

Nicole Perry, Bryn Mawr College

Following in the footsteps of several eminent colleges and universities, Bryn Mawr College has adopted a long-awaited dissection choice policy. After seven years of grappling with the campus Animal Liberation Collective, the Biology Department has agreed to post the policy in a conspicuous spot on its website and syllabi, and to announce the option on the first day of class. The policy will give Biology students the choice to opt out of dissection "...if alternative activities are available and deemed consistent with the pedagogical objectives of the course." Additionally, the policy allows students "...to pursue alternate laboratory activities without penalty."

The Animal Liberation Collective (ALC) has worked conjointly with AAVS to implement this policy at Bryn Mawr College. To start the process, AAVS provided the student group with literature and suggested they present a petition to the Biology Department. The ALC gathered signatures of one hundred students supporting the right to choose dissection alternatives. AAVS then helped the student activists write the original dissection choice policy, which was presented to the Biology Department along with the petition. AAVS followed up by hosting a workshop for professors at the school, demonstrating with videos and models the benefits and competence of dissection alternatives.

The ALC's mission is "...to raise awareness about the plight of animals as victims of institutionalized exploitation and to find common ground between the animal rights ideology/movement and other social justice movements." The dissection choice policy was one of the first campaigns the ALC began at the College. It was one of the longer struggles that the small campus group faced. In its earlier years, the group was also involved in getting more and better vegan and vegetarian options in the dining halls. The group provided the dining staff with simple, savory recipes and even held a workshop for the cooks, explaining what 'veganism' is and demonstrating how to cook healthy vegan meals. Most recently, the students succeeded in impressing the campus dining services to participate in the Great American Meat Out. For the past two years, the Bryn Mawr College Dining Services have served only meatless dinners in at least one of their dining halls for Meat Out. The ALC supplements the event by tabling in the campus center, distributing flyers, and chalking vegetarian facts around campus, and giving out free vegan treats to other students and staff. The first campus-wide Meat Out was such a success that the second was expanded to include two out of the three campus dining halls.

The ALC has also hosted such fine speakers at the College as Dr. Michael Greger. Additionally, student activists have staged an "I'd rather go naked than wear fur" campaign, and have done general vegan outreach at the College.

The dissection choice policy is a great success for both animal and students' rights. More and more students are recognizing they have the ability to influence their colleges and universities, as the Animal Liberation Collective did at Bryn Mawr, and as student advocates at Cornell, Vassar, and Virginia Tech also did.

Next, the ALC plans to work with the Psychology Department to find alternatives to its experiments with pigeons.

Nicole Perry, 21, is a senior studying anthropology and peace/conflict studies at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. She is an active member of the Animal Liberation Collective (ALC) and participates in animal advocacy groups in the Philadelphia area as well. After graduation, she plans to find an animal rights-related job and continue her education in peace studies.