

Students for Life Releases Report on Catholic Schools with Ties to Planned Parenthood

by Laretta Brown

When Catholic institutions of higher learning publicly associate with Planned Parenthood despite the Church's clear teaching on the grave evil of abortion, faithful students and alumni should take note. A recent report from Students for Life can help them do just that. The group investigated 784 Christian institutions, including 237 Catholic schools, and initially found that 103 Christian schools, including 22 Catholic schools, were connected with Planned Parenthood.

After Students for Life reached out to schools with links to the abortion giant, a third of them cut those ties, and the number dropped to 69 schools total, including eight Catholic institutions. The report, released in December, investigated the websites of Christian schools over the fall of 2021 and identified relationships to Planned Parenthood that included promoting the organization as an internship opportunity for credit, promoting it as a student resource, advertising or partnering on a Planned Parenthood event from 2019 onward, and promoting the group as a volunteer or career opportunity. Schools with these ties to Planned Parenthood were emailed and called in September and October of 2021, prior to the report's release, giving them a chance to remove the references to the organization.

Lauren Enriquez, deputy media strategist with Students for Life, told the Register that the report was meant to hold these schools accountable to "the students that go there, the alumni, especially if they're donors, and parents who are going to be paying their kids' tuition to go to these schools." According to their latest annual report, Planned Parenthood performed 354,871 abortions in the past year. Enriquez said that pro-life stakeholders in Christian and Catholic schools "need to be aware" when an institution is connected with the abortion giant.

Catholic Schools Graded on Planned Parenthood Ties

The six Catholic schools that the Register found still had links to the abortion provider on their websites were St. Michael's College in Vermont, Sacred Heart University of Connecticut, The College of St. John Fisher in New York, The College of St. Rose in New York, St. Joseph's University of Pennsylvania, and Felician University in New Jersey. None of the schools returned the Register's request for comments on the report's findings by press time.

Another Catholic school listed at the time of the report's release, Trinity Washington University in D.C., had a link to Planned Parenthood as a women's health resource, according to screenshots from the report, but the link is no longer publicly visible and now requires a Trinity access login. The university did not return the Register's query as to whether Planned Parenthood was still provided as a resource for students in some way or if the information had been removed entirely.

The colleges received letter grades in the report based on how many times a school's website referenced Planned Parenthood. St. Michael's College of Vermont earned the lowest grade of an "F" among Catholic schools in the report, as it listed Planned Parenthood as a resource on five separate occasions under student health services, including for contraception, dating and relationships, and men's health.

Sacred Heart University of Connecticut got a "D" for promoting Planned Parenthood as an applied practice experience for a student getting a master's degree in public health. It also listed the organization as a "pandemic fatigue" resource, but has taken down that link since it was noted in the report. The school did not respond to the Register's inquiry about whether the link was removed due to the school's Catholic identity and whether the website's remaining references to Planned Parenthood were in keeping with that identity.

St. John Fisher College of New York, another "D" school, hosted employees from Planned Parenthood at a 2019 career-center event, listed the organization as a rape resource, and promoted it at a career event. The College of St. Rose in New York has a "C" rating, as it lists Planned Parenthood as an internship site and under "Ways to Serve" social-justice and advocacy suggestions. Schools that earned a "B" rating were St. Joseph's University of Pennsylvania, which lists Planned Parenthood as a "LGBTQ" resource, and Felician University of New Jersey, which has Planned Parenthood as a referral option for students in its Psy.D. handbook.

The report found that 14 of the 22 Catholic schools the group contacted severed their connection to the organization after being informed of it. Catholic schools that removed their website's links to Planned Parenthood included Fordham University in New York and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Enriquez noted that "the Catholic schools were the most likely to cut ties" after being questioned regarding the connection. She believed this was due to the Catholic Church's clear "theology and doctrine in favor of the dignity of life and against abortion," saying "it would be really hard" for a Catholic school to "argue that they were somehow following the teachings of the Church by promoting Planned Parenthood."

Students for Life report had incorrectly stated that Planned Parenthood was listed as a resource for Marymount University in Virginia in a web design and two social media classes. However, the university clarified to the Register that Student for Life report's linked reference to Planned Parenthood found in to two student assignments available through a Marymount commons website. Marymount has since clarified that the links were to websites that are "student-created WordPress pages on the Marymount digital commons. The students created their individual pages for class use only during the Fall 2020 semester."

However, the problem of Catholic colleges associating with Planned Parenthood seems to be ongoing, as after the report collected its findings, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles allowed a student club, Women in Politics, to hold a fundraiser for Planned Parenthood on campus. "The events, actions, or positions of student organizations, including Women in Politics, are not endorsed by the university," the school said in a November statement to Catholic News Agency. "However, the existence of these student organizations and their activities are living examples that LMU embraces its mission, commitments, and the complexities of free and honest discourse." They said the school "remains committed to its Catholic, Jesuit, and Marymount heritage, values, and intellectual traditions." Enriquez said the "silver lining" to that incident was that it motivated pro-life students on campus to act, including student Megan Glaudini, who resurrected the school's long inactive pro-life group VITA and led a Rosary rally.

Pro-Life Resources on Campus

In addition to holding schools with ties to Planned Parenthood accountable, the project gave a special "A+" rating to 49 schools that promoted "free, local and nonviolent abortion-alternative resources on campus." Eighteen of those schools, more than a third of the total, were Catholic. Enriquez referenced the "Standing With You" initiative of Students for Life, utilized by many of the pro-life schools nationwide, which provides information about resources for young pregnant mothers in every state as well as information about balancing college life as a new mom.

Among these schools offering pro-life resources, she highlighted Ave Maria University's "Campus Care" initiative, which is a "student-led, staff-supported initiative dedicated to providing support and resources to pregnant and parenting students." Services provided by the initiative include "pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, STI testing, mentoring, material assistance, housing accommodations, post-abortion healing, academic support, spiritual direction, peer support, baby showers, and free childcare to our undergraduate parents." She added that the school has a babysitting program with student volunteers so that students who are parents can still attend classes and participate in campus life.

She also praised Holy Cross College in Massachusetts for its pastoral care offerings for pregnant students, including a promise to give pregnant students "a caring, supportive environment" and work with them to "develop a plan" for completing their degree.

Overall, Enriquez said that she was impressed by the outcome of one in three schools cutting ties with Planned Parenthood after they were contacted by Students for Life. She said the group will "continue to monitor" the issue and encouraged students "if they're aware of pro-life resources being promoted or the abortion industry being promoted" on campus to reach out via email at christianschools@studentsforlife.org.

Copyright © 2022 [National Catholic Register](#)

Lauretta Brown is the Register's Washington-based staff writer.

Posted on [StayCatholic.com](#)