

Policy Tip Sheet – “Show and Grow Your Power”

The primary mission of your tobacco task force should be to build capacity or power. Essentially, you are creating momentum on campus and empowering individuals to be supporters of tobacco-free policies. You are community organizing and developing a group to move change forward. With that in mind, think of ways to show off your power while also growing it.

Advisors and peer educators are great at creating new and different events to raise awareness about a health topic. To gain momentum for tobacco policy, you should still host events, but this time the goals are slightly different. Every event you plan is very strategic and should build upon the last event you held. This creates a snowball effect, growing your power as you move along.

Look at the events you are currently hosting. Think of ways you can improve the communication of your tobacco message through these events. If necessary, alter the focus to reinforce tobacco-free themes. Focus on **why** this issue is important so that you can build your argument for the **solution** (policy).

Example:

September – Host an environment-themed event, focusing on the tobacco litter and waste around campus. People sign a sheet saying that they want a clean campus.

October – Conduct a scientifically sound survey of campus tobacco use and attitudes.

November – Ask people to text cessation resources to friends.

February – Distribute social norms marketing materials that utilize your tobacco survey data and reinforce the norm that most students prefer to date a tobacco-free person.

April – Host an event to discuss the social justice issues related to tobacco production.

May – Host a rally on the quad with supporters of a tobacco-free policy.

Next Year – Release a poster campaign with photos and quotes from prominent people on campus who want a tobacco-free environment.

Also, identify a champion (powerful advocate) or a group of champions in your particular campus community. This person or group can be a powerful addition to events, sending the message that this tobacco policy is not only possible, but it is also supported by influential people on campus and in the community.

Once you feel that your level of support is high enough to be a majority, start a petition on campus. This will be a way for people to sign on to support a *policy*, rather than just a concept. A large number of signatures will influence campus governance groups, such as student senate, faculty senate, and staff council, as well as key decision-makers. Ideally, the governance groups will vote in favor of your tobacco policy, making it easy for the top tier of administration to say “yes.”