

FAM Launches Website to Increase Awareness of Sexual Health Services

By KATE CRISCITIELLO

Members of Feminist Action at Middlebury (FAM) have built a website in an effort to make sexual health resources more accessible, transparent and easier to navigate for students by directing them to available services at Parson Health Center, Porter Hospital and the Planned Parenthood in Middlebury.

Information on abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing, contraceptives, pregnancy, pleasure, sexual assault, consent, menstruation and mental health are all featured on the site.

Five FAM members lead the website project: Annie Blalock '20.5, Matt Martignoni '21.5, Olivia Pruettt '21.5, Michael Frank '20.5 and Emma Bernstein '21.5. Frank and Bernstein act as data managers.



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The project is supported by Planned Parenthood, which selected FAM to participate in their Campus Campaign Program. The program provides students at colleges nationwide with the funding and training necessary to develop a campaign focused on an issue regarding sexual or reproductive justice.

FAM held a Planned Parenthood Action Forum last March, where they invited students, faculty and staff to discuss their experiences with sexual health issues at Middlebury. Pruett said the decision to focus FAM's campaign on a sexual health website was inspired by experiences students shared at the forum.

"A lot of our ideas came from people telling personal stories on campus trying to access birth control or had questions about it," Pruett said. "Or people who needed an abortion or maybe they didn't need one, or needed information for a friend and didn't know where to turn. We are pretty educated and a lot of us had decent sex education, and so we know these resources should be available to us, but we had no idea who to ask."

Julia Sinton '20.5, one of FAM's co-presidents and another contributor to the project, left the forum with a similar impression.

"A lot of the students who came were first years and some of them were talking about how coming to Middlebury can be such an overwhelming experience," she said. "Having more access and more information on sexual health issues would be a turning point for a lot of them."

This summer, the group of five FAM members attended one of Planned Parenthood's training programs in Detroit, where they planned and strategized for their campaign.

Blalock, FAM's other co-president, emphasized that the website campaign not only concentrates on Parton. It also focuses on off-campus services that students use at Porter Hospital and the Planned Parenthood in Middlebury.

Planned Parenthood and FAM want to ensure that the website is an intersectional resource.

"We wanted to make sure that our campaign is something that could help all people on campus, not just white, cisgender women," Bernstein said.

To meet this goal, FAM will work with different student groups on campus and with the Student Government Association (SGA) Sexual Relationship and Respect Committee.

According to Blalock, FAM hopes to collaborate with Parton so that both groups can work together to make this resource as useful and effective as possible. The online resource will be constantly changing. Blalock said that FAM welcomes input from the administration and professionals.

"The college should be held responsible for keeping sexual and reproductive health resources accessible to us as students," she said.

While he hadn't yet heard about FAM's campaign, Parton's Executive Director Gus Jordan said that the health center's staff would gladly help.

"Sounds great that FAM is doing this, but I'm not familiar with their efforts," Jordan said. "We'd be happy to work with them."

Visit the website at: hartrymartignoni.wixsite.com/middsexualhealth

Go links: [go/ineedmorecondomns](#), [go/sexysources](#), [go/whatdoIdo](#) and [go/sexpleaseT](#)