



CONCORD — Rowan-Cabarrus Community College campuses will be tobacco-free, effective Aug. 1.

Its board of trustees unanimously approved a new tobacco-free campus policy at its meeting at the Cabarrus Business and Technology Center on Monday.

As a result, all tobacco products, including cigarettes, pipes and chewing tobacco, will be prohibited.

"We want to encourage people to be tobacco-free," said RCCC President Carol Spalding.

This conversation has been an ongoing one, though, board members said.

"It's not something that was just thought of last week," said Pat Fulcher, trustee and chairwoman of the personnel committee.

In January 2008, the college was awarded a \$45,000 grant from the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund to promote tobacco use prevention and cessation. The college was expected to participate in creating policy advocacy and educational activities, Fulcher said.

Last January, the Student Government Association voted to send the tobacco-free campus resolution to the college administration, encouraging its adoption, Fulcher said.

Spalding assembled Vision 2020, a group of college faculty and staff who reviewed the resolution from the Student Government Association.

Both groups then distributed surveys to students, and Vision 2020 conducted additional research before recommending the policy's approval.

"This has been an ongoing affair," said Elana Miles, Student Government Association president. "A lot of students came in the fall thinking we were (already) tobacco free."

While she said not everyone was in agreement with the policy, most said they were willing to comply. RCCC will be joining about 30 other colleges or universities in the state that have adopted a tobacco-free policy, Fulcher said.

"It's directly the way the world and businesses are headed," Fulcher said. "I don't think it comes as a great surprise."

Spalding said RCCC wanted to take time to adopt the policy to make the campus friendly to all students.

Between now and Aug. 1, Vision 2020 will communicate this policy to students to make sure it is aware and monitor its impact, Fulcher said.

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