

## PERIOD at UC Davis -- Pilot Program for Menstrual Hygiene Products in Campus Bathrooms

### **Proposal**

Menstrual hygiene products ought to be provided for all menstruating individuals in the academic, residential, and student center buildings at UC Davis. Menstruation is a natural bodily function that affects over half of the campus population every month. Periods are not a choice, shame, or luxury, and menstrual health is a topic that is too often stigmatized and ignored. Menstrual hygiene products are a basic hygiene necessity that ought to be made available like toilet paper, paper towels, and soap.

### **Background**

Access to menstrual hygiene products is a matter of equity. The average menstruating person's period lasts for 3 to 7 days every month. That means there are at least 17,422 undergraduate students alone, bleeding for 144 to 336 days of their 4 years at UC Davis, if not more [6]. Lack of access to menstrual health resources reduces a menstruating individual's educational attainment and productivity. Furthermore, the cost of menstrual products disproportionately affects women and trans folk from low-income backgrounds. Homeless menstruating people in the United States often struggle to maintain basic hygiene during their period [4]. With rising costs of housing and tuition, 23% of the students in the UC system facing Low Food Security, and another 19% of students in the UC system facing Very Low Food Security, a student should not have to decide between purchasing a pad or tampon and buying a meal [5].

In January 2018, a survey was released over social media asking for UC Davis student input on the provision of free menstrual hygiene products in campus bathrooms. A total of 195 students from the undergraduate and graduate programs, and even one prospective high school student, affirmed the need to provide such products. The students shared experiences of leaving class early or missing lectures and discussions entirely, financially struggling, and overall being unable to fully engage in their learning opportunities due to lack of menstrual health resources. Providing these necessities is essential to improving the educational experience of many students by allowing them to focus on their educational, extracurricular, and career goals.

## **History**

In September 2016, the Undergraduate Council of Students at Brown University took on the responsibility of stocking all the bathrooms in academic buildings across campus with menstrual products and replenishing on a weekly basis, with the hope that the university would institutionalize the program [1]. Previous initiatives to provide menstrual products in other schools have been met with great success. On July 13, 2016 the city of New York passed legislation (Intros 1122-A, 1123-A and 1128-A) guaranteeing free access to menstrual hygiene products in all its public schools, correctional facilities, and shelters [2]. In addition, providing menstrual products for free has also proved to be a cost-effective measure when compared to coin-based dispensers as it eliminates administrative and accounting costs. For example, the University of Iowa saves nearly \$30,000 per year by providing pads and tampons for free [3].

In line with schools, cities, and countries worldwide that have taken progressive steps to ensure menstrual equity, the University of California at Davis has the unique opportunity to serve as a leader in Menstrual Hygiene Management by becoming one of the first universities in the UC system and the United States to permanently provide universal access to menstrual hygiene products in all campus buildings. This initiative would demonstrate UC Davis's commitment to public health, class and gender equity, and education.

## **Goal**

The ultimate goal is to provide free menstrual products – specifically pads and tampons – in restrooms of all buildings for all menstruating individuals. Since many transgender people menstruate, this program will provide products in Women's and Gender Neutral restrooms where available. In the long run, we strive to advocate for installation of proper disposal bins and provide products in Men's restrooms as well.

The purpose of this small-scale pilot program is to begin providing these necessary products in campus bathrooms and to collect data on the reception of their provision. This data will be applied to future large-scale and permanent menstrual hygiene provisions in bathrooms campuswide.

The pilot program will provide free menstrual hygiene products beginning on April 29, 2018 and ending on June 14, 2018 in 6 campus buildings including Kemper Hall, Olson Hall, Science Lecture Hall, Shields Library, Student Community Center, and Wellman Hall. We will survey students throughout the program, using a Qualtrics survey, asking what they feel their needs are and in what ways the pilot program addressed or did not address these needs. The PERIOD club has received approval from Custodial Services and Shields Library to place the products in the bathrooms. Student volunteers will be recruited to maintain and monitor the usage and reception of the products during the pilot program.

### **Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability is core to the character of the UC Davis campus and community and a vital factor in deciding what products to provide. In line with the campus objective for zero-waste, we want to minimize waste generation in our program. That is why we are partnering with Aunt Flow, a women-founded company that supplies fully biodegradable 100% organic cotton pads and non-applicator tampons, delivered in minimal packaging. A Life Cycle Assessment study [7] conducted by the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm showed that the majority of the ecological impact of menstrual hygiene products come from the processing of LDPE – low density polyethylene, the plastic used in traditional tampon applicators and some of the backing strips on pads. Non-applicator tampons reduce this impact, but are currently not as popular on the market. Not only will our pilot program serve a constant student need, but it will give students access to more environmentally sustainable options for managing their periods.

### **Implementation**

Since this will be a small-scale pilot program, each menstruator will most likely use their own menstrual hygiene products for the majority of their period, and will use the products in the restrooms for emergencies. Therefore, we approximate that menstruating students will use pads and tampons provided in the bathrooms 2 to 3 times per period.

During the Winter 2018 Quarter, the Student Health and Wellness Center conducted a pilot program providing menstrual hygiene products in the bathrooms on the first floor of their building. They found that approximately 1000 tampons and 300 pads were used in the course of 8 weeks, which translates to 125 tampons and 37.5 pads per week. This data seems to indicate a strong preference of tampons over pads. However, a 2004 survey of 739 women conducted by the Center for Disease Control found that 62% of women say they use pads while 42% say they use tampons [8] (these numbers also include those who use both, the study did not specify the percentage who only used one product). A 2015 study by Euromonitor [9], In addition, calculations based on data from the United Nations and the Simmons National Consumer Survey [10] indicate that 25.35% of women in the US say they used tampons in 2017, while 71.68% of women said they did not (this may include a variety of other options, such pads, menstrual cups, reusable underwear).

Since the preference of pads or tampons amongst the UC Davis campus population is unclear, we will supply an even, fifty-fifty distribution of pads and tampons, track the usage, and use the resulting data to perceive preference and supply accordingly in the future. In addition, we will account for the higher traffic in the pilot program buildings compared to the Student Health and Wellness Center.

As such, we will stock approximately 140 tampons and 140 pads per week in each multi-stalled bathroom, and 70 tampons and 70 pads in single stall bathrooms. This adds up to 840 tampons and 840 pads in each multi-stalled bathroom for the duration of the quarter, and 420 tampons and 420 pads in each single stalled bathroom for the duration for the program. This makes for a total of 6720 tampons and 6720 pads across the 6 buildings for the entire quarter.

To maintain the products in the building, The PERIOD club volunteers will organize shifts to regularly check and restock the products throughout the Spring Quarter of 2018. The products provided for the Shields Library bathrooms will be stored in the Library.

We will place posters above the provided products with text explaining the pilot program, the groups involved, how to contact, and including a link and scannable QR code to a survey where students can provide input. We will place signs in the other bathrooms in the buildings informing students of the floor where they can find products.

## Budget Breakdown

**Estimated Total Cost for Program : \$2542.50**

Length of program: **6 weeks** (Friday 5/4/2018 to Thursday 6/14/2018)

Per Unit Pricing [11]

Cost per Tampon: **\$0.15** Cost per Pad: **\$0.20**

Cost per Container/2 Command Hooks: **\$10**

### Per Bathroom

<u>Multiple Stalled Bathroom</u>	<u>Single Stalled Bathroom</u>
Tampons/Week: 140	Tampons/Week: 70
Tampons/Total Program: 840	Tampons/Total Program: 420
Pads/Week: 140	Pads/Week: 70
Pads/Total Program: 840	Pads/Total Program: 420

### (Estimated Breakdown based on SHCS pilot) Product/Supplies

Product and Supplies (\$2442)					
#	Building, Bathroom	# Tampons (\$0.15)	# Pads (\$0.20)	# Container/ Command Hooks (\$10)	Cost
1	Kemper Hall, Floor 1	840	840	1	\$304
2	Science Lecture Hall	840	840	1	\$304
3	Shields Library, Floor 1	840	840	1	\$304
4	Shields Library, 24 Hour Room	840	840	1	\$304
5	Student Community Center, Floor 1 Women's	840	840	1	\$304
6	SCC, Floor 1 Gender Neutral/Single Stall	420	420	1	\$157
7	SCC, Floor 2 Women's	840	840	1	\$304
8	SCC, Floor 2 Gender Neutral/Single Stall	420	420	1	\$157
9	Wellman Hall, Floor 1	840	840	1	\$304

<b>Publicity and Outreach (\$101.50)</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Price</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Full Sheet Color Poster	9	\$0.50 (Copyland)	\$4.50
Half Sheet Color Poster	360	\$0.25 (Copyland)	\$90
Reusable Page Protectors	9	\$0.77	\$7

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### **Supplies Purchased**

As of 5/1/2018

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Pads	7000	\$1400
Tampon	7000	\$1050
Display Boxes	9	\$90
Command Strips	60	~\$45
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2585</b>

Updated: 5/1/2018

## References

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- [11] Go Aunt Flow + Period, Inc <https://www.goauntflow.com/pages/periodpricing>

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