

Free Menstrual Hygiene Product Proposal

January 28, 2019

Proposal

Menstrual hygiene products should be provided for all menstruating individuals in the gender-neutral bathrooms on 1 and the women's bathrooms on 0, 2, 5, 8, 10, and 12 in the University of Baltimore School of Law Building. Because menstruation is a natural bodily process affecting over half the population, we believe that menstrual hygiene products should be regarded as fundamental necessities to the hygiene of our academic and social environment, as ubiquitous as toilet paper and soap dispensers.

History

Across the county (and the world), initiatives to provide free menstrual products at schools have been met with great success.¹ The products are placed in both women and men's bathrooms to ensure access for everyone who menstruates, not only women but also persons who self-identify as transgender, non-binary, and/or intersex.² Many school administrations have begun to provide free menstrual products, while other students have initiated pilot programs providing free menstrual products.³ Schools providing menstrual hygiene products in academic, residential, or student center buildings, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- University of Minnesota⁴
- University of Nebraska at Lincoln⁵
- Bucknell University⁶
- University of Washington⁷
- Brown University⁸
- University of Pennsylvania⁹
- Cornell University¹⁰

¹ <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2018/9/12/college-installs-menstrual-hygiene-dispensers-houses/> (Harvard provides free products to students); <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/24/scotland-to-offer-free-sanitary-products-to-all-students-in-world-first> (Scotland provides free products to all college and university students).

² <https://dailycaller.com/2017/04/17/university-now-stocking-mens-bathrooms-with-free-tampons/>.

³ <http://www.bu.edu/today/2018/free-tampons-on-campus/> (Boston University);

<https://thetab.com/us/emory/2016/02/09/emory-college-council-petition-free-tampon-dispensers-goes-viral-744>

(Emory); <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/education/article223567575.html> (UC Davis);

<https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/04/02/ycc-to-pilot-free-menstrual-hygiene-product-program/> (Yale University).

⁴ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/22/university-of-minnesota-to-provide-more-menstrual-/>.

⁵ http://www.dailynebraskan.com/news/unl-now-offers-free-tampons-campus-wide/article_ee53fd76-510c-11e5-b489-3bea9466b521.html.

⁶ <https://bucknellian.net/71446/news/free-tampon-movement-takes-university-storm/>.

⁷ <https://facilities.uw.edu/blog/posts/2018/11/08/pilot-program-becomes-permanent>.

⁸ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/09/09/free-tampons-for-all-at-brown-university-this-school-year-even-in-the-mens-room/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0be5d944f683.

⁹ <https://www.thedp.com/article/2019/01/female-hygiene-products-penn-tampons-pads-upenn>.

¹⁰ <https://cornellsun.com/2016/09/27/s-a-free-tampon-referendum-passes-with-overwhelming-support/>.

Reasons

In speaking to fellow University of Baltimore School of Law students about this initiative, many were excited about the possibility and several were willing to share their stories regarding menstruation:

“On more than one occasion, I’ve either unexpectedly gotten my period or bleed through the stash of tampons in my purse. If none of my friends have any products, and because there is nowhere to get any within the school, I will often skip the rest of my classes and head home to get a tampon.”

“I’ve bled through my pads and tampons onto my pants. I’ve had to choose between skipping class to go get tampons/change clothes or bleeding on chairs, which I’ve done before and had to tie a sweatshirt around my waist and come back with paper towels to clean the chair.”

Poor access to menstrual products reduces menstruating individuals’ productivity and educational attainment.¹¹ Sometimes periods come on unexpectedly or are heavier than expected, and individuals are unprepared. A study of menstruators showed that 61% reported having at least one unexpected period.¹² Also, if one is suffering from endometriosis,¹³ menorrhagia,¹⁴ or premenopausal,¹⁵ the flow and length of one’s menses can be heavier and longer.

Currently, there are no machines within the University of Baltimore School of Law building that provide menstrual hygiene products. One of the closest places to obtain menstrual hygiene products is the University Market & Deli. As of January 16, 2019, in the University Market & Deli, the price ranges from \$3.99 for a pack of 10 regular pads to \$6.99 for a pack of 14 overnight pads; additionally, the market charges \$6.99 for a box of 18 lite tampons and \$6.99 for a box of 16 super tampons. Going to the University Market & Deli is not only expensive but can also affect the student negatively mentally and emotionally – the thought of walking several blocks while bleeding to obtain products can be daunting and humiliating. And as one student noted above, if she is going to leave campus to get a tampon, she is more likely to skip class and just head home where she can access her preferred, previously purchased at a much-reduced cost tampons. And while the UB Pantry offers menstrual hygiene products, their hours are very limited, their limited supplies are for “critical food assistance and resources”¹⁶ so no one in the community experiences hunger, and they are not located in the UB Law School.

We believe this proposal provides an exciting opportunity to broaden the law school’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. University of Baltimore School of Law has the unique opportunity to serve as a leader in menstrual hygiene access by becoming one of the first

¹¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/05/25/menstrual-hygiene-management>.

¹² ELISSA STEIN AND SUSAN KIM, FLOW: THE CULTURAL STORY OF MENSTRUATION 189 (2009). Commentators surmise the percentage is actually much higher. ELISSA STEIN AND SUSAN KIM, FLOW: THE CULTURAL STORY OF MENSTRUATION 189 (2009).

¹³ <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/endometriosis>.

¹⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/blooddisorders/women/menorrhagia.html>.

¹⁵ <https://www.womenshealth.gov/menstrual-cycle>.

¹⁶ <http://www.ubalt.edu/campus-life/transitions/be-more/pantry.cfm>.

U.S. law schools to permanently provide free universal menstrual hygiene product access.¹⁷ This initiative will continue to demonstrate, as your administration has already done through the implementation of gender-neutral bathrooms, UB's commitment to public health as well as gender and class equity.

Since our law school is open to the public, it is true that the products would be available for any person who enters the building. We believe, however, that this provides further incentive for this initiative because those persons, such as potential employers for our law students, clinic clients, and law library patrons, would certainly appreciate the good will of the law school in providing these products.

The goal of providing these free products is to make sure our students, staff, and faculty of limited income or experiencing a sudden, unexpected menstrual flow are not precluded from being fully engaged in the community.

Cost

We have done some research into the potential costs for the products and believe the cost would approximately \$58 a month, for less than \$700 a year, with an upfront cost of approximately \$327. *See* UB School of Law Budget Worksheet (attached)¹⁸. We think these funds are probably negligible compared to the cost of toilet paper and also, if appropriate, could be a good use of our student activity funds.

From research on the UB Law School's website, it appears that our community consists of only approximately 662 students,¹⁹ 88 faculty,²⁰ and 34 staff.²¹ And of course, not all of these persons are menstruators. However, we estimated that half of the total students, faculty, and staff are menstruators. We estimated a total of 8 bathrooms (6 of the most heavily-trafficked female restrooms and the two gender-neutral bathrooms on 1). The upfront cost of approximately \$327 is for the purchase of (1) products dispenser per bathroom. All estimates are based on prices available online from wholesalers, so the price through the school's building services department may vary. *See* photo of Sample Dispenser (attached).

And because we see this program serving our community when a period is unexpected or bleeding is stronger than anticipated, we made the assumption (suggested by HOSPECO, the leader in personal care products for public restrooms²²) that each individual would use one menstrual hygiene product per month.

¹⁷ http://archive.boston.com/news/politics/2008/articles/2009/01/04/shes_thawed_harvard_law/ (United States Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan ensured that free tampons were offered to women at Harvard Law School when she was dean more than a decade ago, and we are unable to identify any other law school that provides free menstrual hygiene products to its students).

¹⁸ Editable Budget Worksheet can be located here: <https://hospeco.com/PeriodPartner/#/startMovement>.

¹⁹ http://law.ubalt.edu/about/pdfs/Standard_509_2017.pdf (as of October 5, 2017).

²⁰ http://law.ubalt.edu/about/pdfs/Standard_509_2017.pdf (as of October 5, 2017).

²¹ <http://law.ubalt.edu/about/administration/index.cfm>; <http://law.ubalt.edu/library/information/staff/index.cfm>; <http://law.ubalt.edu/faculty/profiles/anderson.cfm>;

²² <https://www.hospeco.com/>.

Since our law school is open to the public, it is true that the products would be available for any person who enters the building. We believe, however, that this provides further incentive for this initiative because those persons, such as potential employers for our law students, clinic clients, and law library patrons, would certainly appreciate the good will of the law school in providing these products.

We understand that providing products free of charge would not be free to the law school. While there is a cost for provision of such products, the cost is marginal given the increased access and dignity it provides to law students, staff, faculty, and other members of our community. Moreover, by providing tampons and pads free of charge, the law school provides equity to menstruators because non-menstruators already have their full sanitary needs met with the school's provision of free toilet paper, paper towels, and soap.

Education

If the law school agrees to fund this initiative, this group would welcome the opportunity to hold a panel to educate our community about menstrual health and issues of menstrual justice. Additionally, we would be willing to create flyers for the bathrooms to explain the presence of the products and provide useful information on menstrual health and issues of menstrual justice. *See Sample Sign (attached).*

Additionally, as you know, the Campus Pantry provides critical food assistance resources to our UB Community. We would conduct periodic product drives to donate menstrual hygiene products to the UB Campus Pantry located in the UB Student Center.²³

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Student Organization Support:

[redacted]

Faculty Support:

²³ If this proposal is successful, we would certainly support this initiative across the rest of the UB campus.

[redacted]

| UB School of Law Budget Worksheet | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | | | Total Restrooms | 8 |
| | | | | | Total Individuals | 392 |
| Initial Investment | | | | | | |
| | | Selling | | | | |
| | Unit Qty | Quote (ea) | Total Qty | Budget | | |
| DISPENSERS (Restrooms) | | | | | | |
| Necessites Courtesy Dispenser | 1 | \$ 40.80 | 8 | \$ | 326.40 | |
| Total Initial Investment | | | | | \$ | 326.40 |
| Monthly Supplies | | | | # cases (Monthly Case Qty) | | |
| | Monthly Qty | | Monthly Qty | Case Qty | Estimate | |
| Sanitary Napkins, 250/cs | 250 | \$ 44.00 | 196 | 0.784 | \$ 34.50 | |
| Tampons, 500/cs | 500 | \$ 60.00 | 196 | 0.392 | \$ 23.52 | |
| Monthly Supply Estimate | | | | | \$ | 58.02 |

Estimate is good for 30 days.

Assumptions for Monthly Supply Calculations:

- (8) restrooms (female bathroom on floors 0, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12 and the two gender-neutral bathrooms on 1) and half of the total number of students, faculty, and staff.
- All prices listed under "Quote (ea)" are based on prices available online from wholesalers. Price through school's building services department may vary.
- (1) menstrual hygiene product per month per individual, 50% pads/50% tampons.

Sample Dispenser



Sample Sign

BUILDING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON
Custodial Services and UW Recycling



These **free** menstrual products are provided by UW Building Services Dept.

Please only take what is needed in order to sustain this service. Thank you!

HAVE FEEDBACK OR QUESTIONS?

Contact the Facilities Services Customer Care Team:
careteam@uw.edu or **206-685-1900**