



Boston College
UGBC Student Senate
Tiffany Brooks '21, Executive Vice President

**A Resolution Concerning the Provision of Free Menstrual Products in High-Traffic
Women's and Gender-Inclusive Restrooms**

Sponsors:

Sen. Mengru Crystal Pu, LSOE '20
President pro-tempore

Cosponsors:

Sen. Laura Perrault, MCAS '21
Chair of Intersectional Experience Committee

Sen. Kevork Atinizian MCAS '22

Sen. Kat Kmetz, MCAS '23

Sen. Dennis Wieboldt MCAS '23

LEGAL PREAMBLE

Whereas: Article 4, Section 2, Sub Point B of the UGBC Constitution states that “The Student Assembly shall be the final authority on all matters of policy, which concern the UGBC.”

Whereas: Article 4, Section 2, Point E of the UGBC Constitution states that “The Student Assembly shall have the power to make recommendations to other legislative and administrative bodies and officials concerning the welfare of the General Student Body.”

SITUATIONAL PREAMBLE

Noting: Menstrual hygiene products are crucial to women’s physical and reproductive health. Lack of free feminine hygiene products at Boston College prevents female students from completely engaging in their undergraduate educational and extracurricular experiences. The effort to provide menstrual products for free can effectively reduce female students’ tardiness, absences, and interruptions in classes. In addition, the accessibility to free menstrual products will enhance female students’ ability to structure their daily schedules more easily during regular menstrual cycles, without the consistent worry over obtaining products on their own.

Further Noting: The provision of charge-free tampons, sanitary pads, and other similar products will remove a significant financial barrier for lower-income students to cope with their natural and unavoidable bodily functions¹. Studies have demonstrated that women, including a significant percentage of students from lower socioeconomic status, are struggling with purchasing both food and menstrual hygiene products². Thus, the initiative of this resolution will help students from some of the most vulnerable population to invest their limited savings in other necessities.

Acknowledging: Major universities in Boston have started providing free menstrual products in campus buildings and residential halls. Specifically, Boston University has implemented a menstrual product pilot program in which free menstrual product dispensers were installed in the bathroom of six buildings covering five of its eleven schools and colleges, along with its largest student center³. Besides, through students’ public health initiative, Northeastern University has retrofitted all dispensers in its women’s bathrooms to supply different menstrual products for free at various crowded areas of the campus⁴. Moreover, Harvard University has installed similar dispensers in gender-neutral restrooms of all of its residential houses to provide its students with free tampons and pads⁵.

¹ The Bring Your Own Tampon Policy: Why Menstrual Hygiene Products Should be Provided for Free in Restrooms, Elizabeth Montano, University of Miami Law Review (11/18)

² Even in the U.S., poor women often can’t afford tampons, pads, Reuters Health News (1/10/19)

³ Free menstrual products available in campus buildings as part of pilot program, The Daily Free Press (11/6/19)

⁴ Student’s public health initiative brings free tampons to a restroom near you, News @ Northeastern (6/19/18)

⁵ Every Harvard dorm and house will now provide free menstrual products, The Harvard Crimson (9/12/18)

Further Acknowledging: Yale University has expanded its pilot program that provided free disposable menstrual products from two to all of its fourteen residential buildings⁶. Additionally, Columbia University has started supplying similar products in seventeen most-used bathrooms in its main campus⁷.

OPERATIVE TEXT

Therefore, be it resolved, the Undergraduate Government of Boston College calls upon the University to commit to protecting female students' health in their menstrual cycles by providing different types of free, accessible, and disposable menstrual hygiene products, including but not limited to tampons, sanitary pads, and pantyliners, for female undergraduates of diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds⁸ and in different phases of menstrual cycles, in high-traffic women's and gender-inclusive restrooms on the Chestnut Hill campus. In the next five years with the assistance of a pre-designed expansion plan, free feminine hygiene products are encouraged to be placed in the bathrooms of all undergraduate residence halls, especially those located on the Chestnut Hill and Newton campuses and the Commonwealth Ave (i.e., 2000, 2150, and 66). Therefore, the Boston College administration is tasked by the elected representatives of the undergraduate student body to respond to the female students' urgent demands and carry out the following action items and critical steps proposed and passed by the Student Assembly (Senate):

Short-Term Demands

- The University Administration shall regularly refill the free menstrual hygiene products in women's bathrooms that are currently provided by a pilot program sponsored by the Women's Center, Office of Health Promotion, Undergraduate Government of Boston College, and Residence Hall Association during the Academic Year of 2019-2020.
- The Undergraduate Government of Boston College shall form an annual study group, comprised of no less than three (3) student representatives and no less than five (5) members of the UGBC Student Initiatives, to commission an undergraduate suggestion survey on the implementation of broader availability of menstrual products on Boston College's campuses.
- The study group, in collaboration with the three partner organizations of the University Administration, shall conduct extensive field research to determine the target high-traffic bathrooms, in all academic buildings of the Chestnut Hill campus, on which to expand the current pilot program by providing additional free menstrual hygiene products.
- The University Administration is recommended to purchase and install feminine hygiene product dispensers⁹ in the target high-traffic bathrooms.

⁶ YCC brings free menstrual products to residential colleges, Yale Daily News (2/11/19)

⁷ University Senate announces plan to provide free feminine hygiene products in bathrooms, Columbia Spectator (2/8/19)

⁸ Most Chinese and Muslim women refuse to use tampons due to cultural and religious sensitivity.

⁹ According to the website of Louisiana State University, the menstrual product dispensers they have adopted in the restrooms are equipped with a delayed dispensing mechanism which can prevent over-consumption by students.

- The University Administration and UGBC shall provide additional free menstrual hygiene products and dispensers in the bathrooms that are recommended by the UGBC study group, though not currently covered in the pilot program during the Academic Year of 2019-2020.
- The study group, under the consultation of the three partner organizations of the University Administration, shall specify the total number and cost of free menstrual hygiene products and dispensers required to meet the annual needs of all the target high-traffic bathrooms on the main campus.
- The University Administration shall cover no less than sixty-five (65) percent of the total expense indicated in the UGBC annual study group report; and, after annual budget negotiation with the UGBC, shall gradually increase its spending each year on purchasing the feminine hygiene products and dispensers.
- The UGBC Student Assembly (Senate) and Student Initiatives shall organize regular events each year on BC's campuses to collect menstrual product donations and fundraise for the menstrual product and dispenser purchases, in addition to educating the student body on conscious consumerism¹⁰ that will be vital to the success and sustainability of the pilot program and further initiatives.

Long-Term Demands

- The University Administration and Undergraduate Government of Boston College shall aim for regular campus-wide distribution of free menstrual hygiene products in high-traffic women's and gender-neutral bathrooms in all academic buildings, residence halls, and recreational facilities for undergraduate students at all three campuses (i.e., the Chestnut Hill campus, the Newton campus, and the Brighton campus).

¹⁰ Update: Free Menstrual Product Program, the University of Washington (3/11/18)