USL Faculty Senate approves smoking ban in academic buildings

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LAFAYETTE — A ban on smoking in all academic buildings, except professors' offices and lounges, was approved Wednesday by the University of Southwestern Louisiana Faculty Senate.

Richard Hunt, USL Student Government Association president, told the senate that the SGA recently approved the smoking ban. He said he has talked to only one student who opposed the measure.

The smoking prohibition now must go before the University Council and President Ray Authement. Hunt said Authement promised that he would give his approval to the ban if the Faculty Senate agreed.

Smoking is not permitted in classrooms, but is allowed in hallways.

The ban would not include the student union, Hunt said.

Faculty members questioned how the ban would be enforced after it becomes effective March 1. Hunt replied that signs would be installed to inform students of the new rule. Also, he said, peer pressure would be the overriding means of compliance.

Assistant professor Judith Goodstone doubted that older students who attend night classes would be willing to comply. She said the bathrooms might become “blue-haze dens of covert smoking.”

Professor John Vigorito contended that the suspected dangers of secondary smoke have been exaggerated by a “mentality of demagogues.” He said no one is opposing loud music played by students.

In another matter, the senate was briefed by Edward Pratt, dean of student services, on the issue of campus security.

Pratt said three Orientals were attacked on campus last month in separate incidents at night. No arrests have been made, but authorities believe they have contacted one or two individuals who were involved in the attacks, Pratt said.

“We do know we did hit some nerves,” he said.

It's believed that mostly juveniles were involved in some type of gang that required attacking people as a rite of passage, according to Pratt.

And it seems that it may have been coincidence that the three victims were all Oriental, he said.

Nevertheless, Oriental students and faculty members are being warned about walking alone on campus after dark, he said.