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Beginning January 1, 2019, Cuesta College will officially become a smoke and tobacco-free District. The college's Tobacco-Free Task Force is now beginning to educate the college community about the new Smoking and Tobacco Use District policy.

*"Tobacco use – of all types – is bad for the user, those around them, and our environment; banning smoking at Cuesta College aligns with the college's goal to promote the health and wellbeing of our students, faculty, and staff," said Cuesta College Nutrition Instructor and task force member Cherie Moore.*

Currently, smoking is permitted in designated areas of the San Luis Obispo and North County campuses.

The process to become tobacco-free began in 2016 when Cuesta College was awarded a \$7,500 Tobacco-Free Campus Grant funded by [Truth Initiative®](#), America's largest non-profit health organization dedicated to eliminating the use of tobacco. The Tobacco-Free Task Force – comprised of faculty, staff, and students – was launched and began researching and discussing best practices and potential policies.

"After talking to our students, staff and faculty, we developed a policy that will restrict smoking any sort of tobacco product on all District property and locations where the District provides services," said Moore. "The official policy was approved by the college's Board of Trustees in December of 2017, allowing us to transform the college into a healthier learning and working environment for all who step foot onto campus."

In addition, the 2018 College and University Smoke/Tobacco-Free Report Card was recently released, and Cuesta College received an A+ grade. The report found that while all of California's public four-year universities are 100% smoke and tobacco-free, less than half (46%) of California's community colleges are.

In an effort to begin educating the college community about the new policy, the San Luis Obispo Campus will hold a "Pick Up The Butts" event on April 25 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

"In honor of Earth Day and the upcoming policy change, Cuesta will be having a cigarette butt clean up," said Cuesta College Health Education Instructor and task force member Michelle Zulim-Clark. "There will also be a booth with resources, information, activities, and prizes. We want to create policy awareness and involve our entire campus community."

The college has also partnered with the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department to offer a free six-week smoking cessation course beginning April 11. The course will occur every Wednesday through May 6, and take place on the San Luis Obispo Campus in [room 2758](#) from 12:00 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. The public is encouraged to register for the course by sending an email to [tobaccofree@cuesta.edu](mailto:tobaccofree@cuesta.edu), but is welcome to walk-in as well.

The task force is planning more events to help educate both campuses on the new policy and provide smoking cessation resources leading up to the January 1, 2019, launch date. For more