



A PLEA FOR PROTECTION

Students at American University deserve support and resources from the university's administration in order to maintain and understand their sexual health and safety.

By Sophia Carroll

Students at American University feel that it is up to them to provide the sexual health and safety resources that should be provided and made easily accessible by the administration.

On campus, student-run clubs such as Students for Reproductive Justice, Days for Girls at AU, and Students for Change have taken students' sexual health and safety into their hands because many don't believe that the administration does enough to keep their students safe and properly educated.

On Nov. 30 of this year members of Students for Reproductive Justice protested on the quad for emergency contraceptive access to be provided by the university's administration on campus.

Prior to this protest a petition written by AUREpro had been signed by 1,000 AU community members. The petition called for many demands of the club, one being the issue of the lack of on campus emergency contraceptive access.

Students care about their sexual health and safety and currently do not feel that the AU administration does too.

When asked if she feels protected or properly educated by American University in regards to sexual health and safety, president of Days for Girls at AU, Anna Schorr, stated, "College students are very vulnerable...and I think that there are definitely clubs that do the education part that AU should be doing."

What do we need?

Over the years, there have been various instances where student-led clubs do the work to get the AU administration to provide students with resources that should have already been provided.

Schorr spoke about one instance where student-led clubs demanded the administration provide menstrual products in every female and gender neutral bathroom on campus. And in March of 2023, 330 menstrual product dispensers were



installed in various bathrooms around campus.

Many students agree that there are resources on campus, however most students aren't aware of them because of the administration's lack of advertisement. "There are a lot of educational services that AU doesn't really advertise that they offer," Schorr said.

It is left up to students to create safe and welcoming environments in which these resources can be talked about and shared.

Schorr spoke about her experience with the sexual health and safety culture at AU.

"There are open dialogues in certain spaces at AU, like Days for Girls is one of them, there's a ton of other clubs that champion open education and advocacy for sexual health," Schorr said. "But unless you're aware of those spaces, then it is kind of stifled in the sense that people don't really talk about it openly in other spaces."

But these discussions need to be had on the administration level rather than it being left as another responsibility of the student body.

When a student begins their higher education journey on any college campus, they are more likely than not to face a variety of experiences and challenges that they never have before. Living alone, cooking their own meals, etc.

For many students one of these new types of experiences will be sexual experiences. The truth is though, that the public and private sexual education



AUREPRO PROTEST (@AU_REPO)

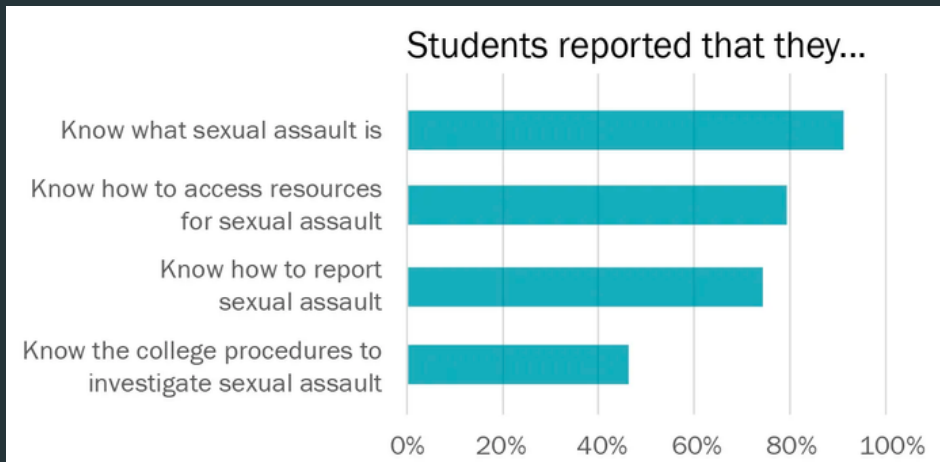
system in most states is severely lacking and leaves students without the knowledge needed to protect their sexual health.

This leaves many college students vulnerable to a variety of sexual health and safety issues and without the help of a college administration, students can feel alone and uneducated on such an important topic.

A study by the American College Health Association reported that 47.9% of sexually active students did not use condoms during their last vaginal intercourse.

There are a multitude of reasons as to why students don't use contraceptives during intercourse. From lack of proper education to lack of supply. This is where a college administration can become an asset to its students.

But at American University, the administration seemingly fails to address these kinds of student needs, until students come forward and push for their needs to be



THE STUDENT LIFE (GRAPHIC BY MEGHAN JOYCE)

addressed.

Protests like the one staged by AURepro are some of the only ways that students can begin to feel protected and supported by their university. Students need more than this.

What do we get?

Although the AU administration is far from where it needs to be in terms of providing for its student body in regards to sexual health and safety, there are various resources of note that the university does provide.

In terms of GYN health services, on the American student health center website there is a list of services provided by the university. Some of these services include: Counseling for contraception methods, prescriptions for contraception medications, screening for sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy tests (urine or blood available), evaluation and treatment for urinary tract infections, referral for other services

not provided (i.e. breast imaging, IUDs, pelvic floor rehabilitation), nonjudgmental counseling regarding pregnancy options and referrals for termination services if student desires, and more.

On this same page a student can find a list of resources outside of AU and a couple educational paragraphs that explain: what a GYN exam is, when one should have a Papanicolaou (aka “Pap”) screening, and what an STI screening is.

Other services to be found on this page include, LGBTQ health services at AU, sexual assault resources, specialist recommendations, and instructions for how to schedule a same-day appointment with the health center.

These are all great resources that any AU student can access relatively easily. However, many students feel that it is not enough. The sexual health and safety of every student should be made a priority by the administration.

As it stands today, it is still up to the students alone to navigate the confusing, complicated, and sometimes scary issues that come with sexual activity. The administration hasn’t done much to create a community of openness in regards to this topic, and so the students have taken it upon themselves to do so. With student-led clubs like AURepro, Days for Girls at AU, Students for



Change, AU Body Neutrality Coalition, and many more, students have been able to create safe spaces for themselves.

Spaces where they can have an open dialogue about difficult topics such as this one. Spaces where students can feel safe to get help when they need it. Spaces that the administration cannot be thanked for.



GRAPHIC BY CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE



CHANGE CAN'T WAIT PROTEST AT AU (ITHE EAGLE: ZZY FANTINI)