

ASB betters world, encourages service learning

By Becca Waterloo
A&E EDITOR

IIT is well known for its acronyms: MTCC, CIC, CMC, E1, OSL, IPRO, etc. The acronym that's been dear to my heart for the last three years is ASB: Alternative Spring Break. If you haven't figured it out yet, Alternative Spring Break gives members of the IIT community the opportunity to travel across country and dedicate their spring break to a service trip. The intention is to volunteer through Habitat for Humanity, building houses and hope for those that are less privileged.

You've supported ASB through numerous fundraisers, whether it was a plate of spaghetti, a drink (or a couple) at Rocky's College Night, eating Krispy Kreme donuts, getting your presents wrapped at Borders during the holi-

days, or getting your car washed. You helped students and staff members get to Alabama, Georgia, and recently to the Bay Area in California. On behalf of ASB and myself, I want to thank you.

To understand your impact, consider that you've given me the opportunity to travel on three different spring breaks to dedicate my time and passion to those that really need the attention and commitment from humanity. In my opinion, IIT trains us as individuals to work hard and efficiently. We're workaholics and can get anything done in a short amount of time. That's where IIT's reputation has its roots. I've seen proof of how hard-working we are when students from different majors and disciplines apply their skills to improve the world through ASB. On past trips, our groups

alone have set the production mode two weeks ahead of schedule on some Habitat projects, and made serious impact just after one day of work through small tasks and heavy lifting. In the long run, these housing developments have completely transformed plots of "unusable" land into safe neighborhoods for children to play in. Everyone deserves the feeling of safety. I've also seen past ASB members have earnest conversations with residents of homes they volunteer in. To see two worlds colliding with each other is such a heartwarming feeling. At the time that I am finishing my final year at IIT especially, coordinating the trip and having it under my belt gives me a great feeling, knowing how many lives I've affected this past year and in the last three as a volunteer.

I want to encourage you to take part in

service work. Whether it's through ASB, other events the Service Learning department holds or opportunities you take outside of campus. You may not see the results immediately when you're pulling all-nighters or writing papers, and wondering what exactly you ought to be doing with your time, but immediate results and feelings of accomplishment come from these types of service projects.

We've decided to expand ASB, and we're in the middle of conversations to combine and create an ASB Chicago and ASB Continental. This will give more people the opportunity to use their spring break to better the world, whether they're across the country or down the block. Stay tuned next year to learn what ASB and Service Learning have in store for you to make a difference.

Vis-à-vis: Dissecting the GOP's plan for Planned Parenthood



By Vlada Gaisina
OPINION EDITOR

The buzz surrounding the Pence amendment passed by the House of Representatives last month has died down, as the voting date on the spending bill has been pushed back. Controversy arose from the fact that the amendment prevents Planned Parenthood and 102 affiliated organizations from receiving any federal funding. Proponents of the amendment argued that it was unfair to use taxpayer dollars for abortions, while opposition has criticized the bill for targeting a specific group and waging a "war on women." Among the politically charged commentary that the media has adopted, it's hard to sort out the facts from the opinions. But, especially with a sensitive issue like this one, getting the full picture is increasingly important.

A reasonable question to ask is why Republican leaders are so intent on anti-abortion legislation, when in their election campaigns they promised to focus on job creation and curbing the deficit. It was stated that stripping Planned Parenthood of funding is a cost-cutting measure, which is why it was proposed as an amendment to the spending bill. However, its relative magnitude is microscopic, compared to the federal budget. According to Pence, PP receives \$363 million per year from the US Government – a sum that might seem substantial, but actually comprises less than 0.01% of the \$3.8 trillion budget.

"Well, you have to start somewhere, you can't just vanish the entire deficit," the counter-argument goes. Yes, sacrifices are necessary.

But I'm willing to bet that Pence's amendment would have caused less of a fuss, had it been accompanied by cuts to government salaries, caps on bonuses, lower tax cuts, a decrease in the defense budget, etc., etc.. People tend to be a lot more amenable to an unfavorable change, if they feel like they are getting something in return.

Moreover, political columnists have stressed that the only feasible way to remedy the deficit is to both cut spending and increase tax revenue, requiring some compromise from both parties. Since Pence offered no such olive branch, his and his supporters' efforts remain to be interpreted as anti-choice agenda, rather than an honest effort to eliminate the deficit.

The last part of the argument that has been actively discussed is the notion of it being immoral to make people pay for something they find "morally reprehensible." There are a couple of issues with that argument. First, the use of federal funds towards abortions can be effectively barred by exercising the exiting Hyde Amendment on government allocations. Second, abortion services constitute only 3% of Planned Parenthood's budget, while the rest is spent on cervical and breast cancer screenings, STD tests and treatment, subsidized birth control and comprehensive sex education programs, among other things.

So, cutting federal funding would mean taking these essential health services away from 48%, or approximately 1.4 million people who use Planned Parenthood. Considering that in 2009, 3/4 of the women served by PP lived at or below 150% of the federal poverty line, this legislation negatively targets not only a specific organization, but also a specific income-level group. Yet, somehow, no moral issues are raised on that account.

There are a few other questionable aspects to the Pence amendment. For example, it is extremely short-sighted, in that a cut to an organization providing sex ed programs is likely to result in more unintended pregnancies in the future, and ultimately cost the system more in public aid programs. Nancy Gibbs, a TIME columnist writes, "The Guttmacher Institute estimates that for every dollar invested in Title X – specifically for contraceptive care – taxpayers save a little under \$4 in Medicaid costs for mother and baby just in the first year. Title X prevents about a million unintended preg-

nancies annually, of which about half would likely end in abortion."

Additionally, a theory has been proposed by Melissa Harris-Perry, Princeton professor and a columnist for The Nation, treating the amendment as part of a larger Republican effort to undermine women and push them out of the public sphere. It is worth noting that the GOP spending bill does not only take shots

to overlook the effect of their actions on the plight of women, if not downright purposely ignore it.

While I know this argument is unlikely to change the mind of a staunch pro-lifer, I urge everyone to take a hard look at what the Republicans are doing – and recognize that it's not just about abortion or Planned Parenthood.



Image courtesy of plannedparenthood.org

Likewise, without affordable childcare women would be less likely to work outside the home." Although Harris-Perry's take sounds a bit like a conspiracy theory, I think she is right to point out that GOP legislators (who are known as the party of the rich white male) are extremely likely

to overlook the effect of their actions on the plight of women, if not downright purposely ignore it.

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Sex Tech

THE SEX AND RELATIONSHIP ADVICE COLUMN

Sweet Pseudonym

SEXTECH EDITOR

It's my pleasure to hand over the responsibility of answering all of your burning (ha) sex questions to a multitude of new people this week. And the reason for that? Sex Week 2011 is here!

Sex Week 2011 is a week (which started this past Monday, and will go until this coming Sunday) that aims to create a campus environment where open talk about sex is okay.

It's a bunch of events involving a ton of

different speakers that aim to make it fun and easy for you to communicate with each other about sex. You may be saying that's crude, and calling it unnecessary, but I would have to wholeheartedly disagree.

My entire ethos about sex revolves around open communication. When you aren't communicating, you probably aren't having fun, and if you aren't having fun, why are you having sex? Sex should be one of the most pleasurable acts that you get to commit in any given day, week, year... and if isn't, that needs to change.

You should be able to tell your boyfriend that you want him to spank you while you're having sex! And he should be able to tell you how many partners he's had without feeling guilty. Sex Week is all about opening your mind and mouth and committing yourself to communicating about sex.

On an even more serious note, it's also very likely that if your partner(s) and you

aren't communicating, then you aren't being safe. Studies have shown that a campus environment that promotes open sexual communication is likely to suffer much fewer instances of sexual assault. And you know what? I would say that alone makes Sex Week a worthwhile event on IIT's campus.

There are going to be events every day, usually at both lunchtime and dinner. They'll range from "BDSM 101," presented by sexologist Sarah Sloane Wednesday night at 9 p.m. in Perlstein 108, to a workshop about communication in relationships, led by Dr. Jean Tzou from IIT's Counseling Center on Friday during the lunch hour in the MTCC Executive Conference Room.

There will also be queerer events, like tonight's 7 p.m. "Bi-curiosity" workshop with sexologist Laura Clair in the MTCC Executive Conference room and Saturday's "Being LGBT and Dealing with Sex" workshop at 6 p.m. in the MTCC Executive Conference

Room.

Other groups are also hosting events within the framework of Sex Week, most notably GLAM's "In Good Conscience" screening and speaker from 7-9 p.m. on Thursday in the MTCC Auditorium.

The whole week is going to culminate in keynote speaker Megan Andelloux's "Oh oh oh! Female Orgasm," at 3 p.m. on Sunday in the MTCC Auditorium. There will even be free giveaways and a raffle!

The main point is: GO. Inform yourself, meet cool people, and get awesome free stuff. And if you can't stop by to an event, at least check out Feminists United on the MTCC Bridge during lunch this week. They'll have free condoms to give away, along with tons of information!

For more information, email iit.feministsunited@gmail.com or just check out "IIT Sex Week" on Facebook.