



Campus Interviews Report

A summary of key informant interviews conducted at
Modesto Junior College and Columbia College

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Introduction & Background

Purpose

The purpose of the interviews is to identify support for and barriers to tobacco-free campus policies at each target campus. The results of these interviews are currently being used to determine the readiness of the colleges to adopt and implement tobacco-free policy, identify the challenges and barriers to such a policy, and identify suggestions that have informed intervention activity strategies. Current target campuses include Modesto Junior College in Stanislaus County and Columbia College in Tuolumne County.

Background

Adopting 100% smoke, vape, and tobacco-free campus environments promotes health and wellness for all members of the campus community. Developing and implementing these policies decreases exposure to secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol, changes tobacco use behaviors, decreases tobacco related litter on campus, prepares students for tobacco-free work environments, and decreases exposure to new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products.

Both Modesto Junior College and Columbia College have histories of addressing the use of tobacco on their campuses. In 2017 Columbia College received a grant from the Truth Initiative to establish a tobacco-free policy. There was a small, but loud group of resisters both from students as well as from faculty. The campus ultimately decided to reduce the number of designated areas on campus, but not go completely tobacco-free.

In 2018 at the request of John Zamora, Computer Science Faculty and Co-Chair of the Facilities Council, that Council approved a request to establish a smoke and tobacco-free taskforce in the 2019/2020 academic year. STAAND project staff are working closely with Professor Zamora on this endeavor.

Methodology

The key informant interviews were conducted in person by California Health Collaborative staff in August and September of 2019. Each key informant was asked the same set of 13 questions. The questions were designed to identify opportunities and



barriers to tobacco-free campus policy adoption as well as possible solutions to addressing critical areas and potential allies and champions.

The Interviewees

Six individuals were interviewed: three from Modesto Junior College and three from Columbia College. Interviewees include two faculty-members, two student health center directors, a campus administrator, and a member of the Associated Students. All six are champions for this change on their campus. All six of the interviewees also participate actively on the decision-making councils and groups on their respective campuses including: the Faculty Senate, the Facilities Council, the Student Success Council, the Associated Students, and the Staff Member Union.

Data Analysis

Notes were taken during each interview and a qualitative analysis was conducted on the responses to identify common themes.

Results & Next Steps

Results

Themes resulting from these interviews are outlined in the tables below.



Barriers Table

Barriers at <u>Both Campuses</u>	Barriers specific to <u>Modesto Junior College</u>	Barriers specific to <u>Columbia College</u>
<p>Faculty concerned with individual liberties.</p> <p>Wanting Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs): <u>Columbia</u> recently reduced the number of DSAs on their campus. <u>MJC</u> has unofficial DSAs on both campuses and the Associated Students have said in the past that they feel DSAs are a good compromise, especially for Student Veterans.</p> <p>Rise of Vaping: The act of vaping is different than smoking. Rarely do people come together in groups to vape. Rather, they use their vapes quickly and discretely on their way to and from classes.</p>	<p>Student Veterans: The Associated Students at MJC are particularly concerned with how this policy would affect student veterans.</p> <p>Student Health Center Needs: Need for Nicotine Replacement Therapy and Tobacco Treatment Training for Health Center Staff</p>	<p>The Risk of Fire: There is a concern at Columbia that this policy would cause smokers to retreat to the surrounding wooded areas to hide and smoke, thereby increasing the risk of fire. Recent conversations with the Fire Chief on campus resulted in the Fire Chief stating his opinion that a smoke and tobacco-free policy would neither increase, nor decrease the risk of fire and that he was neutral on the issue.</p> <p>Campus President: The new President at Columbia has not been adamantly against a tobacco-free campus, but has neither has he been a supporter. The feeling is that the President will support a policy, if it is a student-lead initiative.</p>



Opportunities Table

Opportunities at <u>Both Campuses</u>	Opportunities specific to <u>Modesto Junior College</u>	Opportunities specific to <u>Columbia College</u>
<p>Students were identified by both campuses as the main motivator and factor in making a policy decision like this one. All interviewees agreed that if we could show student support and have a student-face to the initiative, the rest of the decision makers, including faculty, staff, and Board Members, would get on board.</p> <p>Childhood Development Centers: <u>Columbia</u> has a large and actively used childhood development center where students and staff can leave their young children for care and development during the academic year. <u>MJC</u> has a childhood development center on the west campus, which unfortunately hosts a designated smoking area nearby. MJC is planning to establish another large</p>	<p>Allied Health: MJC is home to the Allied Health Department, a popular nursing program, and a one-of-a-kind Respiratory Therapy program where students may earn a bachelor's degree. The Pre-Health Club and the Respiratory Care Club were both identified as potential partners and allies and have already begun to assist in survey collection and presentations to decision makers.</p> <p>Campus President: The new campus President comes to MJC from a campus that had already adopted a smoke and tobacco-free policy. Further, the president studied the use of pesticides in graduate school and is thought to know quite a bit about the dangers of nicotine.</p>	<p>Associated Students: The thought is that if we can get associated students on-board, we have won the battle. Encouragingly, the STAAND project has been able to recruit two members of the Associated Students to serve as STAAND student interns.</p> <p>Student Health Center: The Director of the student health center at Columbia College is a certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist and has a great deal of knowledge and experience in tobacco treatment and tobacco-free policy advocacy.</p> <p>Student Success Council: The Student Success Council was identified as the main decision-making body that we should target. We have</p>



<p>childhood development center on the East Campus in the coming year.</p> <p>High School Programs: Both campuses have strong and growing high school programs and now host tens of high schoolers on their campuses daily. Exposing those students to vape culture and secondhand aerosol are obvious detriments to the existing policy.</p> <p>Environmental Impacts of Tobacco were identified by both campuses as a promising line of messaging and communication, rather than health impacts.</p>	<p>Formation of a Tobacco-Free Taskforce: The fact that MJC has already approved the formation of a taskforce to address this issue shows that the campus is already far along in the process of adopting a policy. Although the taskforce has not yet met, potential members are being gathered and discussions about this issue are happening across the campus.</p>	<p>at least two allies that serve on the Council and because this issue is directly related to student success, it was recommended to bring the policy proposal forward to this council who would then recommend it to the President for adoption.</p>
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Recommendations and Next Steps

Recommendations and Next Steps at MJC:

Outreach and relationship building with the Student Veteran Center will be essential to success at Modesto Junior College. It is recommended that project staff contact and interview Student Veteran Center staff.

Project staff are also considering whether to conduct a Midwest Strategic Planning Session for MJC, given that they have already approved the formation of a tobacco-free taskforce. Once the taskforce launches, project staff will gain a clearer understanding of the campuses trajectory for policy adoption and can weigh the pros and cons of hosting a



session. Project staff have been focused on building a relationship with the leader of the taskforce, Professor John Zamora, and did not want to offend or usurp him by suggesting a strategy session.

Interviewees suggested that the campus President may be supportive of this policy, and so it may be productive to conduct an interview with the campus President. It is recommended that STAAND student interns conduct the interview.

Recommendations and Next Steps at Columbia:

Because of the importance of the Associated Students at Columbia, it is recommended that staff work with them to develop and launch the campus survey. They will need to have trust and buy-in of the survey and the survey questions so that they can trust the results and move forward from there.

Interviewees suggested that the campus President may be barrier to this initiative. It is therefore recommended to not interview the campus President, but rather to focus efforts on the Associated Students, get their approval first, and move on from there.

It is also recommended to reach out to the Student Success Council who may be another potential ally as well an important step in getting a policy adopted.