campus. People sitting in smoke-filled cars are exposed to second hand smoke. And those leaving a smoke-filled car can affect the air quality of those next to them, or often choose to butt out their cigarettes on the ground outside the car. We are trying to discourage this activity.

What are other universities doing?

In 2017, our committee conducted an environmental scan of other universities that showed we were leading or in the middle of the pack in terms of how Universities are dealing with smoking on campus.

In May 2018, the Canadian Cancer Society informed us that there are 23 universities and colleges in Canada that have adopted a smoke-free policy, and more are in the process of doing so. In the US, about 2,000 campuses are 100 per cent smoke-free.

Q&A: Cannabis (Marijuana) on Campus

What is the University doing to respond to the upcoming federal legislation legalizing recreational use of marijuana?

The University is amending its smoking policy to move to a completely smoke-free campus as of August 1, 2018. This includes cannabis smoking and vaping. The University began moving toward a smoke-free campus last year when our designated smoking areas were reduced to three from 19. This is the next step in that process.

We have also added a “Cannabis on Campus” appendix to the Smoke-Free Campus policy which addresses the responsible use of cannabis on campus.

Under the Policy and Appendix, growing cannabis plants is prohibited in all University buildings owned or leased, including University residences; and on outdoor University property.

Why can't we grow cannabis plants in our residences?

Growing cannabis plants will not be allowed in our residences due to impact on resources such as water and electricity, and the risk of fire from heaters and grow lights.

How was this decision made?

The Marijuana Legalization Working Group was formed in January to gather information and identify any potential impacts from the new legislation that needed to be addressed. The working group provided recommendations to the University's leadership team which ultimately decided that the time was right to move to a completely smoke free campus.

Who is on the committee?

The committee is chaired by HR's Director of Health, Safety, and Wellness and includes representatives from Student Affairs, Housing, University Governance, External Relations, the Students' Union, and Campus Security. We are also talking to our Federated College partners, First Nations, and Innovation Place.

What were the concerns? What was discussed?

The committee looked at what we know about the federal government policy, what other universities were doing, and considered any impact on our existing and possible new policies, rules, or regulations. They looked at the campus as a whole – inside buildings including residences, as well as outdoors.

What is the policy now for smoking marijuana on campus?

Up until August 1, 2018, our Smoking on Campus Policy prohibits marijuana smoking or vaping anywhere on campus, indoors or outdoors. Smoking in general is permitted only in three designated areas on campus. These will be removed August 1, 2018 when we go to a smoke-free campus and amend the policy to the Smoke-Free Campus Policy. That new policy will encompass smoking and vaping cannabis (marijuana).

How does this compare to what other universities and colleges are doing?

We know that many other universities in Canada and the US have gone completely smoke-free.

Did you consult students and staff about what they want?

We created an informal questionnaire for use in discussions with campus community stakeholders such as students, residents living on campus, to help better understand their perceptions of upcoming changes to Federal and Provincial marijuana laws in relation to U of R campuses; and, to help inform communication with our stakeholders about these changes or any related U of R policies.

URSU also sent the same questions to their community of student clubs to get a broader response.

What did you hear from students?

From those we've spoken to, many feel that the new legislation will have a neutral impact on them, but they also have some concerns.

What did you hear from those who have concerns?

All the kinds of issues that one would expect such as second hand smoke; students using marijuana during class or exams; smoking indoors; the smell; living with marijuana users in residence; and enforceability.

Doesn't this approach effectively ban it entirely from campus?

Smoking or vaping recreational cannabis on campus will not be allowed under our smoke-free policy. Edible cannabis is not legal, so it will not be allowed either, although we realize that is more difficult to enforce. And while growing four cannabis plants for personal use is legal, we have the responsibility to determine what's allowed on our property, including in our residence buildings.

Growing of cannabis plants in residence will not be allowed due to the impact on resources such as water and electricity, and the risk of fire from heaters and grow lights.

How many of your students smoke pot?

A 2017 Maclean's survey reported that over a third of Canadian university students have smoked pot at least sometimes, and five per cent several times a week or more.

Based on self-reporting, the same survey shows that overall about 27 percent of U of R students use marijuana, with 12 percent using it less than once a year; four percent less than once a month; three percent using it a few times a month; and two percent using it a few times a week or daily.

Why didn't you just keep the designated smoking areas and allow marijuana to be smoked there as well as cigarettes?

The University's goal was to have a completely smoke-free campus. Removing the DSAs was the next step in that transition. As well, many people don't want to smoke marijuana in the same place as cigarette smokers, and vice versa.

How do you think students in residence will be affected?

We don't allow any smoking or vaping of any substance in our residences and that won't change. However, we know there will be questions about where users can legally smoke or ingest marijuana for recreational or medical purposes, and whether they can grow plants in residence. We will communicate that information to our residents and expect them to act responsibly and follow policy.

Will residents be allowed to grow plants in their rooms?

No. Although growing four plants for personal use will be legal, there are concerns about safety, fires, the smell and additional use of resources such as electricity and water if it's allowed to be grown in residences. The University has a responsibility to govern what is allowed on campus, including in residences.

What about carrying cannabis on campus or storing it in my residence. It's legal to do that!

When not in use, cannabis products (including dried cannabis, as well as edibles (once legal) on campus must be stored in sealed, scent-proof containers.

Are there any exceptions?

Cannabis may be used or grown for teaching and research purposes where the research meets all regulatory requirements and approvals, and where appropriate protections for health and safety are in place.

How will you enforce any illegal use of edible or recreational cannabis on campus or in residence?

As is our current practice, the University will work with the police if any illegal activity takes place on campus.

What if someone needs to smoke cannabis for medical reasons? Where can they go? Will you create a place on campus for those who live here so they can smoke or ingest marijuana legally (recreationally) and/or for medical reasons?

The use of cannabis for medical purposes is not covered by our policy and may be recognized as a "duty to accommodate" under Saskatchewan Human Rights Legislation.

Will you be doing any special educational or awareness programs to help students make informed decisions about cannabis use?

We want to encourage responsible use of recreational cannabis, just as we would with alcohol. We are considering educational and awareness programs, and want to see what kind of public education programs the federal and provincial government will provide.

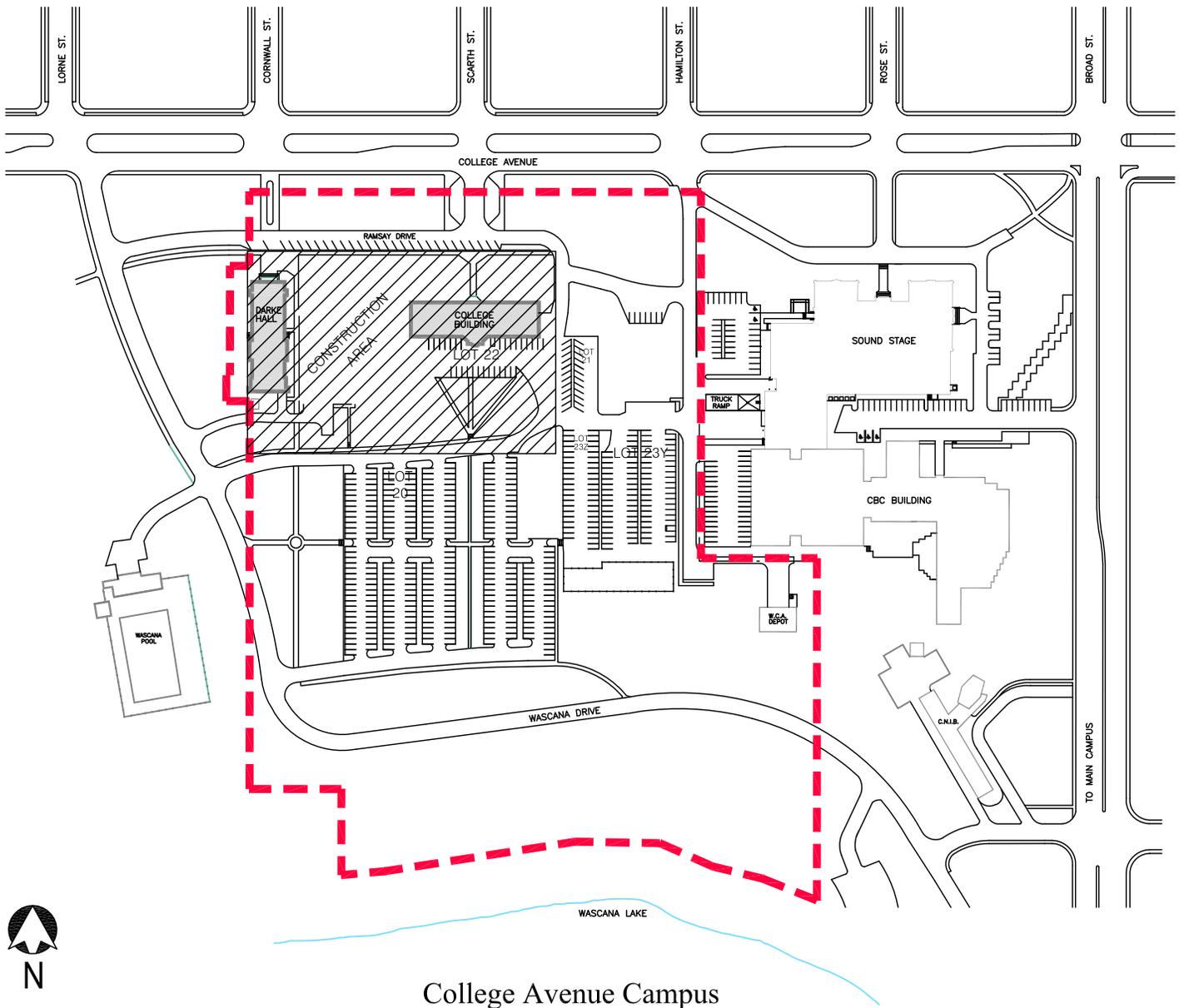
How do you expect the campus/campus culture to change as a result of legalization of marijuana?

We expect the University's policies and rules will be followed. The University will be a smoke-free campus as of August 1, so we expect that everyone working, living, studying, or visiting here will respect that policy and appreciate the benefits of the clean environment we offer.

The existing smoking policy, as well as the move to a smoke-free campus includes cannabis smoking and vaping, so we will not see any change with the legalization of marijuana. Regarding growing plants, we will implement rules that cannabis plants cannot be grown in residence or anywhere on campus. This will be written into residence contracts and include the requirement that when not in use, cannabis products are stored in sealed, scent-proof containers. Edibles currently are not legal, but we will address that when we know more about legislation in that area.

Does the U of R have an impairment policy or a drug and alcohol policy?

No. We have never found a need for a drug and alcohol policy. We are however continuing to conduct our environmental scans to assess if there is a need to such a policy in the future.



College Avenue Campus



University
of Regina

Smoking or vaping, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is not allowed inside the dashed red lines