



Ship Life



Fempowerment carnival illuminates healthy and safe sex habits

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Staff Contributor

Shippensburg University's Women and Gender Studies Department hosted its Fempowfest Sex Ed Carnival on Thursday in the Ceddia Union Building. The fair focused on sex positivity and safety, as many stations had interactive and educational activities.

The PAGE Center had its own table that featured information about gender-based violence and support, as well as Transgender Day of Remembrance. The table also included free condoms and a safer sex raffle quiz, where all participants who scored 70% or higher were eligible to enter a raffle to win a sex toy.

The Frederick Douglass Institute at Shippensburg University also had a table, focusing on bringing awareness to the higher prevalence of Black Americans impacted by STDs and the factors that may lead to this disparity.

There was also a trifold poster of positive affirmations, inviting participants to take what they need or give what they can. In addition to this, another trifold presentation offered information about the values held by the institute, as well as quotes from significant figures such as Desmond Tutu, a South

African theologian and human rights activist.

The Frederick Douglass Institute holds five core principles: scholarship, inclusivity, social justice, civic engagement and empowerment, offering a safe space for students to speak freely and have a group of supporters.

The "red and green flag relationship" table offered many complimentary items, like condoms, stress toys and more. The table also provided several handouts, one of which listed campus resources like the SU PAGE Center, the Counseling Center, the Office of Title IX, and SUPD. Off-campus resources and organizations were also listed, such as Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties, YWCA Carlisle, Women in Need Victim services, and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

The students of the special education department at SU presented a table that was fully dedicated to sex ed and disability. Information was provided about some of the barriers that students with disabilities may have to overcome to combat misinformation about sexuality in individuals with disabilities. Strategies for overcoming these challenges were also presented for students, families and

teachers/administrators to learn from and develop their knowledge.

The Bio Honor Society had a table with Bio Jeopardy, as well as an array of male and female condoms, Lion's Den temporary tattoos, and stress toys. SU's Chem Club offered trivia to "learn the chemistry of you." The sociology/



Madison Sharp / The Slate

SU's Women and Gender Studies Department hosted its Fempowfest Sex Ed Carnival on Nov. 14 to educate students about safe sex habits.

anthropology department also had a station at the event that provided sex education information specific to Pennsylvania. This focused mainly on LGBTQ+ and disability education and inclusion.

In another room, attendees could participate in activities to win raffle

tickets to baskets of different kinds. Participants received tickets to enter for a chance to win sex toys, accessories and lubricants, many from the Lion's Den.

The Women and Gender Studies table offered educational opportunities for students to learn about different related courses at

animal table where students could ask for balloons shaped into different shapes. Some of the most popular balloon variations included balloon penises and vaginas. There was one table that featured the "Sex Ed Wheel," where students were to spin the wheel and answer three sex-related questions. If the questions were answered correctly, the student would win a raffle ticket to put toward a basket of their choice.

The feminist fortune teller station included information about the historical view of fortune telling being "women's work." The table outlined gendered occupation, economic necessity, social stigma, feminist representation and the tarot and feminist theory.

The kissing booth of knowledge had students answering questions about consent and its importance. If the questions were answered correctly, the student could win a prize of candy, a stress toy or another small prize. With information provided by Planned Parenthood, the table showed that consent is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specific.

According to Planned Parenthood, "Without consent, sexual activity (oral sex, genital touching, vaginal/anal penetration) is sexual assault or rape."

In the back of the room, the "Dildo Ring Toss" was a hit, as students formed a line to wait their turns. Generally self-explanatory, students could throw a ring and compete to hook it on the purple dildo. This table also included information on male and female genital anatomy, as well as the different erogenous zones. Similarly, there was another tossing game called "Can you Hit the Clit?"

Next was the "pleasure zone" which was the area of food, supplying students with many different options to choose from including corn dogs, pizza, walking tacos and pastries. SU's WSYC-FM was in charge of the music and played upbeat tunes during the event.

The Fempowerment Fair by the PAGE Center was an event for all of campus to experience, learn and celebrate safe sexual activity and education in a nonjudgmental space. This allows students to embrace their sexuality and learn about the importance of consent, as well as respect for others with different backgrounds. These are conversations that sometimes may seem taboo, but the event unlocked a new level of comfortability in sexuality, inviting people in to embrace, encourage and support one another.

the university. It also outlined some of the significant figures within the department that have positively influenced the community. The table also had a game to guess the amount of candy penises in a jar, where the student with the closest guess would win the jar.

There was a balloon

Cole Pearson: 'Be awkward, be cringey, be weird'

Megan Sawka and Mara Eberle
Ship Life Editor and Asst. Ship Life Editor

If you have spent any amount of time at Shippensburg University, you probably know Cole Pearson. In fact, Pearson is so involved that he can barely name every organization of which he is a member.

When you walk across campus with Pearson, the connections he has fostered are clear. He is not afraid to greet everyone he knows and is not afraid to be himself. Pearson sees each of his roles on campus as an extension of what he already does.

"I go out of my way to be like, 'Hey, how are you?'" Pearson said. "I need that connection and I enjoy that connection very much."

Working as a Peer Anchor, chemistry tutor, and mentor for chemistry and the Wood Honors College, Pearson strongly values connection and community. Pearson emphasized he wanted to be a Peer Anchor to meet new people and leave an impact.

"I enjoy the fostering of community incidentally, not intentionally," Pearson said.

Despite being a chemistry major with minors in math and German, Pearson is quite a creative. He is passionate about music and expresses that through his own radio show on WSYC, String World. Pearson also writes news stories for WSYC News, typically about international conflict.

Pearson's passion for the arts began before his time at SU, as he was very involved in musical theater throughout high school and was the president of his high school drama club



Megan Sawka / The Slate

Abby Lumadue (left) and Cole Pearson (right) are both Peer Anchors and mentors to freshmen students in the Wood Honors College.

during his junior and senior years. Now, he carries the lessons he has learned in the arts into his daily life.

"If you are afraid to do things in front of an audience, like be awkward, cringy, weird, it will be awkward, cringy and weird. So you've got to get past that barrier," Pearson said. "Learning to just find comfort in what is typically very uncomfortable, or at least finding your footing on that, was what I took from it the most."

Pearson is shockingly humble despite his hefty resume. He is not eager to boast about his achievements and even says there are no important things about him. However, he emphasizes

Courtesy of the Wood Honors College
Cole Pearson serves as a mentor in many ways, including to students in the Wood Honors College.

the importance of hard work and knowledge in his life.

"No matter how smart you are, if you don't put the work in, you aren't getting anywhere," Pearson said. "I think there's fun to be had in work."

Inspired by his parents, Pearson values putting effort into everything he does. He learned the true value of education during his two years working in a UPS warehouse.

"That makes you really appreciate your time in college and the value of education," Pearson said. "I'm generally more positive, like all I get to do is learn."

Pearson tries to move throughout his life with a positive outlook, while also recognizing that the world is not always great. "Being positive, not in an annoying way, but 'God, this sucks, but I'm alive,'" Pearson said.

Pearson strives to make the most out of his education and opportunities. This past summer, he participated in a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) focused on physical chemistry at Arizona State University. The experience was not only an amazing one, but it gave Pearson a better insight into what he wants his future to look

like.

"I learned I really love computer stuff which is huge now in chemistry," Pearson said. "So I will probably go to get my Ph.D. somewhere in a field related to computational biochemistry, which is like using computers to develop drugs, discover proteins, discover molecules. A lot of cool stuff."

Another testament to Pearson's hard work was his development of GER-190: "German Beer Culture: Products, Practices, and Perspectives." Pearson assisted Alison Feeney, chair of the Department of Geography and Earth Science, and David Wildermuth, associate professor of the Global Languages Department in developing the course.

Pearson then took the course when it was offered in the spring of 2024. Over spring break, students had the opportunity to travel to various countries, including Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.

Pearson also assists with Ship Votes, the on-campus organization that encourages and helps students with the processes of registering to vote and voting. Pearson tabled for the organization as much as he could and gave speeches at various events, including to the entire Wood Honors College. "It's an important personal value type thing, I think, regardless of how you vote," Pearson said.

Above all, Pearson values personal connection. "Cole Pearson is a great person to be around, someone who you get to meet and know you just have to keep in your inner circle," said Sherlyn Martinez, an SU student and close friend of Pearson. "He is uplifting, positive and, most importantly, a true friend."

Pearson spoke about how to build relationships despite awkwardness. "There's like a barrier of awkwardness that I think I've just always been like completely, I wouldn't say comfortable, but OK with entering," Pearson said. "It prevents most people from saying hi to someone that they had a class with six months ago and maybe don't even know their name. So I think that's it. I'm just not forgetting people saying hello."

If you see Cole Pearson around on the SU campus, make sure to wave and say hi. You never know what connections you are going to be able to make.