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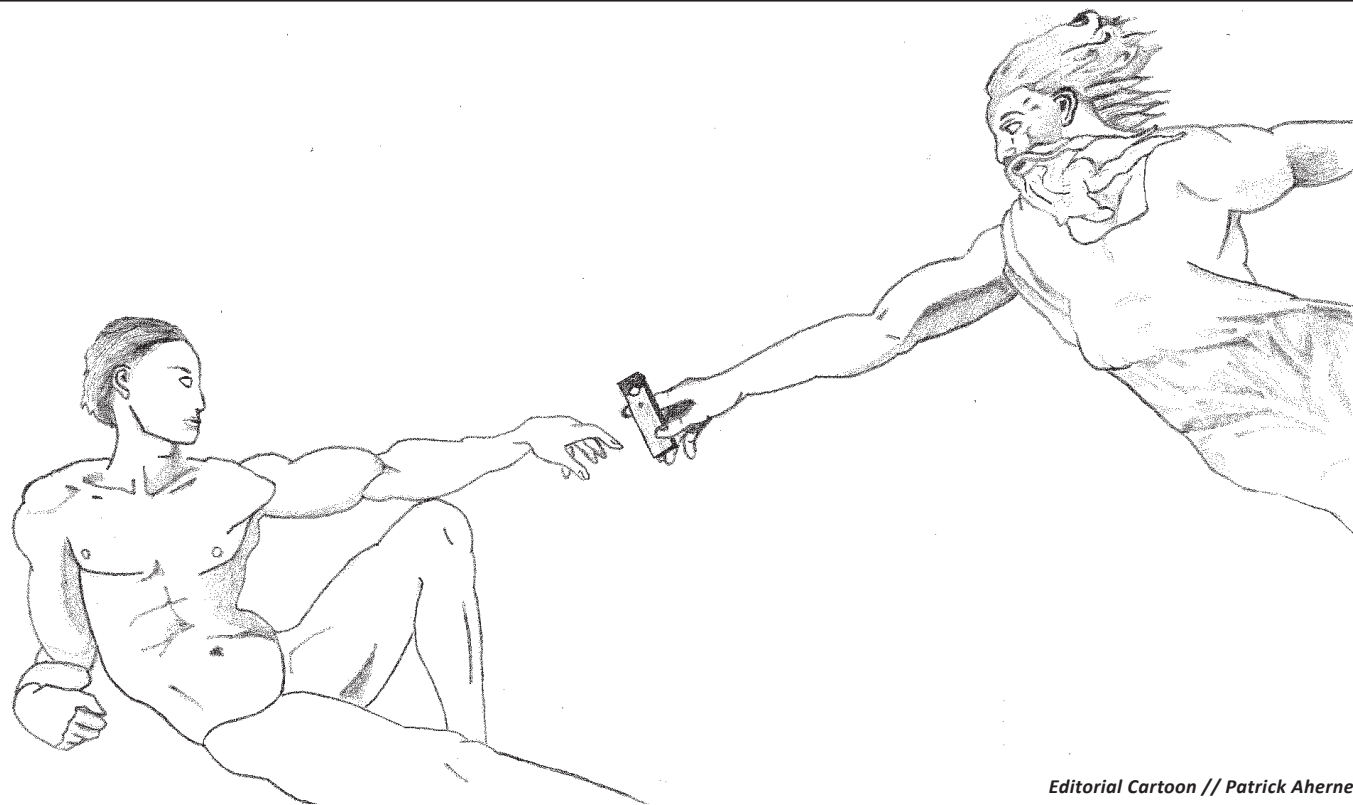
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Editorial Cartoon // Patrick Aherne

The danger with JUULs

After cigarettes fell out of favor with high school students, vapes and e-cigarettes took their place. Now even those are being overshadowed by JUULs. The devices look like flash drives but still deliver the same amount of nicotine in one pod as an entire pack of cigarettes.

Some students may think they're doing less damage to their bodies or are less likely to get caught when smoking one of the tiny devices.

But the rules are still clear, and the damage is still there.

Charleston County School District policy outlines a one-day suspension for anyone found in possession of tobacco products -- which includes JUULs. The administration is doing its part, actively trying to stop JUULing on campus by doing routine bathroom sweeps, monitoring parking lots and class exchanges.

As of now, use of tobacco products are the third most common referral on campus.

New studies have shown that the use of JUULs by high school students has grown, and Center of Disease Control statistics now show that 16 percent of high school teens tried e-cigs in 2015, compared to the 1.5 percent of high school teens tried e-cigs in 2011, according to LiveScience.

While some think JUULs are not dangerous, many scientists agree.

"While JUULs are a relatively new drug, they have still been found to have damaging effects on the human body. The drug is a cardiovascular stimulant and can potentially worsen heart disease in people who already have severe heart conditions," said Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine and the director of the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco.

"Studies have also shown that kids who use e-cigarettes have more respiratory problems and take more days off from school," Glantz told LiveScience.

"Researchers are showing more evidence that nicotine is damaging to a young person's still-developing body system. E-cigs and other chemicals have been shown to negatively affect health. The vapors emitted and inhaled from JUULs have shown to deliver small enough particles to reach deep into the lungs, and that they're not the "harmless water vapor" that marketers claim them to be," Glantz added.

So what do we do?

There are multiple ways we can go about to fix the JUULing problem. One way is through educating people about the negative health effects of JUULing. Outlining the damage the high level of nicotine can do to the human brain would help people who are on the fence about trying JUULs turn them down.

Another effective measure would be to create more severe consequences for those

students caught with JUULs. Charging a fine or warranting arrest would certainly catch students' attention. High school students will only respond to discipline if they consider it to be a real threat. Many students don't fear referrals or even suspensions, but put a Mount Pleasant police officer in front of them and they would certainly pay attention. Maybe it's time for the state legislature to look at making this illegal as well.

The JUUL problem highlights a larger problem with younger people in general; the commitment to break the rules. JUULs are less dangerous than cigarettes but are still illegal for minors. It is evident that the reason many young people engage in JUULing, vaping, and drugs is not so much that they enjoy being high, but that they enjoy breaking rules. Teenagers have always been rebellious and that

it's to be expected, but far too often in society we make excuses based on

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age. The stories many parents and relatives tell about "the craziest thing I did in high school" create an excuse for the youth of today to break laws and do detrimental things.

It's not to say that if an individual does something stupid in high school that their lives should be ruined because good people do stupid things. However, we need to stop making excuses for unlawful behavior; it doesn't have to be a right of passage to break the law in high school.