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Suffolk University to Launch “Our Bodies Ourselves Today”

Center for Health & Human Rights partners with Our Bodies Ourselves to create global online resource

BOSTON—Suffolk University is taking steps to reinvigorate the mission of the trailblazing Our Bodies Ourselves, which a year ago announced that it would suspend plans to produce any new print publications as it transitioned to a primarily volunteer-driven organization.

The University’s Center for Women’s Health & Human Rights, in partnership with Our Bodies Ourselves (OBOS), is launching Our Bodies Ourselves Today (OBOST), a global online resource that will draw upon Our Bodies Ourselves’ 50 years of experience and collaboration with groups working in women’s health, reproduction, and sexuality.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to build on the powerful legacy of Our Bodies Ourselves. It’s such an honor to be able to carry that torch,” said Suffolk University Sociology Professor Amy Agigian, director of Our Bodies Ourselves Today. “It’s amazing to begin to talk to people about the project and feel the level of support from women whose lives have been changed by Our Bodies Ourselves. There is still so much work to do, and we are eager to carry on the OBOS legacy of providing women’s health, reproduction, and sexuality information, with a focus on inclusiveness and intersectionality.”

A small group of women fomented a revolution in women’s health in 1969 when they began researching and discussing taboo sexuality and health-related experiences, eventually publishing a booklet, and then a book, that offered frank information demystifying many aspects of women’s health and encouraging women to be more assertive in confronting the sexism, racism, and other forms of bias experienced during medical encounters. The book and related publications have been published in more than 30 languages.

“This is an exciting opportunity for an intergenerational conversation that will help advance our efforts to achieve reproductive justice for all,” said Judy Norsigian, cofounder and board chair of Our Bodies Ourselves. “And the new collaboration between Our Bodies Ourselves and Suffolk will enable the continued dissemination of accurate and accessible information written from a feminist perspective.”

Celebrating 50 years of Our Bodies Ourselves

The fully developed website will launch in early 2020 with content in the following core areas that will be vetted by experts and updated regularly to ensure accuracy, reliability, and relevance:

- Childbirth
- Heart health
- Menstrual health
- Abortion
- Sexuality
- Gender-based violence
- Mental health

Our Bodies Ourselves Today content will continue the tradition of combining personal stories with factual information, voicing the perspectives of diverse groups and addressing issues such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, class, ageism, disability, and immigration status.

Several Suffolk student interns are working with Agigian to move the project forward.

“Our Bodies Ourselves’ history of providing accurate trustworthy, accessible, and intersectional information about Women’s health, rights and resources since the seventies, immediately drew me to the project,” said Queen-Cheyenne Wade, Class of 2020, a Sociology major who has focused on communicating the importance of the new resource to University clubs and organizations. She has organized and hosted events to promote the 2020 site launch, including an appearance by advocate Lovern Gordon, founder of Love Life Now, to talk about domestic violence on college campuses.

As it works to launch the new online resource, Suffolk University will celebrate 50 years of Our Bodies Ourselves and the launch of the new phase—Our Bodies Ourselves Today—on Friday, May10, in Suffolk University’s Sargent Hall, 120 Tremont St., Boston.

A panel discussion will explore past accomplishments, activism today, and Our Bodies Ourselves Today’s vision and actions as it looks to the future. The discussion will take place from 5-7 p.m., with a reception to follow at 7 p.m.

Panelists

Amy Agigian, director of the Suffolk’s Center for Women’s Health & Human Right, and of the new Our Bodies Ourselves Today initiative

Sabrina Dias, student activist

Miriam Hawley, Our Bodies Ourselves founder

Mariya Patwa, Our Bodies Ourselves board member

Norma Swenson, Our Bodies Ourselves founder

Queen-Cheyenne Wade, student activist

Suffolk University, located in historic downtown Boston, with an international campus in Madrid, is a student-centered institution distinguished by excellence in education and scholarship. Suffolk University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs. Its mission is to empower graduates to be successful locally, regionally and globally.