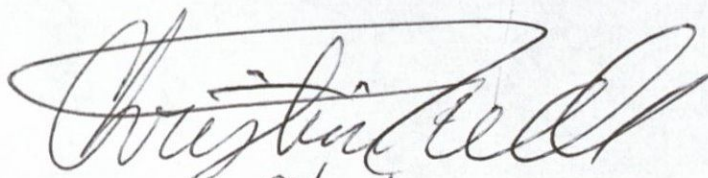


Christina Tuell
Chair Peers Against Tobacco

Faculty Senate Statement - Tobacco Initiative
September 18, 2015

Good afternoon everyone, thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. With the assistance of UT Austin, Net Health and DSHS I started the Peers Against Tobacco group on campus. Judging by the name one might assume the group hates tobacco and tobacco users but the opposite is true. We have one main goal, to be a peer-led initiative to eradicate tobacco use on college campuses across Texas. We're here to help educate fellow students about the dangers of all forms of tobacco use. Tobacco companies have long targeted certain populations, either overtly or covertly. With the TRUTH.org smoking awareness campaign, geared toward youth, smoking in persons under the age 18 significantly decreased but simultaneously there was an increase seen in the 18 - 25 age range. Through many conversations and approvals a grant was awarded to UT Austin to create an initiative geared toward college age students and their campuses. More and more colleges and employers are making their facilities 100% tobacco free. There are many benefits to doing this, for the college it opens up funding opportunities, creates a healthy air space, and a healthier environment. 20% of college casual smokers, the ones that only smoke when they drink or with friends, become smokers by graduation. On campuses where tobacco is not permitted this rate is much lower. Ideally, for me, we would have a comprehensive tobacco policy. It is not realistic to go from 0-60 in a millisecond, I recognize and understand it does take time. The resolution presented by SGA President Free, is a great compromise and realistic approach to this issue. I am confident this is the best starting policy for UT Tyler and leaves the doors open for discussion with the 2-year evaluation. I urge you to begin discussions on this matter if you haven't already, as it is an important issue arriving at campuses across the state. With the resolution presented before you there are realistic enforcement options and opportunities for tobacco cessation for students, faculty, and staff that would like to quit. After receiving my undergraduate degree here and deciding to work on my Masters here I would love to see UT Tyler become the premier school in East Texas, it will only increase the value of current and future students degrees. I believe taking this step to designate smoking areas and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in 2 years is a step toward becoming the premier school and will put us on the same level as the over 1000 schools that have started taking the steps to have a healthier campus.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



9/18/2015