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Southern Goes Smoke-Free: A Multi-Component Campaign to Mobilize the SCSU Community and Build Capacity for Tobacco-Free Policies Within the Connecticut State University System

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Introduction:	<p>Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) is the first public university in the state of Connecticut to implement a tobacco-free policy, effective August 25, 2015.ⁱ This policy prohibits the use of any tobacco product (including lit tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, hookah, and any other device using smoke or vapor) in all facilities and outdoor areas of campus, without exception. We are in the planning stages of launching a multi-component campaign to mobilize the SCSU community and build capacity for tobacco-free policies within the State University System.</p> <p>A key component of this campaign is the recruitment, hiring, and training of anti-tobacco youth leaders on campus, known as Tobacco-Free Ambassadors (TFAs). These peer leaders will design and carry out student-led outreach, education and enforcement activities on campus, with the goal of creating a healthy and positive culture as we transition to a tobacco free campus. In particular, TFAs will hold exciting and innovative student-centered events to combat misconceptions about vaping and e-cigarettes, including social media campaigns, and twice-yearly e-cigarette exchange events.</p>
Statement of Purpose:	<p>We are requesting \$1500 in funding to pay for ten (10) TFAs to complete an evidence-based online training offered through UMass Medical School's Center for Tobacco Treatment Research and Training.ⁱⁱ The "Basic Skills for Working with Smokers" is a self-paced online course that includes modules on the tobacco problem and the public health perspective, exploring barriers to change, talking with smokers about their tobacco use, health consequences of tobacco use, resources for cessation, and how to create an environment supportive of tobacco cessation. The cost to complete this training is \$150 per person.</p>
Overarching Program Goal:	<p>TFAs will design and carry out outreach, education, and demonstrations on campus to inform and support the campus community as the new Tobacco-Free policy is implemented. TFAs will inform students about the Tobacco-Free Policy, and will connect students with appropriate on-campus cessation services. With training, supervision and support from the Program Coordinator (Emily Rosenthal, MPH, MSW, Coordinator of the Wellness Center), students will be empowered to sustain a culture of health and support.</p>



<p>Behavioral Goals & Objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFAs will significantly increase their knowledge of the tobacco problem, the public health perspective, resources and tools for cessation, and how to support their peers who are ready to quit, or who may be resistant or ambivalent to change. • TFAs will become empowered student leaders who will take ownership of student-directed and student-focused outreach, including outreach to residence halls, collaboration with athletic teams, disruptive social events including flash mobs and staged demonstrations, film screenings, and more. • TFAs will benefit from the peer group, and will work together to design and implement programs. TFAs will receive ongoing support and guidance from the Program Director through monthly team meetings/debrief sessions. • TFAs will help to prevent the initiation of tobacco use and will promote quitting among students at Southern. • SCSU students will receive positive messages about health and tobacco use from their peers, delivered in student-centered outreach and events. Students will understand the rationale for a Tobacco-Free Campus, and those who use tobacco will be connected with appropriate cessation services.
<p>Program Design:</p>	<p>TFAs will implement approximately 50 events per academic year, including outreach to classes, clubs, residence halls, greek life, athletic teams, participation in special events, and special campus-wide events including bi-annual e-cigarette exchange events and “Quit to Win” contests.</p>
<p>Evaluation:</p>	<p>TFAs will complete a pre-intervention survey assessing their knowledge of tobacco, the scope of the problem, resources for cessation, and how to work with smokers. Following the online training, they will complete a post-test assessment. TFAs will be required to keep records of every event they participate in or hold, gathering information on the number of students reached, number of e-cigarettes exchanged, and number of referrals made to on-campus cessation services.</p> <p>Longer-term evaluation will examine rates of tobacco use among students, and will hopefully demonstrate a decline in both the rates of everyday and casual smokers.</p>
<p>Please describe how the institution will sustain the project after the grant:</p>	<p>SCSU is in the process of applying for state funding from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board to carry out a comprehensive campaign over the next two years as the Tobacco-Free Policy is implemented and embedded in campus culture. This funding would be available December 1, 2015. If awarded the grant, the contract would cover training costs of future TFAs, supplies, materials and food for training and outreach, as well as a \$500 stipend for each student worker. Funding would also cover our efforts to partner with the three other state universities to support their efforts to create tobacco-free policies and student-friendly cessation services.</p>



<p>Discuss how other campuses could replicate program/instrument:</p>	<p>As other campuses follow the national trend and adopt tobacco-free policies, student-led outreach and advocacy will be critical for successful implementation and culture change. Student buy-in and strong peer support will play a central role in the social norms change that we hope to see over the next two years on our campus, and our experience as the first public university in the state will be valuable to other institutions. If awarded this funding, SCSU staff and TFAs will share our work plan, successes and challenges with partner sites in the CT State University system, as well as other college campuses through the CT Healthy Campus Initiative, presentations at meetings, and both regional and national conferences.</p>
<p>Relevance to College Health:</p>	<p>While traditional tobacco use (cigarettes and other lit tobacco products) declines on college campuses, there is a national rise of e-cigarette usage, and significant misconceptions about the so-called health benefits of smokeless tobacco.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2014, 5.9% of SCSU undergraduate students reporting smoking a cigarette “every day” over the past 30 days. However, 25% of surveyed undergraduate students reported at least “casual” smoking over the past month.^{iv} As part of this project, we intend to gather more information on the prevalence of e-cigarette use on Southern’s campus.</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p>Please see endnotes below.</p>

ⁱ <http://www.southernct.edu/tobaccofree/index.html>

ⁱⁱ http://www.umassmed.edu/tobacco/training/basicskills_online/

ⁱⁱⁱ E-cigarette use triples among middle and high school students in just one year. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0416-e-cigarette-use.html>

^{iv} SCSU Custom Survey and CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey. Spring 2014. Undergraduate students were randomly selected from the entire population of undergraduate students on campus. Surveys were administered during class sessions