

Students petition for women's health care

BY MARIAH BOHANON
Staff Reporter

Recent steps to restrict Planned Parenthood's role in providing reproductive health care in some areas of the state brought protesters to Columbia, Mo., from all across the U.S.

Members of VOX, Truman's organization that supports Planned Parenthood, attended a campaign last Saturday, along with Dana Slavin, a community educator from Kirksville's Planned Parenthood clinic. The event was scheduled as a Live Action camp. Live Action is an organization that teaches activists how to effectively use grass-root techniques in their campaign efforts.

Seniors Marie Weichold, president of VOX, and Hannah Hemmelgarn, a member of the organization, said the campaign was part of a Prevention First initiative by Planned Parenthood. Prevention First is a program designed to teach adequate sex education in schools and to provide informa-

tion about birth control that is both available and affordable, according to a petition that was handed out by campaigners on Saturday.

Weichold and Hemmelgarn said they spent the day asking people to sign the petition at the University of Missouri-Columbia football game and in various neighborhoods. They said people

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Dana Slavin
Planned Parenthood
Community Educator

were very supportive about the petition and open to what the campaign entailed.

"We're not trying to change people's minds, we're trying to find like-minded people to speak up," Hemmelgarn said, explaining that the campaign was directed at Governor Blunt's current sex education plan.

She also said she thinks it's important for people to take part in campaigns because sometimes the public opinion is not voiced as it should be. Only 6 percent of Missourians support Blunt's abstinence-only sex education program, she said. Slavin said Blunt's plan is not effective in preventing unwanted pregnan-

cies and sexually transmitted infections and that one of the most important aspects of the Prevention First initiative is providing medically accurate sex education classes.

"As a mother of teenage daughters, I'm very concerned about the quality of sex education in schools," she said.

The Prevention First petition also protests the proposed closing of abortion services in Columbia and the canceling of Planned Parenthood contracts in southwestern Missouri that gave low-income women access to breast and cervical cancer screenings.

Slavin said the Live Action day in Columbia resulted from all the Planned Parenthood branches in Missouri networking together to form a campaign day. The Live Action tactics will be implemented throughout the state, with Columbia used as a test site for the campaign, she said. Slavin said it's important for Missourians to understand what Planned Parenthood does and how its services can be affected by legislators.

"Anything that restricts a woman's rights, we see as a step backwards," Slavin said.

Other states are progressing toward accurate sex education programs whereas Missouri is



Photo submitted
Members of VOX raise awareness for women's health in front of Faurot Field at the University of Missouri-Columbia on Saturday before a home football game.

moving more towards abstinence-only programs, she said.

Planned Parenthood workers from six states took part in the Live Action day, including officials from Washington D.C., Hemmelgarn said. About 50 people were at the event before splitting into smaller groups to canvas neighborhoods with the petitions, she said.

The groups also phonebanked by calling people who were on Planned Parenthood's e-mail list and asking them to renew their subscription to the e-mails, Weichold said. The event was very effective and far surpassed its goals to get signatures for the Pre-

vention First petition, she said.

Slavin said she thinks that a similar campaign in Kirksville would be effective in promoting Prevention First. She said she thinks the local community is supportive of Planned Parenthood's mission to provide reproductive health care to women, and many people here would like to see medically accurate sex education in schools.

Planned Parenthood workers currently do not teach sex education in Kirksville public schools although they are allowed to, Slavin said. Health care workers who provide abortion services or information about abortion

to the public are prevented from teaching in public schools. This specifically targets Planned Parenthood workers in communities where clinics provide abortions, she said.

Weichold said Planned Parenthood acknowledges abstinence as the safest choice and the only way to completely prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. She said Prevention First is the only realistic way to provide Missourians with adequate knowledge and health care.

"[Some] people are going to have sex, and they ought to have the tools and the knowledge they need," Weichold said.

Attempted Arabic studies course falls through

BY HEATHER TURNER
for the Index

Despite a last-minute cancellation, a pilot Arabic program should be on track for next year.

The proposed distance-learning program was canceled about two weeks before the start of the semester because of an unexpected visa denial for the teaching assistant who was hired, said Ron Manning, director of the language learning center for classical and modern languages and coordinator for Arabic studies.

"It was literally two days before I announced that the course was canceled that we found out the T.A. had been denied their visa by the Moroccan consulate," Manning said.

The classical and modern language faculty has asked about adding an Arabic course for the past several years. Heinz Woehl, former dean of language and literature, said he started looking into the program after the Student Senate forwarded the results of a campus survey to

him that suggested student interest in an Arabic course. Woehl said he then proposed the distance-learning program to the CML faculty last year and funding was approved.

"I was really pleased at the student interest in Arabic," Woehl said.

He said that according to plans, the program would run for two years to see if student enrollment and interest in the course stays strong.

"Then if it did hold up, we would develop a permanent program here on campus rather than through distance learning," Woehl said.

Andrea Cluck, a senior English major who enrolled in the canceled course, said there are a couple of reasons why students might be interested in taking the class.

"There are just a lot of people wanting to take it for various reasons, students who want to be able to translate for the government and people who have personal interest in learning the language," she said.

Before its cancellation, the class was filled to capacity, with 27 students en-

rolled. Manning said four more students wanted to enroll but couldn't because the course was limited to 27.

The program, operated out of Montana State University, would be taught two days a week by a professor in San Francisco using a two-way video/audio connection, then two days a week by a teacher's assistant, Manning said.

He said students interested in a second year of Arabic would have the option of studying abroad for a year at a university in Ifrene, Morocco.

Manning said hiring for the T.A. position started in March, relatively late for the process. The University looked to fill the position locally first, as well as in Columbia, Mo. A couple of candidates out of Columbia were considered early on, Woehl said.

"But when push came to shove, they were no longer interested," Woehl said.

The list for the T.A. position was narrowed by April to two native Arabic speakers from a university in Ifrene, Morocco, affiliated with the program, Manning said.

After one of the prospective hires was unable to take the position, the job was offered to the second candidate, and work began to secure him a visa.

"The University was wonderful, they allowed me to work all summer on it," Manning said. "So we worked up to the last second."

The last-minute visa cancellation came as a surprise to everyone involved in planning the program because the candidate had studied and traveled in the United States in the past, Manning said.

"It broke about 12 hearts in the administration," Manning said.

Senior history major Jesse Leong also was disappointed when he was first notified by e-mail about the cancellation.

"I had been looking forward to that class for quite some time," Leong said. Cluck said she was looking forward to the class, too.

"I'd even already ordered the textbooks," she said. "I still have them. I might learn a little bit on my own."

Cluck said she has had to rethink things

because the course fit in with her graduate school plans.

"I'm really glad they're going to be able to bring it in for next year because there are a lot of people excited about it, but it doesn't help me out," Cluck said.

Manning said he felt bad about having to cancel the course so late, inconveniencing students enrolled in the course.

"It wasn't just a huge disappointment to just 27 students who wanted to take it but to a whole bunch of other people on our campus, at Montana State, in Morocco," Manning said. "If I had to do the same thing next summer, then I will."

He said this year work will begin early to secure a T.A. for the program next fall.

"We are no longer starting from scratch this year," Manning said. "We already have a whole system set up with the people in Morocco and at Montana State and the offices here on campus who offered support, financial support and otherwise have agreed to do it for next year, too."

Who's Who

Among Students in
American Universities
& Colleges



Eligibility

Seniors graduating in December, May or August
2007-2008 Academic Year

Active in campus or community activities
2.75 cumulative GPA

Evaluation Criteria

Excellent academic record

Character

Breadth and depth of leadership

Impact on the University or community

Nominations are due Oct. 5
Applications are due Oct. 26
Pick up/drop off at Kirk Building 112
For more information, call X4111

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