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# Pot-smoking U of T prof lights up a room

Given his own space in basement

Needs to smoke for health reasons

PHINJO GOMBU  
STAFF REPORTER

For years, University of Toronto Professor Doug Hutchinson smoked pot in his office.

Sometimes he'd hide behind garbage dumpsters or even climb trees to use the drug, which he said he needs to alleviate the pain from an undisclosed medical condition.

Now he's out of the closet and in the basement of the university's Trinity College, where he can finally smoke in peace and without recrimination — all with the blessing of U of T.

"It's a beautiful solution," Hutchinson said yesterday, at

the end of a messy year-long battle with college officials.

It's also rekindled in him the fire to fight what he calls complicated and often-contradictory laws governing the use of marijuana in Canada by those who use it both medically and recreationally.

"I'm feeling lighter," said Hutchinson, 50, who teaches ancient Greek philosophy and specializes in the works of Plato. "It was burdensome being in the closet."

On any given day, between classes and students, he smoked up to 10 joints a day, or roughly an ounce of marijuana a week.

But Hutchinson got busted late last year after someone complained about the smell coming from his second-floor office, which overlooks the quadrangle of Trinity College.

"The first reaction (from college officials) was this has to

stop, and I said, 'No, this doesn't have to stop,'" he said.

"They tried to get me to admit to past offences and swear never to offend again," he said.

That's when, Hutchinson said, the ugliness began with cease-and-desist orders — both in writing and orally — that carried insinuations about his criminal

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Margaret MacMillan, Trinity College

behaviour and moral judgments about the fact that he smoked in front of his two children.

Trinity College provost Margaret MacMillan described the situation to give him his own room as "a necessary decision."

"We have to accommodate people with disabilities and rec-

ognize medical needs," she said, adding that once it became clear Hutchinson had clearance from Health Canada, it was simply a question of finding a suitable space.

"There was clearly discussion about this," she said. "We had to understand what those needs were."

Hutchinson said part of the reason for hiding his pot smoking was that it was only early this year that Health Canada, which was operating under new guidelines to allow marijuana for medical use, finally gave him the green light.

He said a doctor had monitored his use until then, even though he wasn't "officially" allowed to use pot.

Hutchinson believes the college came down on him in part because, after years of turning a

blind eye to pot smoking, a student was expelled last year.

The professor fought back, aided by a U of T procedure that allowed a neutral office to review special dispensation for medical conditions.

It took months, but with his new card from Health Canada that allows him to smoke, the only issue was where.

Officials tried to move him to a new office, but he wouldn't leave the room where he's worked for almost 20 years.

Ironically, the room where he now smokes, which has its own ventilation system, is beside another room where, in years past, officials allowed students to smoke marijuana, he said.

Hutchinson said the whole process has "rekindled his activism on the marijuana front" to mount legal challenges for the rights of others who want to use the drug.