



Period Partner

UW implements free menstrual products pilot program

The university follows other Big Ten schools in offering readily-available products in three buildings on campus

by PEYTON DAVID
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RILEY STEINBRENNER/The Badger Herald

The University of Wisconsin Associated Students of Madison announced Wednesday they will implement a pilot program that provides free menstrual products in three buildings on campus starting by the end of April.

Helen C. White Hall, Sterling Hall and The Red Gym will be the first on-campus buildings to carry free products. Helen C. White and Sterling will have menstrual products carried in all women's restrooms and The Red Gym will carry them in all women's, men's and gender-neutral restrooms.

The idea originated in fall 2016 from Vice Chair Miriam Coker and Rep. Evan Pelke, who also worked on this project at a former internship. Rep. Katrina Morrison and Mara Matovich, the Shared Governance Committee campaign director, also participated in bringing the program to UW.



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“It’s definitely a deficit and an unnecessary burden for [anyone] to have to go and purchase menstrual products,” Morrison said. “Having them be free and readily available in campus buildings is definitely a necessity.”

The pilot is loosely based on similar programs at other Big Ten institutions, such as the University of Michigan, University of Maryland and Northwestern University, Matovich said. These universities are either in the process of implementing the program, have the pilot program in place or already have a free menstrual product system at their university.

Not having a program in place at UW, in comparison to other major institutions, was “more of a reason” to implement the pilot, Matovich said.



To do this, Morrison said they looked at what would be most cost efficient for the university. This meant either renovating most of the buildings on campus’ current dispensaries so they are free of charge or purchasing new dispensaries entirely to accommodate the program.

Morrison said ASM hopes to see the pilot program expanded in the future.

“Being a representative on student council, I want to do all I can to represent women,” Morrison said.

ASM is working to finalize the program with the Vice Chancellor of Finance Administration and Facilities Planning and Management.

The initiative will start as a pilot program no later than April 30 and end in December 2017.

Clarification: A previous version of this article referred to these products as women’s hygiene products. This article has been updated for clarification.