

**TO: SUNY Cortland Faculty Senate
SUNY Cortland President**

FROM: The SUNY Cortland Senate Steering Committee
RE: Free Access to Menstrual Products
DATE: February 6, 2018

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS the University Faculty Senate passed a resolution requesting that local campus develop and fund programs that provide access to free menstrual products in all campus restrooms; and

WHEREAS the federal government recognizes the need for improved affordability and access to menstrual products and “in early August 2017, the U.S. government began to offer tampons and a variety of sanitary pads free to federal inmates”¹; and

WHEREAS New York State is a national model for progress in menstrual equity: “On July 13, 2016, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio signed legislation, with unanimous support, providing free access to feminine hygiene products to all public schools, prisons and homeless shelters in the city’s five boroughs (Bill Intros 1122-A, 1123-A and 1128-A). And, “on July 21, 2016, Governor Cuomo signed legislation eliminating local and state sales tax on feminine hygiene products (bill A.7555-A/S.7838)”; and

WHEREAS SUNY’s female student body is 239, 073 (54%); and

WHEREAS many of students in SUNY are financially insecure: 75% of all SUNY students receive financial aid; and

WHEREAS if campuses do provide menstrual products, students must ask for these products at a campus health center; if not, they must buy their own; and

WHEREAS if students cannot afford these products, they may miss class, which could affect their ability to be successful in their classes and complete their programs in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS there is national foundation support in place through *Free the Tampons*, to help institutions overcome the financial concerns of this exact type of policy and “provide education and resources that empower advocates to create change for women nationwide.”²

WHEREAS the SUNY Cortland Title IX office in conjunction with the Director of Facilities and Operations and Services has been studying this issue and has devised a plan to distribute free menstrual products in all single-use bathrooms and as least one women’s room per building; and

WHEREAS the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Committee and the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Committee concurs with the above plan as a first step with the eventual objective being access to free products in all single-use and women’s restrooms.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that SUNY CORTLAND Faculty Senate strongly urges the SUNY Cortland President to support our students who need these products by developing and funding programs that provide the greatest access to free menstrual products.

BACKGROUND

1. Federal law to allow free access to menstrual products for inmates:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/federal-prisons-must-provide-free-tampons-and-pads-to-incarcerated-women/2017/08/23/a9e0e928-8694-11e7-961d-2f373b3977ee_story.html?utm_term=.0c6112633465
2. Free the Tampon Non Profit Foundation: <http://www.freethetampons.org/about.html>