**Residence Life**
Assessment of the smoking policy for University Villages apartments

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**ABSTRACT**
University Villages (UV) provides comfortable and competitively-priced off-campus housing primarily designated for UM students with dependent children. Residence Life administered two brief surveys in May and October 2007 to solicit feedback from residents about UV’s smoking policy. Residence Life took on this assessment to address several different concerns, including the health concerns of residents regarding the impact of secondhand smoke, especially on small children; nonsmokers’ complaints about smoke in their apartments; and Residence Life’s own concerns regarding the cleanliness of apartments. Because all other campus housing operates under a no-smoking policy, Residence Life conducted the survey as the first step toward instituting a similar policy in UV.

**BACKGROUND**
The dormitories and apartments at Lewis and Clark Village, an off-campus residence primarily designated for single students without dependents, are nonsmoking. In contrast, at the time of this assessment, Residence Life’s smoking policy for UV allowed residents to smoke inside their apartments. However, a number of nonsmoking residents each year had voiced their concerns regarding secondhand smoke and complained that they could smell smoke inside their apartments.

Although Residence Life had attempted to distribute air purifiers to nonsmokers, this had not resolved the smoking issue entirely as the unit could not afford to give every apartment an air purifier.

**ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**
The Community Assistants (CAs) went door-to-door in their specific residence areas and asked residents to fill out the brief survey, knocking on 574 doors in both May and October. CAs asked the resident to complete the survey right at that time so Residence Life would be more successful with getting information back from tenants. The CAs had approximately two weeks to go door-to-door and return as many surveys as possible from their areas.

**FINDINGS**
The May survey yielded 335 total responses, with 263 respondents indicating that they did not smoke. The October survey yielded 264 responses, with 198 respondents indicating that they did not smoke. The following charts indicate the percentages of smokers and nonsmokers in each respondent group.

**Survey Results**
May 2007
- Nonsmokers 76%
- Smokers 24%

**Survey Results**
October 2007
- Nonsmokers 75%
- Smokers 25%

In addition to asking whether respondents smoke, the survey asked respondents the following questions regarding smoking habits:
- If you do smoke, do you smoke in your apartment?
- Would you consider smoking 25 feet away from your apartment?
If you do not smoke, have you ever been impacted in your apartment by others smoking near you?

The second survey may have generated responses from new residents as well as residents who had lived in UV the previous spring, and were therefore responding to the survey for the second time. The surveys revealed that many smokers recognize that smoking is not a healthy habit and are willing to smoke outside so it does not impact others around them. In both cases, the majority of smokers stated that they did not have to smoke in their apartment (74%), and that they would be open to smoking twenty five feet away from their apartment (71%).

RECOMMENDATIONS
Residence Life presented information from these two surveys to the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) in April 2008; ASUM subsequently approved the decision to make all Residence Life apartments nonsmoking as of July 1, 2008. Although Residence Life finds enforcing the general campus policy of prohibiting smoking at least 25 feet away from buildings to be a challenge, the unit plans to be creative to make this policy work for the UM community. Plans include placing smoker outposts at designated areas that adhere to the new policy, as well as possibly providing covered smoking shelters.