

New smoking policy a breath of fresh air

Dalhousie sees success, UNB smokers doubt effectiveness

by Sean Patrick Sullivan

UNB is taking a step forward in ensuring the health of those on the UNB campus: as of May 1st, smoking within 10 metres of any university building will be prohibited.

All residence buildings, food service areas, building entryways, and areas near air vents will also be non-smoking.

The policy is a continuation of the university's wellness initiatives, meant to ensure a healthier environment for those who breathe the air at UNB.

Deans, department chairs, and building directors will be responsible for the enforcement of the policy. The university won't be enforcing the ban, but is instead urging cooperation from smokers.

"Our policy on smoking has been evolving progressively over the years toward a smoke-free environment," writes university President John McLaughlin on the school's website. "Its evolution has paralleled that of

the smoking bylaw in the municipality of Fredericton, the policies of other universities in the region, and guidelines implemented by various UNB faculties and departments."



Meg Folkles/The Brunswickian

People who are allergic to smoke will soon be able to breathe a little easier thanks to UNB's new policy requiring people to smoke at least 10 metres from any building on campus.

Some smokers on campus doubt the policy will work.

"It's an inconvenience for me for sure," said one student who asked not to be identified. "I understand the reasons for it, but now there's going to be crowds of people standing in the middle of parking lots smoking."

Though Sodexo employees on break outside of the cafeteria said they weren't opposed to the policy, they questioned its effectiveness.

"It's not going to deter anybody," said Rick Huskins. "It's just going to force them to go find their little holes."

Dalhousie University in Halifax went smoke-free in September 2002, asking smokers to step off of university property to light up. According to the director of Dal's safety office, the policy has worked.

"It's been quite effective," explained Dr. William Louch, "though that's not to say that if you walk around campus you wouldn't find someone breaking the new rules, especially on colder days."

Louch said that a survey last term found that 80 per cent of people smoking on or near the campuses were doing so in compliance with the policy.

Since September, security and safety officers at Dal have been asking non-complying smokers to move, and thanking those who are in the right place by passing out candies.

Louch said enforcement based on positive rewards is the best way to ensure the policy's success. Ticketing, he said, is not the way.

"The difficulty is, it wouldn't help the policy to make martyrs out of people. There's a limit to what we can legally do," said Louch.

UNB has established a task force to determine what steps the university should take in continuing its policy development. A survey for smokers and non-smokers is available at www.unb.ca/health.

Bruns Meetings:

Wednesdays @ 12:30pm.
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NEWS SHORTS

compiled by Graham Cox

Record profits for insurance companies

Insurance companies gained their greatest profits ever in Canada last year. The industry brought in more than 2.6 billion dollars in profits across all insurance categories, including some 200 companies.

Spokespeople for the insurance companies have expressed that this is not unreasonable when considering the number of companies involved. However, seeing that the price of auto insurance was the main topic in the last Maritime elections, people are not taking the news well.

The National Union of Public Employees have reported that the profits translate to approximately \$85 profit off every person in Canada, leading the union to call again for a public auto insurance system.

Women win equal rights in Uganda

Inter Press Service News has reported a major court decision in Uganda that has given equal rights to women with regard to divorce.

Women have now been given the Constitutional Right to call for a divorce on the grounds that their husbands have committed adultery.

Men were allowed to divorce their wives on these grounds before this ruling but women had to prove that their husbands were abusive or breaking other laws as well as being adulterers.

This ruling is seen as a breakthrough for groups who are seeking gender equality in other areas such as land ownership and the enactment of a Domestic Relations bill.

AIDS drug not working as hoped

New research has indicated that the drug being administered in some African countries that is supposed to block parent-offspring transmission of HIV may not be working as hoped.

When administered on its own in one dose, the drug Nevirapine is leading to increased drug resistance in the AIDS virus, is blocking transmission to offspring only about half the time, and is not leading to increased length of life in mothers.

AIDS groups are calling for the implementation of a combination of drugs to be used instead but cost and ease of administering the "drug cocktail" is a major constraint.

Bank for the poor starts in the Arab world

Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organisations (AGFUND) bank has officially opened.

AGFUND is a development bank targeting needs of the poor in the Arab world through promoting education and awareness of health issues, aiding in emergency relief, and liberalization.

The bank's president is the Saudi Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz and has close associations with the United Nations economic and social development groups.

Appeal to end illegal logging in Indonesia

The Rainforest Action Network (RAN) has released an appeal echoing the Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri's request for international assistance to stop illegal logging in the pristine rainforests.

The calls have come out after a Science Magazine report from Yale pointed out that nearly 50 per cent of the protected area forests in Indonesia have been deforested.

RAN is calling for international logging companies to cease purchasing timber and to cut demand for wood products from Indonesia until a system to verify legal lumber can be established in the country.

The human rights and environment group have stated that any company buying illegal lumber are as much at fault as the people who are cutting it since they are supplying the demand and resources that allow illegal cutting to continue.

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