



The Bark | November 7, 2022

The VPSL Column: Special Guest Edition



Guest columnist: Michelle Callahan, *Director of Health Promotion & Wellness*

Hello, Friends,

My name is Michelle Callahan, and I am your new director of health promotion and wellness (HPW). For those who may not have heard of us before, HPW staff help to promote healthy decision-making, health literacy, and skills development to provide support when students face health-related challenges. We also offer resources, education, and prevention programs that typically concern L&C students. Finally, I also oversee programs such as the Confidential Advocates, Sexual Health and Consent, Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Service (SAPES), and bluLights for seasonal depression, free of charge to students.

For November, our office is focusing on tobacco cessation to bring awareness to the benefits of quitting smoking, vaping, or tobacco use. It is important to note that tobacco use or smoking tobacco varies based on people's cultural and spiritual backgrounds. However, it is apparent that commercial tobacco use (e.g., using tobacco products containing a combination of harmful and addictive chemicals made and sold by companies) is a global social equity issue.

Across the globe, tobacco use is [the cause of more than 7 million deaths](#) per year. Specifically in the U.S., nearly [a half of a million deaths](#) are linked to cigarette smoking. Over the past several decades, public health policies, messages, and interventions supporting quitting have helped to decrease smoking and tobacco use rates. At the same time, companies behind commercial tobacco production continue to [strategically target folks from vulnerable communities in the U.S. and across the](#)

[globe](#). Some of these communities include adolescents and young adults; Black, Native American, and Latine communities; low-income communities; and LGBTQ+ communities. We are not powerless against these companies. We all can continue to learn about this topic and to critically and conscientiously advocate for policies that help folks live their healthiest lives while respecting their traditional or spiritual reasons for smoking or using tobacco.

Therefore, starting last week and running until Nov. 17 (or until our prizes are all gone), our office has put together our "Butts Out Scavenger Hunt." This is an educational scavenger hunt for students to learn more about the impacts of smoking, vaping, and tobacco use. Students can play along by finding the nine educational placards across the CAS, Grad, and Law campuses. Once you find a placard, read the information, scan the QR code, and answer the accompanying questions.

The first six folks that find all nine placards will receive one of our prizes:

1st–3rd Places: Grand Prize (check out our Instagram for pictures of these prizes @lclark_wellness!)

4th–6th Places: HPW Goodie Bag

If you decide to play along, please note:

All placards are in common/accessible places. Do not disturb any classes, instruction, meetings, or events that are going on. Be quiet and respectful of the spaces around the placards.

If you would like to talk more about changing your behavior around your tobacco or vaping use or for any other reason to help improve your health and wellness, you can reach out to me at mcallahan@lclark.edu.

Until next time, folks!

Michelle C.