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# Campus Organizations Educate and Advocate During Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Ashley Hagar, Staff Reporter

This year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) was led off by the Wellness and Health Promotion Office with the Clothesline Project. The Clothesline Project is an annual event to signify support for victims of violence, and this year is no different. In April, the country has the opportunity to raise awareness on sexual violence, how to prevent it and how to best support those who have been affected by it.

In addition to the Clothesline Project, the Wellness and Health Promotion Office partnered with the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) to host educational events throughout the remainder of April to honor SAAM.

The Clothesline Project signifies a defiant statement against sexual violence and misogyny through creating statements with items associated with traditional female gender roles before the second-wave feminist movement. Laundry was viewed as a woman's job and it became a place for women to share common experiences by hanging color coded shirts.

Seattle U's clothesline is available for viewing in the Student Center across from the Wellness and Health Promotion Office. Students are invited to decorate white, yellow, pink, blue, purple and black shirts through the end of the month.

Sarah Gordon, Program Coordinator for Healthy Relationships in the Wellness and Health Promotion Office, helped lead the Clothesline Project this year. Gordon shared that she hopes to raise and spread awareness about SAAM and make everyone aware of the resources available in the Seattle U community.

"We want to provide educational resources and to act as support for any support that needs support through this," Gordon said. "We are here to help and support. I would love for any student that doesn't know where to start to know that there is support and they are not alone."

Students can go to the Wellness and Health Promotion Office at any time this month to write on a shirt and hang it up. Gordon shared that students can also send her photos of their decorated shirts so she can share them with the community.

Seattle U's Title IX Coordinator, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Equity and Chief Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Andrea Herrera Katahira, ensures equal opportunity for higher education and employment for students, including protecting members of classrooms and workplaces from gendered/sexual harassment or discrimination.

She works to promote a safe environment for learning, living and working. Katahira works with students that report misconduct to ensure their safety.



Adeline Ong

"I believe the various support options and assistance available to students who experience sexual misconduct—and the fact that all of it is available to them whether or not they choose to make a formal complaint—are important to highlight," Katahira said.

President Stephen V. Sundborg, S.J., sent an email to all students, faculty and staff sharing how the Seattle U community could stand in solidarity this month.

"Through various events hosted on campus aimed at raising awareness about the impact of sexual assault and promoting its prevention, SAAM provides our campus community a dedicated opportunity to individually and collectively reflect on and demonstrate our support for those who have experienced trauma," Sundborg wrote in the email to the students, faculty, and staff. "All Seattle U community members are encouraged to observe SAAM and are invited to participate in events arranged by Wellness and Health Promotion and other campus partners."

As a part of SAAM, Seattle U is hosting a variety of events to raise awareness of sexual assault prevention and provide resources for students on campus to better protect, educate and care for the community. For one of these events, Assistant Director of OMA, Ashlee Day, led a conversation April 19 about sexual violence and how it disproportionately impacts marginalized communities.

At the Identity, Power and Sexual Violence Workshop, Day led students through a discussion centered on the experiences of white women in comparison to the experiences and impact of sexual assault on LGBTQ+ and BIPOC individuals.

Additionally, the Wellness and Health Promotion Office is offering students free copies of the book *Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault*. Peer health educators held a discussion with students April 21 to discuss the book and various case studies within it.

Students were encouraged to read the book, but it was not mandatory to attend the discussion. The Wellness and Health Promotion Office still has copies of the book for those interested in reading it.

As a part of raising awareness during the month, students are encouraged to participate in or view Denim Day. Participants can either wear denim that day or send a photo to Gordon of the Wellness and Health Promotion Office in solidarity with survivors of sexual assault.

Denim signifies the support of survivors after the Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction in 1999. The survivor was assaulted and was wearing jeans. Justices believed the victim implied consent after wearing jeans and allegedly helped remove them. Students can show their support by wearing denim April 28, sending in pictures or posting on social media.

While Seattle U offers many events during April for students to attend, the Voices for Change online course is one of the main educational tools the university uses as part of its prevention efforts. It is a mandatory training for all students entering the university.

Voices for Change is divided into four areas: living in and supporting an inclusive community, bystander intervention to prevent sexual misconduct, preventing hazing and bullying and understanding alcohol and drugs.

Third-year Nursing Major, Ansel Pendley-Griffin and First-year Biology Major, Annalee Gorman, both wish the university would implement more education to students about sexual violence. Pendley-Griffin suggests having more discussions.

"I don't think the training is particularly effective," Pendley-Griffin said. "The people who most need it are also the ones who blow it off by skipping through as fast as they can. The program is well made, but the only way to really get through to people is with an in-person discussion."

As an incoming student, Gorman remembered the videos to be brief and not addressing the extent at which women face sexual harassment on a daily basis.

"Besides my orientation video I haven't had any more education about it or heard about how to reach out for help or support," Gorman said. "I think it would be important and helpful to students to implement more training or workshops as this is very prevalent among college campuses. There is more to sexual assault than "no means no" that the orientation video talks about."

On April 29, the annual Take Back the Night (TBTN) event hosted by the Health and Wellness Crew (HAWC) will be held virtually. TBTN allows individuals to raise awareness of sexual violence. Those that participate will be invited to march around campus, attend a candlelight vigil, share personal stories and listen to guest speakers from the community.

In addition to these events, the Wellness and Health Promotion Office has year round resources for students. Students can contact Campus Ministry, the Student Health Center or someone from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

If necessary, Seattle U, through the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), can make academic accommodations including No Communication Orders, housing modifications and safety planning. For more information on these resources, the OIE has provided a guide available on their website.

Additionally, Green Dot is another program available for students to join. Green Dot works to communicate the expected norms of Seattle U's community through a comprehensive bystander intervention strategy. It also trains students in helping recognize and respond to situations proactively.

Students interested in educating others about sexual violence and misconduct have opportunities to participate in other programs on campus. Students can become members of HAWC to help educate their peers, host programs or provide a private peer consultation.