



Sex Toys 101 and Other Lessons From Yale Sex Week

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Yale students accustomed to competing for straight-A's will be vying for triple X's this weekend as they compete to win a porn-star look-alike contest. It's that time of year again: the return of the Ivy League school's controversial Sex Week.

During eight days of programming, students can learn everything from how to achieve a state beyond bliss to the proper application of personal lubricants.

And it's all free, once mom and dad have covered the \$45,000 for room, board and tuition.

Nonetheless, some say Sex Week has no place in the classroom.

"I don't see the need for college students to talk to each other about sex anymore than they already do," said sophomore Jake McGuire, who has been writing about the events for the school's conservative Yale Free Press newspaper.

"Call me a curmudgeon, but I find that my daily ritual of waking up with a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a copy of the YD"N" (Yale Daily News) is a little less pleasant when a smiling freshman holding a string of anal beads is staring back at me from the front page," blogger Will Wilson wrote on the Yale Free Press blog.

[Click here to read the blog.](#)

In 2004, the biennial event won the Collegiate Network's Campus Outrage Award. Now in its fourth incarnation, Sex Week at Yale 2008 includes a lecture by a VH1 host of "The Pick-Up Artist" and the aforementioned off-campus "Skull and Boned" party, where students who dress as porn stars will be judged on their resemblance by an adult-film director.

[Click here to see the Sex Week at Yale Web site.](#)

Wilson referred to an event early in the week, when students packed an auditorium on a blustery Tuesday evening to learn about the latest in sex-toy technology.

"Do you want to see some of these?" Patty Brisben, the CEO of sex-toy company Pure Romance, asked the crowd last week at a seminar on sex-toy technology, motioning to a lecture table filled with a rainbow array of creams, salves and bedroom gadgets. She got a resounding "yes."

Brisben's Ohio-based company sponsors the week of sex programming at Yale. On Tuesday, she called on student volunteers who got to keep the product she demonstrated upon them. Later that evening, at a girls-only cocktail event in a New Haven bar, attendees listened as Brisben demonstrated vibrating sponges and other toys.

"If you've taught your children what you believe to be the right morals in life, I don't think that just having a Sex Week is going to corrupt them," said Brisben, who travels to more than a dozen universities each year to deliver her talk. "It's going to empower them even more so to have the knowledge."

But McGuire said the week tarnishes the reputation of "Yalies" who come to the school "to become leaders."

"I told my folks the other night and my Dad gave me the 'Oh, I'm paying \$50,000 a year for the Sex Week' thing," said McGuire, who had plans to protest Sex Week with some of his friends.

Organizers, however, say Sex Week provides a creative forum to discuss the topic.

A discussion on porn with adult stars Ron Jeremy and Monique Alexander and Craig Gross, the founder of the XXXchurch.com, and a lecture on sex and spirituality that includes abstinence proponent Dawn Eden are expected to draw crowds. The week also offers a sexually transmitted disease screening drive.

"What we want to do is get people talking," said Victoria Wild, a senior.

A companion Sex Week at Yale Magazine offers tips on making your dorm room a college love pad. It also has articles on hooking up, students who are parents, and an interview with the founder of Harvard's abstinence group.

Students on Old Campus crammed the aisles Tuesday under a Tiffany glass window that featured images of "Purity," "Faith" and "Hope," but appropriately enough, not "Chastity," for a lecture on the female orgasm by sexologist Logan Levkoff.

"Especially nowadays, where so many people are coming out of abstinence-only education, where they get little-to-no information about sex, and they find themselves in a world where now they're making decisions about their bodies and don't have the resources, these events are really wonderful," Levkoff said after the lecture.

Joe Citarrella, a senior and the director of Sex Week 2008, said the group chooses speakers who will provoke and educate.

"If students are going to be sexually active, we want them to be educated about sex and relationships and love and intimacy," he said. "And we want them to be safe and sexually healthy."

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