

## **SGA STATEMENT: SGA ADVOCATES FOR STUDENT VOICE AND STUDENT WELL-BEING**

While Feminist Front's petition to change university policy did not achieve enough student signatures to be placed on the ballot for SGA's spring elections, SGA will continue working with students and the university to pursue initiatives of student health and well-being. Members of the DePaul community have worked tirelessly on initiatives to improve student well-being, but we know more work must always be done.

### **Background:**

- According to the Election Operations Board (EOB) [Bylaws](#), for referenda to be placed on the SGA ballot for spring elections, a petition of 1,500 valid student signatures must be submitted to the EOB no less than 30 days prior to spring elections.
- On Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, Feminist Front leaders submitted a petition asking if students would like to see a change to university policy around the accessibility of contraception on DePaul's campus to the Election Operations Board (EOB) of the Student Government Association.
- Working with Student Records to verify the student signatures, the EOB found that the petition only included 1,339 valid student signatures.

### **SGA's Existing Efforts to Support Student Well-Being:**

- Sexual health and sexual violence prevention have been key SGA initiatives in the 2014-2015 school year.
- SGA expanded student representation on the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Working Group which has worked on university policy reform, student programming, and Title IX resources for DePaul students.
- SGA organized a "Let's Talk Consent" panel with the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) to discuss sexual health, consent, and sexual violence prevention.
- SGA also hosted two Take Care DePaul Kick-off events in Lincoln Park and the Loop in collaboration with HPW to educate students of the university campaign to take care of each other and intervene when necessary.
- SGA joined the new student group SLATE (Student Leaders Advocating Together for Empowerment), and sponsored the kickoff of a Consent Tagline competition. The winning consent tagline will be featured in university sexual violence prevention and sexual health educational programming.
- SGA sponsored a bystander intervention training with HPW for students during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- SGA piloted the Haven program, an online bystander intervention and sexual health education module, which will be provided to all incoming students starting this fall to engage students in conversations of sexual health before arriving to campus.
- HPW is currently expanding with 6 new peer health educators in a program designed to "provide health on a variety of topics to the DePaul student body with the goal of enhancing long-term healthy behaviors."

- Students have recently approached SGA with concern that classroom material does not include trigger warnings. SGA has since facilitated a meeting with members of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Working Group, HPW, faculty, and students to take on next steps. The group will be presenting an option to add trigger warnings and links to resources at the university to D2L. The hopes are for this initiative to continue into next year.
- SGA is also working closely with the Dean of Students Office to enhance university-wide communication strategies to inform students of sexual health resources on campus and in Chicago.

### **Advocate for Student Well-Being with SGA:**

- Get involved – While SGA members sit on the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Working Group to work on initiatives of sexual violence prevention, students are encouraged to reach out to SGA to have their input included in those meetings. Let us know your thoughts, your questions, your comments, and we'll make sure they are included in the work already being done.
- Get trained – The Office of Health Promotion and Wellness offers Bystander Intervention trainings throughout the year. Bring a training to your student organization, attend an SGA sponsored training, or reach out to HPW to see what works for you.
- Join SLATE or student organizations focused on sexual health – Student Leaders Advocating Together for Empowerment (SLATE) discusses sexual violence prevention, creates programming, and collaborates on initiatives like the recent Consent Tagline Competition. If SLATE doesn't work for you, try to get involved with other organizations that focus on sexual health and well-being. If that doesn't work out, create a new organization! SGA is here to support you through the process either way.
- Questions, comments, concerns? Let us know! – SGA is here for you. Let us know how the university should be improving sexual health resources, sexual violence prevention workshops, or anything else you can think of. We'll bring your comments to administrators, faculty, staff to make sure your voices are heard and work is done on your behalf.

### **Conclusion:**

SGA continues to be committed to advocating for students and focusing on initiatives of student well-being. Though a referendum about sexual health will not be on the SGA ballot this spring, SGA wants to continue to have health-related conversations with students about well-being on campus. A lot of progress has been made at DePaul, but more work always must be done. Perfection is almost never achievable, but we remain inspired by the question raised by St. Louise de Marillac, "Dare we hope?" SGA hopes to continue making progress in collaboration with students and the university to make our university the best it can be.