Residence-hall smoking ignites smoldering tension

By Nicole Southern

The time has come for residents to decide whether smoking should be allowed in the residence halls. A survey was sent through e-mail on Wednesday, April 13, to determine students’ feelings on the subject.

According to Area Director Jamiey Mosley, smoking in the residence halls was always an issue, but had not been as controversial as it has become.

“This is the first time, in recent years, that the question has been posed to the Rider community,” he said.

The results of the survey will be an important step for Rider, said Mosley.

“This will set Rider up for future years and show what direction the University is going,” he said.

According to Mosley, legal attempts to stop smoking in public places have been made and if a law is passed, smoking in the residence halls will have to be banned.

“There is a pending legislation that might make a state law against smoking in all public places,” said Mosley. “The legislation supersedes our vote.”

The campus is split on making the residence halls smoke-free and some residents have a lot to say about the subject.

Freshman Mike Scuilli feels strongly that people shouldn’t smoke in the residence halls.

“They say that we can’t have microwaves because it’s a fire hazard, yet they allow smoking in the dorms,” he said.

According to Scuilli, the rule that smoking is allowed in the rooms if both roommates agree should be re-evaluated.

“It isn’t just the roommate it effects,” he said. “Everyone in the hall can smell it.”

Scuilli also said the issue of smoking can be hazardous to the development of the relationship between roommates.

“It puts people in an awkward position that first day of school,” said Scuilli. “You don’t even know your roommate and you have to tell him he isn’t allowed to smoke in the places he lives.”

Sophomore Adil Murad also feels that smoking should not be allowed in the residence halls because it shows great insensitivity to others, he said.

“Smoking in the residence halls is just inconsiderate and selfish,” said Murad.

Sophomore Ashlee Belovin also has a strong opinion on the issue, but she supports smoking in the halls.

“I feel that we pay enough to live here and we should be able to smoke in the residence halls if we want to,” she said.

Belovin is also concerned about where smokers would go when the weather gets harsh.

“Rider should provide some kind of common area for smokers if we can’t smoke in our rooms,” she said.

A ban in the residence halls would inconvenience smokers, Belovin said.

“It’s more convenient to sit where I am and have my cigarette than to go where Rider tells me to,” she said.

There are even smokers and nonsmokers on-campus who support the opinion of the other side.

Graduate student Jason Kwon, a regular smoker, feels that smoking indoors should not be allowed.

“I am against smoking in the residence halls because I don’t like the smell that it leaves,” he said.

According to Mosley, the main focus is on the new residence hall currently under construction, although the other residence halls may be affected.

“Whether or not the other residence halls will become smoke-free will depend on the opinion of residents,” he said.

The University wants to see which direction students wish to take, according to Mosley.

“I would say that more students on campus are against smoking in the residence halls,” said Mosley. “But, the results could go either way, depending on who responds.”

Because of this, Mosley feels that all students should make themselves heard. If more students who are for it respond and those who are not let it slide, things could go in the other direction, he said.

“All students should voice their opinion,” said Mosley. “No matter what it is.”

According to Mosley, the Rider community should be informed of the decision some time over the summer.

“If the policy changes, students will be notified,” said Mosley. “We don’t want to infringe on the rights of smokers or nonsmokers.”