



## Request for 2020/202 Funding Services and Activities Fee Committee

### BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name:

Create Date:

Due Date:

Submitter Name:

UW Email Address:

Phone Number:

Department Head Approval:

Department Head:

Requested Amount:

## Departmental Information

### STUDENT UTILIZATION

By providing free hygiene products to the students of UW Tacoma, it has the potential to change the quality of life for over half of the population. Restroom facilities already uncontroversially provide many of their services free of charge, such as toilet paper and soap, an extension of hygiene products is the next step towards an equitable restroom experience. The students that take advantage of these free hygiene products will create a significant decrease in financial burden. Users of hygiene products spend somewhere around \$100 per person per year, this number becomes even higher when purchasing from convenience stores like West Coast Grocery, where smaller quantities are charged for more.

With expansion of availability and accessibility of the products, it will alleviate the moments of sudden stress that students experience when having these products on hand become an unexpected necessity. One testimonial from a surveyed student admitted to having skipped class because they didn't have hygiene products on hand when they were caught off guard on campus and didn't have the time to seek out the spaces where they were sold. Another recalled a time when they were so overwhelmed with anxiety about pulling out a tampon in their bag that they couldn't concentrate on their work. Being able to prevent instances like these happening in the first place will give students more freedom to focus on their educational experience instead of being preoccupied with anxiety about making these decisions.

### CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT

**EQUITY: By expanding the availability of free hygiene products on campus we will be addressing financial and accessibility barriers experienced by low income students who may find themselves in need of the products but unable to leave campus or search alternative options due to schedule/transportation restraints. It also highlights the current expenses of hygiene products on campus, where tampons sold at West Coast Grocery at an exponentially higher price than they would be elsewhere, quarter-operated machines are outdated with the expectation that the average person carries quarters on their person at all times, and the closest alternative to stores on campus requires a trip on the Link.**

**A report done last year by Reuters found that more than one in five women said they had a problem affording hygiene products every month. This is especially a problem given that these items aren't covered under SNAP or WIC. By expanding these services into additional gender neutral/all-gender restrooms, we will be accommodating the needs of traditionally underrepresented students. This is an especially valuable resource to those students who are gender non-conforming, non-binary, and transgender. But it is also an important resource to have available for those who use the individually stalled all-gender restrooms for any privacy or medical reasons that may prevent them from feeling safe and comfortable in the multi-stall and gender exclusive restrooms. Seeing indicators of equitable success comes with equitable bathroom design and availability of services provided for these same underserved and marginalized identities.**

**By increasing the services we offer, we are destigmatizing the conversation of menstruation as a whole. For gender non-conforming and trans students who have experienced harassment from their perceived identity not aligning with a traditionally menstruating identity, this can alleviate anxiety about, for instance, grabbing a loud, crinkly tampon out of their bag. This is an issue of healthcare equity, and without active efforts to mitigate the disparities in hygiene product accessibility, many students, staff, and faculty will continue to experience the consequences of deeply conditioned ignorance to a problem that affects half the population.**

### SAF-FUNDED PROGRAM OR SERVICES GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Last year, the student government administration worked with the University to create a pilot program for this project. For this, four dispensers with free hygiene products were installed in four different bathrooms on campus, one of which being gender neutral. While no exact measurement system was put in place at the time, Tessa Coleman, Associate Director of Maintenance & Operations, confirms that refilling the existing dispensers happens about once a week. While it is challenging to measure this program due to privacy concerns and inability to assume that only one product is used per one person, there are only imperfect statistics that can be provided. However, with the amount of interest that has been shown within the school and throughout the country to implement free hygiene product programs, it's clear that the need is there.

This year, our goals for expansion means extending the available dispensers from only four restrooms to twelve restrooms, 8 of which being gender exclusive and the remaining 4 be in gender neutral single stall. If funded, we hope to maintain this three-fold model on an annual basis, increasing steadily until all restrooms have these services freely provided in them. The request for this year will include the four existing restrooms that provide

free hygiene products already, these are: MAT 105 (Gender Neutral), 1st Floor Women's Joy, 1st Floor Women's SNO, and 1st Floor WG. While these are valuable starting points, we hope to add additional dispensers in UWY F1 (Gender Neutral), 1st Floor Women's MAT, 1st Floor Women's TPS, 2nd Floor Women's SCI, GWP 238 & 240 (Gender Neutral), 2nd Floor Women's JOY, 2nd Floor Women's SNO, and 1st Floor Women's GWP.

The Seattle campus of the University of Washington has already implemented these services are operating with expenses about \$20,000 a year. Their facilities department installed free tampon dispensers with what began with 17 pilot locations and shortly after expanded to 72 permanent locations within 60 different buildings because of the success and demand. CA, IL, NY, NH and Boston have already passed legislation that require schools to offer free menstrual products in school bathrooms. These same public schools in New York City achieved an attendance increase of 2.4% amongst girls when free tampons and pads were offered for free in the bathrooms.

The creators of this proposal have met with Facilities, the YMCA, and the design team for the future Milgard building to discuss the expansion of free hygiene products becoming a standard option available for campus restrooms. All parties are on board with the idea of expanding from the current pilot program's amount and steadily to continue expanding as time goes on. This would grant us the ability, both with an increased financial and community support system, to implement long term services at significantly larger scale, which is imperative to the success of our goal to meet equitable restroom needs for students of any identity.

#### STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

**Due to the private nature of the project, the exact values for student usage are incalculable. We are only tracking total consumption based on procurement needs. However, Tessa Coleman, Associate Director of Maintenance & Operations confirms that roughly \$650 was used to restock the four dispensers for the first pilot year of 2019. This means that \$162.5 was spent on each restroom this year. By roughly pulling apart this number and the cost of the products by case (\$138.11 for 750 individual products of either tampons or sanitary napkins), we can estimate that over 3,000 students used the products at least once during this time period, or at least that products were utilized over that many times.**

**Given that one of these dispensers was located in a gender neutral restroom, we can assume that this consumer base stretched along the spectrum of gender identity. Because of the nature of gender neutral restrooms in its design, we can also assume that these dispensers served a population of both physically differently abled students and those living with invisible disabilities to use the privacy of these single-stall restrooms to address additional barriers to access. Since this data is pulled from only the first active year, we can only estimate that this number will increase as the locations that these services are provided increase. By estimating the amount that a 3-fold increase will reach, we intentionally account for the possibility of large influx of usage during the first 3 months of offering free product as recommended by free hygiene product company Aunt Flow. With this, our estimate for population served in the second year with expanded services is roughly 6,500 students per year.**

#### COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS

Measuring the effectiveness of the product has presented itself as a barrier to the project. We recognize it is important to gather information from the students and how the installation of hygiene products in restrooms has affected their experience on the UW Tacoma campus. Gathering data can help research and improve access to these products for students. While we would like to gather this information we have not yet determined a form of gathering data that would be effective. We do, however, know that our products are being used at a steady rate that has, based on rough calculations done in the question above, reached 1,500 students. This number alone is representative of the success of the pilot program since this value represents one third of the student population and roughly half of the campus population (according to UW Tacoma 2019-2020 data) menstruates. Even assuming that a handful of students (using an example of 10 products per person) were responsible for the majority of the supply usage, there would still be more participation in the free hygiene program than most University elections and more than the number of campus faculty employees.

Our plan for measurement, which is additionally laid out in more detail in attached spreadsheet, will include the same system of keeping in contact with facilities to receive details about how often product dispensers are refilled. It will also include an annual survey for each year the project is funded to measure student's level of participation, awareness of services, and additional concerns or suggestions for locations for expansion and services provided.

#### SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

Menstrual products are expensive and Washington State taxes these necessities with a 6.5 percent sales tax, despite items such as condoms and chopsticks being exempt from this tax. Hygiene products are necessities for the majority of our student population. A lack of access to hygiene products can result in a disruption to the learning of students on our campus, the primary mission of the university. It will relieve additional cost barriers that students experience when making decisions between necessary purchases.

This is especially pertinent to non-traditional college students that are responsible for providing support for their families and those who work multiple jobs. These services are significant to addressing accessibility barriers for transgender and gender non-conforming/non-binary students who, although requiring these services, may not have access to them in the bathroom that they identify with. For differently-abled students and those with invisible disabilities, this program addresses the need for large, private spaces for additional medical needs. By identifying and working to alleviate all these additional stresses that students face, we will increase their opportunity to learn comfortably and safely without worry of affordability or accessibility.

A goal from a larger point of view for this project is to be a factor in destigmatizing and decommmodifying menstruation. We recognize these factors as problematic for the majority of the menstruating community because they are expressed often through our relationship with our peers, colleagues, family members, and within our own lives. When there is a challenge that affects more than half of our student population, we recognize its importance to the community. Across the country there have been a rise in similar programs created by communities that feel the same way. These programs continue to expand and increasingly become part of our daily routine once the conversation about menstruation and hygiene products being a necessity instead of a privilege is destigmatized.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OF FUND UTILIZATION

N/A

### Staff Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
PERSONNEL TOTAL:		\$0

### Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Non-Food Supplies & Materials	Total amount for hygiene products (including both tampons and sanitary napkins). Actual purchasing will be driven by utilization.	S001 <b>\$4,000</b>
Equipment	Eight (8) hygiene dispensers estimated at a cost of \$670 each	S002 <b>\$5,360</b>
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:		<b>\$9,360</b>

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$0
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$9,360
<b>COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$9,360</b>

### Supplemental Documents



#### FREE HYGIENE PRODUCT PROGRAM COST BREAKDOWN

This is the 2018/2019 - 2019/2020 cost breakdown for the Free Hygiene Product program. Includes prices of dispensers, products, and total costs from last year and estimated for this year.