



**TO:** SUNY University Faculty Senate

**FROM:** Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee

**RE:** To Provide Free Access to Menstrual Products at All SUNY Campuses in All Restrooms

**DATE:** 177<sup>th</sup> Plenary at SUNY Delhi, October 19-21, 2017

**RATIONALE:**

WHEREAS the SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015 Resolution desires to “make SUNY the most inclusive higher education system in the country”; and

WHEREAS the SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015 Resolution’s Guiding Principles state that “diversity and inclusiveness are integral components of the highest quality academic programs and the strongest campus climate. Diversity is essential to excellence in the university setting” and that “SUNY’s statutory mission makes clear its responsibility to provide the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population of New York State”; and

WHEREAS campuses should work to “ensure that services are in place to support retention (of faculty and students) and foster student completion at a rate that closes existing achievement gaps; and implement programs and strategies to establish a welcoming environment for all”; 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”<sup>1</sup>; 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)”;

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

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

WHEREAS if campuses do provide menstrual products, female 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.”<sup>4</sup>

## **RESOLUTION:**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that SUNY support students on our campuses who need these products by developing and funding programs that provide access to free menstrual products in all campus restrooms.<sup>2,3</sup>

## **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](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. [www.suny.edu](http://www.suny.edu)

3. Free the Tampon Non Profit Foundation: <http://www.freethetampons.org/about.html>

4. Products in men’s room for gender equity:

<http://www.chronicle.com/article/Tampons-in-Men-s-Rooms-/240091>