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## UW-Stout to hold student vote on campus smoking ban

By Chuck Rupnow  
Leader-Telegram staff

MENOMONIE - UW-Stout students will vote electronically Wednesday on a proposal to eliminate smoking on campus, possibly as early as next fall.

The vote is only one of several factors school officials will use in determining if smoking will be prohibited on campus grounds. It already is prohibited in buildings.

Chancellor Charles Sorensen said there is no precise deadline for making a determination.

"I want it thoroughly discussed on campus, and if we say yes then there would be six months or so to thoroughly prepare the campus," he said. "I expect that we will make a decision by early fall.

"As for the smoking issue, we are weighing the pros and cons of this, and I am interested about the student referendum, although it is not the only factor," Sorensen said. "We are and will finally make a decision on what is best for campus and the long-term health of those on the campus."

Stout currently bans smoking within 25 feet of any building entrance or exit.

Freshmen Tim Oakes and Dan Churchill said last week that they expect UW-Stout to someday be a smoke-free campus.

"It's the thing to do now, to be smoke-free," said Churchill, of Woodbury, Minn. "It's a trend thing. It'll happen here too.

"I agree that it's not a good thing in the dorms and rooms, but we're already supposed to be 25 feet away from buildings," he said. "I'm still going to smoke; it's just a matter of where."

Oakes, of Brookfield, glancing at a large number of cigarette butts on the ground outside a dorm, doesn't like the littering caused by smoking but also doesn't appreciate being chastised by nonsmokers.

"I don't think it's going to matter much what the vote is. A lot of kids aren't going to vote anyway," Oakes said. "If kids want to smoke they will, but I hear the workers complaining about (the possible ban) as well."

Michael Lubke, president of the Stout Student Association, earlier said the organization put the question up for referendum



Tim Oakes, left, of Brookfield and Dan Churchill of Woodbury, Minn., smoked recently outside a UW-Stout dorm. Students will vote in a nonbinding referendum Wednesday on whether they prefer UW-Stout to be a totally nonsmoking campus.

Staff photo by Chuck Rupnow

### No Smoking on Campus

The Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation reports at least 260 colleges and universities nationwide have totally smoke-free campuses, not including campuses that designate certain areas smoke-free.

In Wisconsin they are Chippewa Valley Technical College, based in Eau Claire; Alverno College in Milwaukee; Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee; Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhinelander; UW-Baraboo/Sauk County in Baraboo; UW-Platteville; and Western Technical College in La Crosse.

because of the trend toward campus smoking bans.

Dean Sankey, director of safety and risk management at UW-Stout, said he's heard more concerns about the possible campuswide smoking ban from employees than students.

"People should have the right, if they choose, to clean air, which is why the smoking restrictions have increased over the years," he said. "There are tons of facts about the impact of smoking and secondhand smoke."

UW-Stout doesn't have a penalty for violating the 25-foot smoking rule, and Sankey believes some enforcement might help if a campus ban is established.

"A smoking ban on other campuses has been shown to be effective, but it's a learning curve," Sankey said. "It takes time, but I think over time it will happen on all campuses."

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