

Tobacco- Free Campus Initiative

Possible challenges from smokers/tobacco users and responses to those challenges

Brief role-playing by department is great practice/preparation

Initial interaction to a user: “Good morning/afternoon/evening. Are you aware that we are now a tobacco -free campus? Thanks for helping us to maintain a healthy environment for everyone here at Middle Georgia.” (The attitude in which this is said can make all the difference)

Another initial interaction: “Excuse me. I hate to bother you but I wanted to remind you of a new policy that was recently implemented here at MGA that doesn’t permit smoking or use of any tobacco products on campus. You may have missed the signage across campus (Don’t say: **in BIG BOLD letters on every corner of the campus**) so hopefully this reminder will help. We want to help make our campus a healthy one.”

Response: “It’s my right to smoke. You can’t make me.”

Rebuttal: “You are absolutely correct but we would respectfully ask that you move to an off-campus location to smoke since we have no areas on campus that are designated for smoking.”

- (If challenged from that point) “Although we want to make your campus experience a good one, we also want that good campus experience to be applied to everyone. Our campus has made a commitment to providing a healthy environment for all, so we have measures in place to assure that this commitment is fulfilled. You can help us with that by not smoking as our policy directs.”
- (Further challenge) “I would prefer that we not have to report this because of a failure to abide by campus policy so hopefully you can understand and refrain from smoking (or using tobacco products) while on campus.”
- If person becomes combative or belligerent, do not continue. Step away and contact campus police.

Response: “So where CAN I smoke?”

Rebuttal: “You are more than welcome to smoke anywhere off campus.”

OR: “You may choose your location to smoke as long as it is off-campus since we do not have any areas on campus designated for smoking.”

Response: “So this is a requirement? A policy? “

Rebuttal: “Yes, sir/ma’am. We here at MGA made a commitment to our students/faculty/staff to provide a healthy campus environment and this is one of many ways we are doing just that.”

OR: “As a result of that commitment, we instituted a new policy in October of 2014 that provides a smoke and tobacco free campus, including e-cigarettes.”

OR: “We certainly respect your right to smoke but have made it a policy to have all who wish to smoke or use tobacco to do so off-campus.”

For faculty/staff smokers/tobacco-users who violate this policy:

Initial Interaction: “Morning Dr./Mr./Ms. Faculty/Staff. Did you forget that we are now a tobacco-free campus?”

Response: “No I didn’t forget. I just don’t care. They can’t make me stop.”

Rebuttal: You know you're right that no one can make you stop but it is now policy and we, as employees here at MGA, need to stay in compliance with the policies of our campus while on campus."

- If faculty/staff continue to smoke/use tobacco, simply contact your supervisor so the faculty/staff member's supervisor can be notified.
(Then smoking cessation discussions can occur)

What NOT to say:

- Threats that create a hostile environment and a defensive response.
- Advice on how to keep from complying with the policy without getting "caught."
- Ridicule of the policy or comments that imply you condone violations thereof

The attitude and tone of the conversation is set by us and maintained by us. It makes all the difference so use the service standards at all times.