



# ASGBV RECOMMENDATIONS LIST



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These recommendations were produced and ratified by the University Students' Council in September 2021 and have been endorsed by the Safe Campus Coalition, the body of student organizers behind the September 17th, 2021 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Walkout, attended by thousands of students and community members. Please see the USC's 2022 Anti-Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy Paper for additional recommendations.



# FORWARD

Western University's return to campus for the 2021/2022 school year has been framed by the hurt and anger coming out of the allegations of sexual violence that took place during Orientation Week. This led Western to create Task Force on Sexual Violence and Student Safety and announce a number of new safety and support measures.<sup>1</sup> As part of this year's review of the USC's Womxn's Policy Paper, the USC has a number of recommendations to add to the broader conversation on gender-based violence on campus, and looks forward to working with both Western administrators and provincial partners to ensure that students are safe both during their time at Western and beyond.

University-related sexual assault is a widespread problem that affects approximately 25% of female students during their time at university. It also impacts a smaller but significant number of male students on university campuses.<sup>2 3 4</sup> Studies also show that different demographics are more at risk of gender-based violence than others. Survivors of gender-based violence from minority ethnic and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) communities are less likely to access specialist support following an incident of gender-based violence than other members of the general population.<sup>5</sup> First-year university students are also especially at risk for experiencing acts of gender-based violence. <sup>6</sup>Furthermore, Western University was identified as an area where women felt particularly unsafe in London in the London Safe Cities Report, which was conducted in 2018.<sup>7</sup> This research further enforces the importance of having a firm and survivor-centric approach to address gender-based violence at all universities.

It is vital that Western University work with students and community members to address the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence on campus. This document, which has been

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1 Western University. (2021). Western launches action plan and Task Force on Sexual Violence and Student Safety. <https://news.westernu.ca/2021/09/western-action-plan-task-force-sexual-violence-student-safety/>

2 W. DeKeseredy and K. Kelly, The Incidence and Prevalence of Woman Abuse in Canadian University and College Dating Relationships, (The Canadian Journal of Sociology 1993), 137-59.

3 B. S. Fisher, L. E. Daigle, F. T. Cullen, and M. G. Turner, "Reporting Sexual Victimization to the Police and Others: Results from a National-Level Study of College Women," ( Criminal Justice and Behaviour , 2003), 6-38.

4 C. P. Krebs, et al., College Women's Experiences with Physically Forced, Alcohol- or Other Drug Enabled, and Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Before and Since Entering College, (Journal of American College Health 57, 2009), 639-49.

5 Gillian Love et al., Improving Access to Sexual Violence Support for Marginalised Individuals: Findings from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. (Critical and Radical Social Work 5, no. 2, 2017): 163-179.

6 S. Cranney, The Relationship Between Sexual Victimization and Year in School in U.S. Colleges: Investigating the Parameters of the "Red Zone," ( Journal of Interpersonal Violence , 30 (17), 2015), 3133-3145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514554425>

7 London Safe Cities Report , (City of London Ontario Canada, 2019).



unanimously endorsed by our Council of elected student representatives, outlines the USC's recommendations for Western University in order to create a safer and more equitable campus.



# PREVENTION

Upstream prevention education and prioritizing the voices of survivors are vital. Prevention work should be progressive, evidence-informed, and survivor-centric in order to proactively mitigate sexual and gender-based violence before it happens.

- ❑ Western University should immediately **require and provide consent-training modules for all current campus community members** (ie. faculty, students, and staff);
- ❑ Western University should **mandate consent-training modules for all future campus community members** (ie. faculty, students, and staff) moving forward;
- ❑ Western University should **prioritize listening circles and consultations with survivors** when reviewing the recently-implemented Policy on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence in the 2022/23 academic year;

The Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety reported that in 2019, 71% of students at post-secondary institutions reported experiencing or witnessing “unwanted sexualized behaviours”.<sup>8</sup> Students must learn about consent, how to safely intervene to prevent acts of gender-based violence, how to support survivors who disclose experiences of gender-based violence and what steps to take to report it. Therefore, the USC recommends that all current and future students of Western University receive consent training, along with faculty and staff of the Western Community. For faculty and staff, ASGBV training should be advocated for in all new faculty contracts negotiated by the university and should be added as a clause when current faculty contracts are up for re-negotiation.

This year, the USC will be reviewing its Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence policy paper. In updating this paper, the USC will prioritize a survivor centric approach in regards to consultations and the creation of the new policy paper. Western should use the recommendations provided by the upcoming Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence policy paper by the USC, along with prioritize the listening circles and consultations with survivors, in order to ensure that the Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence policies at Western reflect the concerns and needs of students on campus. A survivor-centric approach to Gender-Based Violence and

<sup>8</sup> Marta Burczycka, “Students’ Experiences of Unwanted Sexualized Behaviours and Sexual Assault at Postsecondary Schools in the Canadian Provinces,” Government of Canada, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, September 14, 2020), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>.



Sexual Violence prioritizes an environment that listens to survivors and acts in a manner that reflects their wishes and concerns.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> UN Women, “Survivor-Centred Approach,” Survivor-centred approach, 2013, <https://endvawnow.org/en/articles/1499-aproche-axee-sur-les-survivantes-.html>.



# RESPONSE

Western's response to the violence our campus has had to navigate this September must be trauma-informed, intersectional, and recognize that sexual and gender-based violence is an equity issue as well as a safety issue.

- Western University should **equip all incoming students with campus and community sexual- and gender-based violence response resources**;
- Western University should **consolidate and centralize sexual- and gender-based violence reporting under the portfolio of the AVP EDI** and include addressing such violence as a strategic priority of the portfolio;
- Western University should **commit to a third-party investigation** of the violence which occurred on 10 September 2021;
- Western University should **introduce a third-party sexual- and gender-based violence reporting tool** for campus community members; and
- Western University should ensure that **equity-oriented approaches** to sexual and gender-based violence are **prioritized** in the work that **the new Task Force on Student Safety and Sexual Violence** takes on.

26.4% of female undergraduate students and 6.8% of male students experience sexual assault in University.<sup>10</sup> When assaulted, only 20% of female students will report to law enforcement. Additionally, during the first semesters at University, there is an increased rate of sexual assault, with over 50% of sexual assaults in University occurring in the first few months of the academic year.<sup>11</sup> With those statistics in mind, it is clear that students should be made aware of the variety of resources available on and off-campus and informed about how to navigate disclosure and reporting processes at Western prior to coming to Western. Upon accepting admissions to Western, new students should receive harm reduction materials regarding sexual and gender-based violence that include educational materials regarding consent, bystander intervention, current policies, how to access Gender-Based Violence and Survivor Support, and Foot Patrol. Western students must be aware of not only the resources

10 RAINN, "Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics," RAINN, 2021, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>.  
11 Ibid.



available but also resources to contact if sexual assault does occur, and this approach allows them to access these resources before the busy first few weeks of the new school year. It also ensures that, in the event that first years students do experience a sexual assault, they are already aware of the resources available and not trying to navigate that process in the midst of a traumatic experience.

The process of reporting and disclosing sexual and gender-based violence should be made simple and navigable for students in crisis. Following sexual and gender-based violence, survivors can be in a state of “shock/disorganization,” which means that it is important that the response process be as survivor-centric and accessible as possible.<sup>12</sup> To move towards this goal, Western should centralize the reporting procedure under the portfolio of the AVP EDI. By centralizing the reporting procedure to one specific portfolio in addition to instructing students on the use of it, students will be able to more effectively report sexual and gender-based violence. As sexual assault and gender-based violence are matters of equity in addition to being safety concerns, reporting and related supports should be included in the AVP EDI’s portfolio.

In order to investigate the events of September 2021, Western should engage a third party investigator. This would support students who do not currently have high levels of trust in Western’s reporting and investigations processes to participate if they choose to do so, and may result in a more fulsome understanding of what occurred during Orientation Week and after. This information could then inform the work of the Task Force on Sexual Violence and Student Safety. A third party investigation could also shed light on elements of campus culture that enable gender-based violence in a way that can be difficult to do for those who are part of that culture, as unconscious as campus community members may be of the influence of those elements on their own work.

The USC’s previous policy paper, Womxn’s Policy Paper, recommends the use of a third-party reporting system that allows sexual assault survivors to report their experiences through a specialized online forum.<sup>13</sup> This forum allows for survivors to save information and evidence electronically and have the option to report their assailant on the spot, or to withhold their report until that assailant is reported by another student in the online forum. By giving information that uniquely identifies the perpetrator, the report of gender-based violence would only be given to Western’s administration if the same assailant was reported by another student. 15% of all reports entered into the website matched with another victim of the same assailant, causing them to report simultaneously.<sup>14</sup> If Western were to implement a similar third-party reporting

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12 Rape Crisis Center, “Feelings & Stages Following a Sexual Assault,” Rape Crisis Center, April 26, 2017, <https://thercc.org/get-support/after-an-assault/feelings-stages-following-sexual-assault/>.

13 Callisto: Tech to Combat Sexual Violence, Year Three of Combating Sexual Assault, Empowering Survivors and Advancing Justice: 2017-2018 Academic Year Report, (2018),

14 Ibid, 4.





system for online reporting of gender-based violence on campus, it would be a significant step in supporting survivors of gender-based assault and would strategically target repeat offenders.

Though the USC’s 2019 Womxn’s Policy Paper suggests the use of ‘Callisto: Tech to Combat Sexual Assault’ as a third-party reporting system, in 2020 REES (Respect, Educate and Empower Survivors) launched on campuses in Canada.<sup>15</sup> REES partners with campuses across North America, providing customizable reporting, support, and data gathering functions.<sup>16</sup> As a system for reporting sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault, the program is able to reduce barriers for survivors, act as a centralized reporting tool access 24/7, and collect data based to help create prevention and support programs. REES has specific programming that targets sexual and gender-based violence on campuses.<sup>17</sup> The USC recommends that Western invest in and introduce REES as a third party investigation and reporting tool.

All reporting, support, and investigation, whether carried out by a third party or internal body, should be provided with an intersectional and equity-focused lens. In September 2021, Western announced the creation of a Task Force on Sexual Violence and Student Safety as a result of the events that occurred during Orientation Week. This Task Force is working to ensure students feel safe on campus by working “to better understand and eradicate sexual violence and create a campus culture where these unacceptable actions are prevented.”<sup>18</sup> Given that personal identities deeply impact the experiences students have of both gender-based violence and campus culture more broadly, the USC recommends that Western ensure that an intersectional lens is taken when the task force takes a comprehensive look at current campus safety, policies and culture.

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15 Lobson, Mary. “Online Reporting of Sexual Violence On Campus Set to Launch.” Courage to Act. July 2020, [www.couragetoact.ca/blog/REES](http://www.couragetoact.ca/blog/REES)

16 REES, “REES on Campus,” <https://www.reescommunity.com/on-campus/>, accessed November 2021.

17 REES, “Rees Community,” REES, July 1, 2021, <https://www.reescommunity.com/>. ; REES, “Rees Campus,” REES, 2021, <https://www.reescommunity.com/on-campus/#Features/Benefits>.

18 Western Communications, “Western Launches Action Plan and Task Force on Sexual Violence and Student Safety,” Western News, November 1, 2021, <https://news.westernu.ca/2021/09/western-action-plan-task-force-sexual-violence-student-safety/>.



# STUDENT SUPPORTS

Having strong supports in place for first year students and student leaders is necessary to empower our community to navigate difficult situations, such as responding to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. These recommendations consider how Western can better equip our students to access support on campus.

- Western University should **reintroduce the live-in Residence Soph program for the 2022/23 academic year;**
- Western University should **permit all Sophs to visit their first-year students in residences effective immediately;**
- Western University should commit to **amending Soph training to include improved gender-based violence prevention and response and suicide prevention and response training, in consultation with Sophs and the USC.**

Residence is one of the first points-of-contact with Western for many students. Residence, positioned to students by the university as “an experience where you’ll feel a sense of belonging like you’ve never felt before,” should be a space where students feel safe and comfortable.<sup>19</sup> Student leaders are often the first point of contact for first-year students at Western who are the most vulnerable, and play an influential role in the transition to University for first-year students. Residence Sophs act as “spirit leaders, academic role models, and mentors to help students connect with campus resources”.<sup>20</sup> This peer mentorship program provides year-long support to help first-years navigate the difficulties of first-year, and ensures that students have a trusted point of contact to help them navigate difficult situations such as gender-based violence should that occur. However, in order for Residence Sophs to be able to fully support first-year students, Western University should reintroduce the live-in Residence Soph program so that students have more supports readily available if and when students need access to them.

In addition to reintegrating Residence Sophs into first-year buildings, faculty Sophs play an influential role in supporting the transition to post-secondary for first-year students, specifically in providing academic support. By allowing faculty Sophs into the residence buildings, they

<sup>19</sup> Western University, “Live Here in First Year,” Residence, A Place for Everyone, 2021, [https://residence.uwo.ca/about/live\\_here\\_in\\_firstyear/index.html](https://residence.uwo.ca/about/live_here_in_firstyear/index.html).

<sup>20</sup> Western University, “Residence Sophs,” Western University, 2021, <https://housing.uwo.ca/learning/get-involved/residence-sophs/>.



are able to better maintain yearlong connections with their First-year students by checking in on them on their floors and providing academic support in with groups in the common study lounges. Faculty sophs also provide additional support as trained bystanders who can intervene should gender-based violence occur, and may be well positioned to intervene early should they see signs of intimate partner violence. Therefore, faculty sophs should be permitted to enter Residence buildings to ensure first-year students are receiving the best possible support during their transition to University.

Peer mentorship interventions rely on the strength of the peer mentors to be successful. Equipping Sophs with a strong foundation in training is essential to their effectiveness in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in residences. All Sophs on campus should be more effectively trained in how to respond to gender-based violence disclosure and preventative measures along with suicide prevention. All Sophs, including residence, faculty and off-campus student leaders help foster long-lasting, meaningful connections and friendships with students that as a result help cultivate a sense of belonging at Western. With additional and more effective training, Orientation Leaders are better equipped to work as advocates for respect and safety to ensure that everyone feels safe in the Western community. Stronger training will enable Sophs to be better equipped to handle issues of sexual violence and how to effectively respond when a first-year discloses sensitive information. Additionally, mental health and suicide training for Sophs will help them be able to better support incoming students in addition to encouraging compassion towards oneself, others and the greater Western Community. Finally, with the right training, Sophs will be better able to influence residence culture in part by modelling the kind of behaviour that will shift the campus community away from one that enables gender-based violence towards one that prioritizes consent, compassion, and respect. In order to develop and provide this training, Western should work in consultation with the USC, ANOVA and other relevant student groups to find more effective training procedures and support services for Sophs in the Orientation program.



# CAMPUS CULTURE

Sexual and gender-based violence has its root causes embedded in cultural and social norms, and systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and others, which create and maintain a culture where inequality and violence are normalized. It is essential to consider how we can change this culture.

- ❑ Western University should ensure the **provision of free-of-charge menstrual products** in all washrooms on campus;
- ❑ Western University should prioritize work through Facilities Management to create a long term plan for **retrofitting existing buildings on campus with gender neutral washrooms**, with an end goal to have a gender-neutral washroom in **every building on campus**;
- ❑ Western University should **review its student recruitment strategies in order to reach different communities** and build a more inclusive and diverse student population.

Menstrual products are a necessity for a large portion of Western’s population, and students who menstruate, including but not limited to female, non-binary, and transgender students, require access to these products in order to move through daily life. Menstrual health is a basic human need, yet around 500 million girls globally struggle to access adequate menstrual products,<sup>21</sup> and Canadian women spend up to \$6,000 in their lifetime on menstrual hygiene products.<sup>22</sup> Not being able to access these products can be a barrier to education because of the financial burden the products provide, and the lack of open access to the products contributes to the unequal burden that those who require them are placed under. Toilet paper is provided free of charge for anyone wishing to use a public restroom - the USC believes that those who require other sanitary products should also be provided with these free of charge.

63% of Canadian women and girls have reported having to miss “an activity because of their period and concerns about not being able to access menstrual hygiene products or proper

21 Cardoso, L.F., A. Scolese, A. Hamidaddin, and J. Gupta. “Period Poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States.” 2021. BMC Women’s Health. <https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5.pdf>.

22 Craggs, S. (2019, December). Hamilton looks at buying menstrual products for low-income women and girls. CBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/femcare-hamilton-1.4939718>



facilities”.<sup>23</sup> Locally, period poverty remains prevalent. To combat this, the Thames Valley District School Board has placed menstrual products in 26 public high schools and 12 alternative education classrooms in London.<sup>24</sup> The provincial government followed, announcing an initiative to distribute six million sanitary products in school boards across the province annually, which can be accessed by students in washrooms free of charge, in order to “build more inclusive schools that empower all girls to have the confidence to succeed”.<sup>25</sup> London City Council has voted to provide free menstrual products to city-owned facilities.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, all three of Western’s Affiliate Colleges (Huron, Brescia, and King’s University Colleges) already provide free menstrual products in washrooms to their students,<sup>27</sup> and larger universities like University of British Columbia have had free menstrual products available in the majority of washrooms since 2019.<sup>28</sup>

In March and April 2019, a pilot project was undertaken by the USC to provide all bathrooms in the UCC with free menstrual products. This pilot project provided these products in male, female, and gender-neutral washrooms and was highly successful, with ample positive feedback received from students. Due to the project’s success and positive reception, the USC would like to see the university build on the success of this student-run pilot project by providing free menstrual products not only all bathrooms within the UCC, but in all washrooms across campus.

Menstrual products are not a luxury - they are a necessity. Plan International reports that feelings of “shock, shame and embarrassment” are often associated with menstruation for women.<sup>29</sup> Additionally in a study done regarding the impacts of period poverty on US students, it was found that two-thirds of those surveyed “have felt stress due to lack of access to period products”.<sup>30</sup> Poor menstrual hygiene can have damaging impacts on the physical and mental health of female-identifying students.<sup>31</sup> As 56.96% of the undergraduate population at Western

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23 Plan International. “New Plan International Canada Research Shows Large Majority of Canadians Support Free Menstrual Hygiene Products in Schools and in the Workplace.” 2019. <https://plancanada.ca/media-centre/plan-intl-canada-releases-new-menstrual-hygiene-research>

24 Liny Lamberink. “‘Menstrual equity’ means free pads, tampons in all-gender bathrooms in London high schools.” October 2018/, [https://globalnews.ca/news/4536096/menstrual-equity-means-free-pads-tampons-in-all-gender-bathrooms-in-london-high-schools/?utm\\_medium=Facebook&utm\\_source=AM980London&fbclid=IwAR2oGRAwWtjU4icBjhKCBBWfcYAG-g5EIQMGk7R-cV-dyzC39YAeMOy6ytno](https://globalnews.ca/news/4536096/menstrual-equity-means-free-pads-tampons-in-all-gender-bathrooms-in-london-high-schools/?utm_medium=Facebook&utm_source=AM980London&fbclid=IwAR2oGRAwWtjU4icBjhKCBBWfcYAG-g5EIQMGk7R-cV-dyzC39YAeMOy6ytno)

25 Ontario News Release. “Ontario Launches Free Menstrual Products in Schools.” October 8, 2021. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000941/ontario-launches-free-menstrual-products-in-schools>

26 Parraga, Jennifer. “Period Poverty.” Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. 2020. [https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/rapport/2020/topical/period\\_poverty.html](https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/rapport/2020/topical/period_poverty.html)

27 Rebekah Rodrigues, “Ziyana Kotadia Aims to Strengthen Connections with Underrepresented Students as VP University Affairs,” The Western Gazette, 2021.

28 University of British Columbia, “Free Menstrual Products on Campus,” Building Operations, 2021, <https://buildingoperations.ubc.ca/2021/04/16/free-menstrual-products-on-campus/>.

29 Desiree Buitenbos, “A Bloody Shame: Menstruation Is Keeping Girls out of School,” Plan International Canada, May 19, 2021, <https://stories.plancanada.ca/a-bloody-shame-6-reasons-why-menstruation-is-keeping-girls-out-of-school/>.

30 Thinx & PERIOD, “State of the Period White Paper - Shopify,” 2019, [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788).

31 Citron Hygiene, “A Guide to Menstrual Hygiene & Care - Everything You Need to Know,” Citron Hygiene, February 18,



in the 2020-2021 academic year identify as female, the impacts of period poverty and access to menstrual products should be a priority for Western.<sup>32</sup> Ensuring that menstrual products are free and readily available to students who need them will help create a more equitable environment on campus, and build a culture where menstruators feel empowered to move through spaces on campus with a sense of belonging. Providing these products in university bathrooms of all genders will help reduce the stigma surrounding menstrual products, reinforce the normalization of menstruation, and reduce barriers to education that menstruators experience.

Beyond menstrual products, students on campus need access to spaces that better reflect their own lived identities, including washrooms. There are some gender neutral washrooms on campus, but in general most buildings do not have them. The University is often hesitant to add gender neutral washrooms to existing buildings, as retrofitting an old building can be expensive.

For students who are transgender/nonbinary, the gendered washroom is a place where discrimination (blatant or micro-aggression) is more likely to occur. This could include comments that a trans person should use the “other” washroom, misgendering, false claims of predatory behaviour, othering body language from others (ie. staring), and even physical violence. Furthermore, the act of choosing a gendered washroom can be a dysphoria-inducing and upsetting experience, especially when a student has to choose between their gender identity and their safety/“belonging” in a space or when a student does not identify with binary gender. Gender neutral washrooms are a solution to these issues as they provide a safe space for all students.

Safety and belonging on campus are deeply tied to more than just the physical spaces and amenities. Culture is continually reinforced by the people occupying those spaces and the behaviour they see as acceptable. In spite of efforts aimed at reducing gender-based violence on campus, the Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey found that, at Western, 71.6% of students disclosed experiences of sexual harassment.<sup>33</sup> This is the highest percentage among other schools surveyed,<sup>34</sup> which suggests that there is something about Western that is unique.

While representation alone does not change the culture of an organization or institution, Western should review its student recruitment practices to make sure it is not unintentionally attracting and admitting students for whom this higher rate of sexual assault is a positive. That is, some prospective students may be attracted to Western in part because there appears to be a culture that permits, or at least does not actively prevent, gender-based violence. In this

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2021, <https://www.citronhygiene.com/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-menstrual-hygiene/>.

32 Western University, “Full-Time Constituent Enrolment 2020-21,” 2021, [https://www.ipb.uwo.ca/documents/2021\\_budget.pdf](https://www.ipb.uwo.ca/documents/2021_budget.pdf).

33 Government of Ontario, Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey.

34 Government of Ontario, Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey.



vein, Western's reputation as a 'party school'<sup>35</sup> needs to be actively engaged with, whether or not it is actually true. That sexual and gender-based violence is more likely to occur in setting that involve alcohol is not new,<sup>36</sup> and students who are attracted to that reputation may perpetuate a culture that prioritizes alcohol consumption and the associated increased risk of gender-based violence.

Student recruitment is not the only type of recruitment that Western should review. Representation in positions of leadership in faculty and staff at Western is an integral step to making students feel more represented and included on campus. At Western in the 2019-2020 academic year, only 39% of the full time faculty identified as female.<sup>37</sup> The Harvard Business Review reports that, because 95% of CEOs are white men, hiring panels unconsciously favour white men for positions of leadership.<sup>38</sup> As a result, for women and people of colour, there are increased barriers to success in positions of leadership. A lack of diversity in faculty and staff can lead to feelings of isolation for students who do not see themselves reflected in the leadership and community of the university, and these gaps in lived experience among faculty and staff can influence the student experience in significant way. <sup>39</sup>By having individuals in leadership positions that share similar lived experience and aspects of one's identity, it allows for students to feel more seen and envision themselves in positions of leadership.<sup>40</sup> In order to increase the proportion of women-identifying people in positions of leadership, Western should ensure equitable hiring and recruitment practices are leveraged in order to build a more diverse campus community.

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35 Campbell, Megan. (2017). "Western University: An action-packed night at a Top 10 party school." Maclean's. <https://www.macleans.ca/education/western-university-an-action-packed-night-at-a-top-10-party-school/>

36 Antonia Abbey, Alcohol's Role in Sexual Violence Perpetration: Theoretical Explanations, Existing Evidence, and Future Directions, (Drug and Alcohol Review 30, no. 5 2011) 481-489.

37 Western University, "Gender Balance of Faculty and Staff," Performance indicators - western university, 2019, [http://www.ipb.uwo.ca/pi/evaluation\\_of\\_instructor\\_effectiveness.php](http://www.ipb.uwo.ca/pi/evaluation_of_instructor_effectiveness.php).

38 Stefanie K. Johnson, David R Hekman, and Elsa T Chan, "If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired," Harvard Business Review, February 7, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired>.

39 Rebekah Bastian, "The Power of Representation in Leadership Roles," Forbes (Forbes Magazine, November 9, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2020/11/09/the-power-of-representation-in-leadership-roles/?sh=1892ae776266>.

40 Rebekah Bastian, "The Power of Representation in Leadership Roles," Forbes (Forbes Magazine, November 9, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2020/11/09/the-power-of-representation-in-leadership-roles/?sh=1892ae776266>.



# GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The provincial government has a major role to play in our fight for a safer campus. These recommendations offer avenues for how the government can take survivor-centric and trauma-informed approaches to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence prevention and response. Many of these recommendations are outlined in the ‘Gender-based and Sexual Violence Prevention and Response’ policy paper developed by the Ontario Undergraduate Students’ Alliance (OUSA), the USC’s provincial advocacy body.

- ❑ The provincial government should **amend Ontario Regulation 131/16** to ensure that institutions’ sexual violence **policies take a trauma-informed and survivor-centric approach.**
- ❑ The Ministry of Education should **include sexual health in all subject areas of the K-12 curricula** and, specifically, amend the Health and Physical Education curriculum to include research-based education about consent and safe relationships.
- ❑ The provincial government should amend **section 17 of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act** to:
  - ❑ Require that post-secondary institutions participate in a gender-based and sexual violence campus climate survey administered every three years
  - ❑ Require post-secondary campuses to **employ an appropriate and proportional number of gender-based violence educators;**
  - ❑ Require that all **staff and faculty be trained in how to respond to disclosures** of gender-based and sexual violence in a way that is **survivor-centric and trauma-informed.**
- ❑ The provincial government should **provide grant funding to community sexual health clinics** to work with post-secondary institutions to **provide students with resources and information about local supports**, as well as enhancing infrastructure and referral systems.
- ❑ The provincial government should **mandate evidence-based Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Prevention training for all current and future liquor servers.**





Ontario Regulation 131/16, titled ‘Sexual Violence at Colleges & Universities’ is a provincial government regulation under the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act. This regulation provides additional protection for college and university students who disclose or report sexual violence.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it is essential that this policy take a trauma-informed and survivor centric approach. Through research and consultations with survivors and experts within the field, the current regulation has not been found to be comprehensive enough in supporting survivors and addressing campus culture. The Ontario Undergraduate Students’ Alliance has highlighted 20 components of this policy that should be amended or altered to provide further guidance that can be provided under this regulation:<sup>42</sup>

- Inclusion of comprehensive definitions of sexual assault and sexual violence;
- Statement of the importance of and commitment to educating campus community;
- Clear outline of policy scope, indicating who, where, and when the policy applies;
- Provision embedding a coordinated response team;
- Recognition and reconciliation of conflicts of interests;
- Provision clearly outlining the rights and responsibilities of staff to respond to disclosures;
- Statement that there are no time limits attached to reporting;
- Stipulations for maintaining privacy and confidentiality;
- Explanations of complainants’ rights, including the right to academic considerations;
- Outline of potential interim measures and statement that interim measures are non-disciplinary;
- Stipulations for sexual violence-specific, trauma-informed training for investigators and adjudicators;
- Statement that complainants’ and respondents’ rights to access supports and services;
- Explanation of complainants’ and respondents’ rights to representation, support persons, or advocates;
- Statement that complainants’ lesser violations of school policies will be excused (ex: drug or alcohol policies)
- Statement that complainants’ sexual history will be excluded from investigations and hearings;
- Commitment to resolve complaints in a timely fashion and to regularly update parties on the progress of a case;

41 Simmy Sahdra, “Ontario Government’s Action to Address Sexual Violence With Post-Secondary Campuses,” September 22, 2021, <https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/blogs/canadian-employer-advisor/ontario-governments-action-address-sexual-violence-within-post-secondary-campuses#:~:text=which%20amends%20O.Reg.,disclose%20or%20report%20sexual%20violence>.

42 Catherine Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Violence Prevention & Response, Toronto: Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2020, 48.



- ❑ Inclusion of expectations surrounding the burden of proof;
- ❑ Explanation of rules governing adjudicative processes and hearings;
- ❑ Inclusions of examples of potential sanctions against respondents; and a
- ❑ Statement of complaint and respondents’ rights to appeal adjudicative decisions.

In March 2022, Ontario Regulation 646/21, which amends Ontario Regulation 131/16, will come into effect. This amendment addresses points 14&15 in the list above. However, this leaves 18 recommendations yet to be addressed. The USC strongly recommends that the Government of Ontario accept and implement these recommendations as soon as possible.

The Ending Violence Association of BC outlines that students are more at-risk of experiencing sexual violence during the first six to eight weeks of their post-secondary Education.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it is essential for students to be provided sexual and gender-based violence early in their education. In her research, Professor Kathy Bickmore has shown that a sustainable culture and attitude shift must be addressed through education on consent, respect, sexuality, and conflict management at an early age.<sup>44</sup> Prior to entering post-secondary education, students should receive this comprehensive and continuous education to ensure that necessary and healthy conversations are had regarding consent, healthy relationships, and sexual violence prevention. Although previous steps have been taken in provincial health and physical education curriculums, more can be done. Specifically, such curriculum must incorporate how technology can be used as a form of violence, including revenge porn, surveillance and stalking, exploitation, human trafficking, and harassment.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to addressing the legislation above, the USC also recommends changes to Section 17 of The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act. This section addresses sexual violence in Colleges and Universities and includes sections regarding, but not limited to, the definition of sexual violence, post-secondary sexual violence policies, the inclusion of student input, and annual reporting.<sup>46</sup>

Firstly, this Act should require post-secondary institutions to participate in a gender-based and sexual violence campus climate survey every three years. The Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey, published in 2019, showed the disappointing reality of sexual violence on Ontario campuses. This survey collected data on a number of topics including students’ perceptions of consent, knowledge of sexual violence supports, services, & reporting procedures, experiences

43 Campus Sexual Violence: Guidelines for a Comprehensive Response, Vancouver, BC, Ending Violence Association of BC, 2016.

44 Kathy Bickmore, “How might social education resist (hetero)sexism? Facing the impact of gender and sexual ideology on citizenship,” Theory and Research in Social Education 30, no. 2 (Spring 2002).

45 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Violence Prevention & Response, 24.

46 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act, R. S. O. 1990, c. M.19, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m19/v17#BK29>



of sexual harassment & stalking, satisfaction with institutional response to sexual violence, and behaviour of a bystander.<sup>47</sup> For Western specifically, this survey showed concerning data with 71.6% of students disclosing experiences of sexual harassment, this being the highest percentage among other schools surveyed.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, 64% of students either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that they have knowledge of sexual violence supports, services, and reporting procedures at Western.<sup>49</sup> This important data reflects the effectiveness of prevention and response measures on campuses, but it has not been reinstated since its last edition. Without this data, it is impossible for universities to track their progress and develop adequate changes to policies, initiatives, and, consequently, our campus climate. It is important that after this data is collected and assessed, the provincial government develops an adequate response to its findings whether in the form of regulation changes, funding, or new and/ or changed initiatives. Without the collection of data to gain the student perspective, the provincial government risks taking uninformed steps to prevention and response measures. Finally, this survey should be developed, administered, and overseen by experts in the field to avoid re-traumatizing survivors.

Secondly, section 17 of the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act should require post-secondary campuses to employ an appropriate and proportional number of gender-based violence educators. The work of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence can often be underfunded and under-resourced.<sup>50</sup> Most campuses only hire one or two educators for all students on campus. For example, Western University has almost 40 000 students and only two educators. As previously mentioned, the 2019 Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey found that 64.0% of Western students surveyed were not aware of sexual violence supports, services, and reporting procedures.<sup>51</sup> This shows that there is a need for increased education for and communication with students. This needs to go past awareness of accommodations and expands to education on harm reduction, intersectional gender-based violence, how to respond to sexual and gender-based violence, and much more. The provincial government must develop clear guidelines regarding the number of educators on each campus. A framework should be created which states the number of educators needed per thousand students on campus,<sup>52</sup> and adequate and sufficient resources should be provided to match.

Lastly, section 17 of the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act should contain a mandate for all staff and faculty to be trained in how to respond to disclosures of sexual and gender-based violence. Survivors may not know where to go to disclose an incident of sexual

47 Government of Ontario, Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey, Ontario, March 19, 2019, <https://files.ontario.ca/tcu-summary-report-student-voices-on-sexual-violence-survey-en-2019-03.pdf>

48 Government of Ontario, Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey.

49 Government of Ontario, Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey.

50 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Prevention & Response.

51 <https://files.ontario.ca/tcu-summary-report-student-voices-on-sexual-violence-survey-en-2019-03.pdf>

52 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Prevention & Response.



harassment. For some, talking to a professor or staff member might make them feel most comfortable. In this event, faculty and staff should be adequately prepared in understanding university policy, available support, and, more generally, how to respond to survivors. Given the barriers that currently prevent many survivors from reporting or disclosing, we must ensure that wherever a survivor decides to turn to, a safe space is created.<sup>53</sup> Research conducted by ‘Responding to Disclosures on Campus’ shows that initial responses to incidents of sexual violence make a significant difference in outcomes, consequences, and system navigation for survivors.<sup>54</sup> As a faculty or staff member may be the person that a survivor confides in, they must be provided survivor-centric and trauma-informed training to be prepared in their response.

Not all students will feel comfortable disclosing to staff or faculty. In some cases, they will want to have the option for support from providers in the community. Community sexual health clinics are essential in providing students with local support, especially with survivors who may have experiences such violence on campus and may not feel safe or comfortable accessing on-campus support centres.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, it is essential for students to be provided with many opportunities to receive SGBV resources, information, and support. Many of these community based clinics can fill gaps that on-campus services do not currently provide. For example, a more diverse staff may allow a survivor to feel more comfortable disclosing an incident of sexual harassment. However, some of these community based clinics may not have sufficient resources to provide continued support for survivors. Therefore, the provincial government should provide grant funding to community sexual health clinics to work with post-secondary institutions in providing services. They should also work to streamline referral systems to assist students in finding this off-campus support.

In September 2021, the provincial government announced that sexual violence prevention training will be added to Smart Serve training.<sup>56</sup> While this announcement has been welcomed, there are still some gaps that need to be addressed. For example, there has not been a plan outlined for training current servers who have already completed their Smart Serve certification. Additionally, very little information has been provided on the development of this training, which should be developed in consultation with experts and should “include recourse for how to intervene and respond to situations of GBV between staff, staff-patron, and patron-patron; invest in the development of a best practice bystander intervention program to prevent GBV for staff in bars, restaurants, or establishments with liquor sales licenses.”<sup>57</sup>

53 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Violence Prevention & Response, 46.

54 Responding to Campus Disclosures on Campus, <http://respondingtodisclosuresoncampus.com/responding/>

55 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Violence Prevention & Response, 58.

56 Farrah Merali, Ontario adds sexual violence prevention to mandatory training for those who serve alcohol,” September 24, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/smart-serve-ontario-adds-sexual-violence-prevention-training-1.6187334>

57 Dunne et al., Policy paper: Gender-based and Sexual Violence Violence Prevention & Response.





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