



Shared Perspectives:

A Joint Publication on Campus Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

*Alliance of BC Students
College Student Alliance
Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance
Union étudiante du Québec
New Brunswick Student Alliance
Students Nova Scotia
University of Prince Edward Island Student Union
Canadian Alliance of Student Associations*

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MESSAGE FROM THE PARTNERS

Last summer, a partnership of provincial student associations published *Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Student Mental Health*. That publication marked a national review of the challenges of student mental health care and identified examples of limited successes. This Spring, our partnership comes together again to address another important issue in post-secondary education with *Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Campus Sexual Violence Prevention and Response*.

Everyday, our organizations think about how post-secondary education can continue to improve in Canada. We work to make sure all students can afford to pursue higher education, and how to prevent barriers to access. We care about the high-quality and innovative education we are receiving, and are constantly looking for areas of growth. We think about how to incorporate the student voice into education, ensuring that our sectors are accountable to the students they serve. In addition to these efforts, we also acknowledge that students must have a strong foundation of health and safety to be successful during their education.

The decision to work collaboratively on this project comes in response to the recognition that a viable solution to sexual violence will require a collective effort from student organizations and stakeholders across the country. We aim to both identify challenges and opportunities that exist in individual provinces, but will also look past provincial borders in order to highlight sexual violence as a problem we all must work towards solving. It is our hope that this document provides the reader with an understanding of the issues students experience on campuses across our country, and that it sheds light on how we can, and must, work together to end sexual violence on post-secondary campuses across Canada.

Students from Victoria to Charlottetown share the need to eradicate sexual violence. We hope this can be used to further the conversation on campus sexual violence prevention and response in Canada.



Alliance of BC Students

AUTHORS

Caitlin McCutchen
Nicki Simpson
Heather Middlemass

INTRODUCTION

This research project was conducted upon the unceded and un-surrendered territories of the Coast Salish people, including the Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh, Tsleil-Waututh, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Katzie, and Semiahmoo—what is now known as the Greater Vancouver area of British Columbia (BC).¹ If we are to work towards communities of care, to truly dismantle rape culture on university campuses and within our wider communities, we must recognize the broader structure of settler colonialism within which sexualized and gender-based violence occurs. Sexualized and gender-based violence are inherently embedded within settler colonialism, and function as an exertion of power that disproportionately affects people of color, Indigenous women, trans, non-gender conforming, and Two-spirit folks, and people with disabilities. As Sarah Hunt elucidates, “rape culture and racism are indeed deeply intertwined, shaping [campuses] in ways that decrease safety for Indigenous students, faculty and staff, particularly women, Two-spirit, trans and queer people.”² Recognizing who

is most affected by violence is essential in creating robust and inclusive policy and initiatives that support survivors and prevent violence.

This paper draws upon research surrounding sexualized violence and prevention work, relevant provincial legislation, as well as information gathered from a collaboration with the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) at the University of Victoria. We would like to sincerely thank AVP for sharing their knowledge with us and for the critical prevention and support work that they conduct. From this research, we recommend that the provincial government mandate and fund a comprehensive survivor centred Action Plan to improve and embolden existing policy.



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reaching law enforcement.

WHO WE ARE

The Alliance of BC Students (ABCS) is a not-for-profit coalition of student societies across BC. Our mission is to provide accessible, affordable, and innovative post-secondary education (PSE) to all students. Under this mandate, the ABCS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every student, regardless of gender and/or identity. Emerging from, and working alongside the powerful advocacy of various grassroots organizations and student-survivor advocates in the province, the ABCS continually works to end sexualized and gender-based violence, seeking to create safer university campuses and communities.

SEXUALIZED AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN BC

Sexualized violence is an issue faced by a disturbingly large number of students on campuses across the country. A recent survey of Canadian institutions found that 20% of female students, 46.7% of LGBTQ+ students, and 6.9% of male students have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives.³ Furthermore, additional surveys have reported that 30% of female students had been sexually abused within the past 12 months, while another found that one third of women overall are sexually assaulted during the course of their lives.⁴ These numbers are further elevated among marginalized women; Indigenous women report rates of sexual violence three times higher than non-Indigenous women in Canada.⁵ While statistics regarding sexualized violence have helped push through policies, it is important to recognize that numbers do not tell the whole story. As Indigenous lawyer and sexual assault survivor advocate Sarah Deer notes, data and statistics fail to recognize the importance of community centred approaches to sexualized violence that address long term solutions.⁶ Furthermore, the majority of sexual assault cases are not reported to police, with estimates of only 33 per 1000 cases reaching law enforcement.⁷ However, even with the current statistics, it is evident that rates of violence this high are unacceptable. Policy, therefore, must include prevention work that centres survivors and take into account intersectional violence working while towards long-term solutions.

Sexualized violence is the only type of violent crime where the numbers have remained consistent for the past decade, with reporting of sexual violence remaining consistently low.⁸ Indeed, sexual violence is the most under-reported of all violent crime in Canada.⁹ Realities such as victim blaming, survivors believing that they won't get justice, the lack of education on consent, and fear of reprisals all contribute to under-reportage of sexual violence. Survivors also don't know what to do when confronted with sexual violence; 31% of students across the country said that they were not given information on how to report a sexual assault.¹⁰ In addition to prevention work, there is clearly much work to be done in order to make campuses a place where students are comfortable coming forward to disclose sexual violence. Policy should include mechanisms that seek to create an environment in which reporting is more accessible and safer for survivors.

The structures in place for reporting and addressing sexual violence on campus must be effective in making survivors feel

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safe and supported. For many students, residence on a post-secondary campus marks the first time that they have left home and the support structures of their childhood. These young people need to be able to find support on campus, especially women between the ages of 15-24, who are the group most targeted for sexual assault. As previously stated, these statistics are further elevated among women of color, Indigenous women, trans, non-gender conforming, and Two-spirit folks, and people with disabilities. It is devastating that 28% of survivors considered taking time off or dropping out of school after being assaulted. This further highlights the severe mental and emotional distress that can impact survivors' ability to succeed in post-secondary education and a lack of support from institutions.¹¹ Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) have a responsibility to ensure that everyone can access education—regardless of their identity—without being subject to violence. Therefore, any policy must ensure that disclosures and reports are followed by the ongoing support of survivors, encouraging their continued engagement in PSE.

HISTORY

No student should feel vulnerable or threatened during their time spent on a university campus. Institutions have a responsibility to ensure students are safe and comfortable, however, sexualized gender-based violence and rape culture are still prevalent on campuses across the country. In 2016, following two high-profile sexual assaults on the campuses of the University of British Columbia's (UBC) and the University of Victoria (UVic),¹² pressure from both students and the public intensified for the government to implement stand-alone sexualized violence policy. Emerging from community engagement and grassroots activism conducted by student-survivor advocates and sexual assault centres, on May 19th 2016 the BC provincial government passed Bill 23—Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act, requiring that all “public post-secondary institutions to establish and implement a sexual misconduct policy,” by May 2017.¹³ Although Bill 23 was largely informed by survivors and advocates, it is the only major policy development in the province that addresses sexual violence on campuses.

Mandated by the legislation, PSI's individual stand-alone policies have now been in effect for almost a year. Going forward, the Bill requires that institutions report on the policy each year and conduct a review every three years. It also grants the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training the ability to request surveys to assess the efficacy of the policy and procedure at any time.¹⁴ Although the Bill does not specify a procedure for reporting and follow-up, recently the Minister of Advanced Education, Melanie Mark, and some Members of the Legislative Assembly have reached out to organizations and institutions regarding how policy implementation has been implemented on campuses.

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ISSUES

While we celebrate that Bill 23 and the subsequent stand-alone policies of each institution have worked towards PSI's and the government taking sexualized violence serious, BC's overall advancement in addressing this violence has been limited. This legislation needs to be further expanded and enforced as to ensure that PSIs consciously and consistently invest in building comprehensive sexualized violence policies and procedures that not only support survivors, but also work to prevent violence through education.

Although we will be learning more about the implementation of the Bill in the upcoming annual review, in discussion with our member schools—including Capilano University (CAP), Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), and UBC—we found that PSI's have implemented different programs, workshops, and resources in place to actualize their policies. Unfortunately, the initiatives that have been implemented vary significantly from campus to campus. For example, Simon Fraser University (SFU) recently opened a Sexual Violence Support and Prevention office, open five days a week and staffed by four people. The office runs educational workshops covering the

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policy, practicing consent, and being a bystander.¹⁵ Other PSIs, such as CAP, have run workshops¹⁶ and training, while some institutions, such as KPU, have not launched any new initiatives.¹⁷ Over the past two years, AVP has noticed a difference in institutional support at UVic, and commend the hard work put in by the Sexualized Violence Prevention Coordinator.¹⁸ However, it is evident to AVP that the sexualized violence education and prevention office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR)—created

in response to the mandated policy—is understaffed and continually operating above capacity.¹⁹ Based on our findings, it is evident that the implementation of Bill 23 varies drastically from campus to campus in BC.

Furthermore, as Bill 23 lacks substantive defining principles, each institution must individually research and determine best

practices, supports and procedures which have resulted in delayed and inconsistent implementation. The legislation needs further content and educational resources, such as definitions of terms—sexual assault, rape culture, intersectional violence—alongside improved language. For example, as noted by the education coordinator for AVP, meg neufeld, the terminology of 'sexual misconduct,' used widely within the Bill, dilutes the fact that sexualized

and gender-based violence is violence not misconduct; you cannot equate sexual assault to plagiarism.²⁰ Along with a lack of defining terms and language failure, the Bill does not define or elaborate on what prevention and education work looks like or who is included. Following the Ontario Government's "It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Violence and Harassment" we suggest that the BC Government create a holistic and inclusive process to provide BC PSIs with robust and clear guiding principles and procedures to make services and support for survivors more consistently available across the province.²¹ Engaging with survivors is imperative to establish comprehensive and inclusive guidelines which will ensure that institutions are successful in supporting and centering survivors within their individual policies and procedures.

CONCLUSION

Currently, the implementation of sexualized violence policies as mandated by Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act, vary significantly between institutions across British Columbia. Students must have access to safe post-secondary education regardless of their identity or where they choose to attend university. The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the provincial government of British Columbia fund a comprehensive Action Plan to establish guiding principles and procedures, with a focus on prevention work, education, and support services that include and centre frontline workers and survivors. Drawing from our research, and in conversation with the Anti-Violence

Project, we stress that this Action Plan must be inclusive, supportive, and accessible. With the understanding that this work will be triggering and emotionally laborious for survivors, structures of support must be available throughout and after the process in addition to funding given to survivors who participate. Furthermore, the process must be slow; recognizing the capacity and space needed for frontline workers and survivors.²²

We suggest that this Action Plan then be integrated into the existing Bill 23 as to better equip individual institutions with the tools and concepts to prevent sexualized and gender-based violence and support survivors more effectively. This new policy must be accompanied by funding, strategically allotted based on need of institutions, creating equal and standardized access to support across the province. Quebec, for example, recently committed \$23 million to address sexual violence on campuses across the province.²³ The government should mandate surveys and data collection from universities to determine whether there has been notable improvement as a result of the policies, and identifying which areas and problems need to be focused on going forward. An Action Plan centering survivors attached to mandated funding will not only offer guiding procedures for violence response and prevention, but will also ensure standardized implementation and resources across the province.

College Student Alliance

AUTHOR

Olivia Dagbo

WHO WE ARE

College Student Alliance (CSA) is a non-profit, membership-driven advocacy organization representing the interests of Ontario's college students. Comprised of 14 student associations, CSA's objective is to ensure students receive affordable and accessible education, uncompromising of accountability, transferability and quality. To ensure these principles come to fruition, CSA works alongside municipal and provincial leaders as well as stakeholders in the post-secondary sector to guarantee student voices – whether domestic, international, mature or otherwise – are considered in post-secondary decision-making. This is exemplified through CSA's involvement in the creation of a safe and healthy post-secondary environment. As an avid member of the provincial Sexual Violence and Harassment Reporting Committee as well as the College Sector Sexual Assault

Task Force, CSA continuously participates in the development of inclusive policy, program and services in sexual assault and violence prevention and the fundamental support of student survivors in the college sector.

INTRODUCTION

Post-secondary institutions act as communities for local and international students. Dominant social discourse places post-secondary as an opportune environment for social development, as independence and autonomy are foundational to academic and social success. Alongside such expectations,



however, are perils that can contribute to an unsafe atmosphere. Abusive behaviours, patriarchal attitudes, prejudice, stigma and violence can find way into class and dorm rooms, risking the safety and health of those within. Inadequate supports and policies in the community and on-campus can easily transform a desired academic experience to a personal holding cell for student survivors.

Years of advocacy regarding the pervasiveness of sexual violence and assault, and subsequent lack of supports, increased general recognition of these challenges worldwide. In Canada, nearly half of self-reported sexual assaults occurred against women prior to their 25th birthday.²⁴ The statistics are just as alarming in Ontario's post-secondary institutions; the American College Health Associations (ACHA) Ontario 2016 survey reported more than 13% of female students experienced some form of sexual assault or violence in the past year alone.²⁵ Reflective sexual prevention and response supports are vital; during this critical time, students need tools to prevent these attacks from occurring as well as the supports for their health and well-being.

Improving resources for students to address sexual violence on and off campus is paramount. With Ontario colleges as a primary focus, this paper highlights recent developments of sexual assault prevention and response policies, as well as services currently provided and required in post-secondary institutions.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ONTARIO'S POST-SECONDARY SECTOR

Prior to recent developments, many supports and recommendations for sexual assault prevention and response were provided by grassroots and community organizations through provincial and municipal funding. Community advocates for women and marginalized populations have appealed for a systematic, widespread approach in preventing sexual assault and violence. In response to calls addressing gender-based violence, the Ontario government established the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) in 1983. Primarily responsible for reviewing economic development of Ontario women, the OWD later expanded to include matters of equity, health and safety.²⁶ In 2011, the Ministry of the Status of Women released *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives: Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan*. Informed with anecdotal evidence exposing sexual assault on post-secondary campuses, the Ministry developed a resource guide for the post-secondary community as a tool against sexual violence on campus.²⁷

Despite community and government efforts, data shows sexual violence and assault against Canadian women remained problematic, as there were significant declines in violent incidents between 1999 - 2014, with the exception of sexual violence.²⁸ Recognizing the need for an accessible and reflective policy and protocol in the college sector, the Committee of Presidents representing Ontario's 24 colleges and Colleges Ontario agreed to develop a stand-alone sexual assault policy in November 2014. A task force comprised of administrators, staff, student, and student council executives,

CSA and other representatives participated in the consultations. Modifiable to reflect institutional differences, each of Ontario's 24 colleges used the template to create and publicize a sexual violence and harassment policy by March 2015.

While Ontario's college sector implemented prevention and response policies, subsequent provincial sexual assault and violence prevention strategies were developed. The 2015 modernization of Ontario's K-12 sex-education curriculum incorporated lessons on sexual health, safety, and consent. In accordance to Bill 132, Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, which was given royal assent in 2016, post-secondary institutions must implement a sexual violence and harassment policy inclusive of student involvement, as well as report the number incidents, initiatives, and supports obtained by students.²⁹ The Ministry also developed a reporting advisory committee for the Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey to understand incidents of sexual violence and harassment on campus. As part of the committee, CSA represented student voices regarding sexual violence and harassment in post-secondary through an internal working group. In Spring 2018, the province-wide survey was distributed to universities and colleges across Ontario.

STUDENT SUPPORTS & CAMPUS SERVICES

Students and community advocates have constantly demanded supports in

eradicating sexual assault and violence in the community. In 2011, the first annual SlutWalk was held in Toronto as a protest against sexual assault and associated myths.³⁰ Students, alongside community advocates, residents and supporters march to dismantle victim-blaming and the notion that clothing instigates sexual assault and violence for women. Since then, hundreds of similar protests and rallies have taken place, creating a worldwide movement to mobilize women and educate masses on consent.

Aside from supporting SlutWalk and similar protests, colleges establish campus-wide events and educational resources against sexual assault and violence. After implementing a college-wide survey, Centennial College created Consent Week as part of orientation to encourage discussion and provide opportunities to educate students on consent in and outside of relationships. The success of its primary campaign and the realization that the definition of consent was still not entirely grasped by all students, led to its repetition for a second year. Centennial also incorporated technological resources by developing a campus application - Campus Safety Watch - to provide information and prevention resources using an accessible platform. Through the app, students can contact security, contact crisis help lines, and distress centres, as well as access the Sexual Violence Resource feature which includes support information and reporting options for survivors. Similarly, Cambrian College developed a website,

www.safe.cambriancollege.ca, where survivors can access information, supports, and understand options should they choose to file a complaint.

Available in most campuses are student support resources. For example, WeSpeakStudent, a student health plan provider for over 40 campuses across Canada, offers supports and resources for thousands of Ontario's college students. Through their Student Assistant Programs (SAPs) available in some campuses, students can access confidential 24/7 counselling services, including crisis counselling and short-term counselling over the phone, through video or in-person. Depending on the health plan, domestic and international students can access counselling psychologists, registered social workers or psychotherapists at no additional costs. Sault College's Upstander program, developed by Western University, provides workshops on identifying dangerous situations in the prevention of sexual assault.³¹ In Conestoga College and Centennial College, women can access free self-defence training through the Rape Aggression Defence System program (RAD). For some campuses, services such as Walk Safe, when security accompanies students to vehicles or bus stops after-hours are provided. Despite efforts, there are still improvements necessary in implementing widespread prevention and response strategies. With greater opportunities for offsite and online learning, colleges have a particular set of challenges in ensuring initiatives are received and understood by students and the general community.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

Ontario's demonstrated leadership in addressing sexual violence and assault is instrumental, however, there are ample opportunities for improvement. Membership student associations believe the following advances will assist with the implementation of reflective prevention and response strategies.

1. CONTINUOUS AND ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

College applicants are comprised of direct and indirect high school graduates; reliance on sexual education curriculum provided during secondary school may not reflect the knowledge college students have when enrolled. Greater investment in public education strategies is imperative in sexual assault and violence prevention. The Who Will You Help advertising campaign, developed by the Ontario government, received international recognition due to its accomplishment in raising attention to sexual assault and violence in everyday scenarios. Continuity of this campaign and subsequent educational resources will inform the general population of consent and sexual violence prior to entering Ontario's colleges.

There are also a number of community and campus supports that can be maximized through increased accessibility. The use of technology, such as applications and websites, can provide a platform for students to educate themselves on resources and supports without formally

making a complaint – providing survivors with greater agency. Colleges must also ensure that avenues students take to seek assistance are considerate of student positioning; access to diverse security staff inclusive of women can facilitate a supportive environment for survivors.

Materials must also incorporate different languages for greater accessibility. Though a number of online resources and training guides are available for English colleges to use, the same opportunities are not available for French colleges. In a recent CBC news article, College Boreal, a French college in Ontario, noted that it was difficult to find materials on sexual violence in French.³² As a result, French colleges might resort to creating their own materials, despite limited financial resources. Services and training materials funded by the provincial government must also be in French so they can be utilized and accessible for French colleges and students in Ontario.

2. INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PARTICIPATION

Implementing initiatives can be challenging when stakeholders are reluctant to participate. Some student associations expressed difficulties securing administration and institutional involvement in prevention and response strategies. Assumptions that campus-specific sexual violence data will interfere with institutional reputation has in part contributed to incomparable and inaccessible data across the sector. Acknowledgement and adherence to sexual violence prevention and response efforts must be assured. Educational initiatives and appropriate training for all parties, including community law enforcement and legal assistants, must be provided to ensure survivors' best interests are recognized.

3. INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR MARGINALIZED, UNDERREPRESENTED, AND LGBTQ2+ GROUPS

Sexual assault and violence is detrimental to all; however, portions of the population are more susceptible to experiencing this violence. Providing prevention and response services inclusive to students with varying abilities, Indigenous populations, LGBTQ2+ students, and international students is imperative, yet challenging due to insufficient resources. Educational resources, prevention and support strategies must be inclusive of marginalized, underrepresented and LGBTQ2+ groups. Student groups are heavily reliant on community supports and advocacy organizations in ensuring that inclusive prevention and response services are on-campus. The investment and expansion of these community resources is vital for the continuation of supports during and after college.

4. COLLABORATIVE REPORTING AND ADVISING MECHANISMS

As a result of Bill 132, colleges are required to provide data on campus sexual assault and violence investigations as well as accessed and available supports to the province. Though this regulation is greatly needed to advise policy and understand the climate of assault and harassment on campus, there are also opportunities for the general community to support campus safety as well. The number of complaints received are not always shared with community safety officers, student associations and advocacy organizations. Ensuring information is anonymous and void of identifying information, campuses should report the number of sexual assault and harassment complaints and investigations to local law enforcement and

student associations.

The absence of collaborative reporting mechanism contributes to the overall issue of underreporting; with an understanding of campus issues, law enforcement and campuses can work effectively in providing reflective supports for campus safety. Data sharing should not be the only collaborative effort. Specialized counsellors independent of institutional priorities must be available for students to access. Not only can they provide necessary supports and information to students, they can also assist student associations with campus advising for sexual assault prevention and support services reflective of student needs.

CONCLUSION

Ontario's leadership in addressing sexual assault and violence through education and awareness is instrumental. With sexual violence prevention and response policies in place in Ontario colleges, the challenge is to ensure implementation is effective and reflective of students' needs. Participation from all levels of government, administrators, community services, and student associations can provide supports to students and survivors, as well as supplement community resources. Inclusive strategies and initiatives are imperative in supporting underrepresented students. Ensuring safe and supportive communities and campuses are priorities for students to live and learn successfully. Together, students, community advocates and policy leaders can continue the progress in eradicating sexual violence in the post-secondary sector.

*Ensuring safe
and supportive
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Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance

AUTHORS

Stephanie Bellotto
Ryan Deshpande
Martyna Siekanowicz

INTRODUCTION

Ontario students have long advocated for meaningful policy change to address the persistence of sexual violence on their campuses. There have been several key steps taken by the government and post-secondary institutions, as well as students and their communities, to work together towards building a world free of sexual violence. In 2015, the provincial government announced It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVHAP), which set the stage for several important policy and legislative changes affecting Ontario's post-secondary institutions. The aim of this plan is to raise public awareness, invest in prevention and response, increase funding for supports, and build safer workplaces, campuses, and communities.³³ In March 2018 the government also announced funding to support the efforts outlined in SVHAP, including an investment of up to \$242 million to combat gendered violence in the Ontario, although no specific plans were laid for campuses.³⁴ Bringing an end to sexual violence has been an ongoing issue for students, advocates, and those at the

Everyone has a part to play in building a world free from sexual violence, and while essential steps have been taken, mechanisms for prevention and response must be improved to ensure that all individuals can safely pursue an education in our province.

forefront of support and care services. From peer-supports to educational workshops, advocacy and providing safe spaces, student unions and other campus groups have been pivotal forces in addressing sexual violence in their communities and on their campuses.³⁵ This article will highlight key developments in campus sexual violence prevention and response efforts, analyzing both strengths and weaknesses within current provincial and institutional approaches. Student-led efforts will also be addressed. Everyone has a part to play in building a world free from sexual violence, and while essential steps have been taken, mechanisms for prevention and response must be improved to ensure that all individuals can safely pursue an education in our province.

WHO WE ARE

The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) represents the interests of approximately 150,000 professional and undergraduate, full-time and part-time university students at eight student associations across Ontario. OUSA's approach to advocacy is based on creating substantive, student driven, and evidence-based policy recommendations. Our professional government relations practices ensure that we have the access to decision-makers we need in order for our members' voices to influence provincial legislation and policy.



SETTING A PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK

OUSA has strongly advocated for comprehensive sexual violence legislation in Ontario. In 2016 we released our Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Policy Paper, which outlined student concerns and provided recommendations to improve campus safety and combat gendered violence through education, prevention, and effective response. In the same year, The Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention Action Plan Act (Bill 132) was passed by the provincial legislature, which mandated post-secondary institutions to establish stand-alone sexual violence policies. Additionally, Ontario Regulation 131/16 (Sexual Violence at Ontario Colleges and Universities), found in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, set out expectations for universities and colleges in developing their own policies under the new framework.³⁶ As of January 2017, all 21 publically assisted universities in Ontario must have stand-alone sexual violence policies on their campuses.

Bill 132 sets out general requirements for institutions to follow, including conducting triennial policy reviews and collecting data related to sexual violence. Universities must also produce information about how supports are promoted to the student population, as well as the number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence

that were reported.³⁷ Furthermore, post-secondary institutions must provide the above material and produce information pertaining to policy implementation to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). An important area to highlight in Bill 132 is section 17.4, which states that all post-secondary institutions must ensure student input is considered during the development, amendment, and/or review of sexual violence policies.³⁸

Within Bill 132 several of OUSA's recommendations are highlighted, but there are also gaps within the legislation that must be addressed. One of the main areas of concern for OUSA has been the lack of clarity, direction, and oversight. The new legislation does not go far enough in setting expectations for institutions and ensuring these expectations are fulfilled. While post-secondary institutions have to produce or make available educational and prevention training programs, there is no mandatory completion. Additionally, while universities must produce data to MAESD, there is no permanent unit within the ministry, particularly focused on campus sexual violence, which would provide policy oversight, review data, conduct analysis, and produce recommendations.

Sexual violence remains one of the most underreported crimes, therefore removing barriers to reporting and putting into place effective response mechanisms is essential, but the current provincial framework offers no guidance for how institutions should do this.

In terms of response, disclosure, and accommodations, there is little detail about how universities should develop such mechanisms and what resources should be made available to ensure the safety and agency of survivors. Moreover, there is concern over how data is to be collected and reported to MAESD by institutions. Without consistent data collection and reporting mechanisms, information on sexual violence may be skewed and/or limited.³⁹ As of now the ministry has not yet asked institutions to produce report backs, despite legislation being in effect for 2 years. In addition to this, there is concern over the triennial reviews, particularly surrounding the timing of the reviews, how students will be involved, and how the

ministry could be involved in the process as well. Students would also like to see more provincial accommodations laid out, including expanded OHIP coverage, removing penalties for OSAP dependent students who may lose full-time status, as well as more guidance on how institutions should develop their academic reporting procedures.⁴⁰ Sexual violence remains one of the most underreported crimes, therefore removing barriers to reporting and putting into place effective response mechanisms is essential, but the current provincial framework offers no guidance for

how institutions should do this. Successful response and disclosure policies would include anonymous reporting and providing written notifications of the outcome of appeals.⁴¹ OUSA recommends that Bill 132, and particularly Ontario Regulation 131/16, should be amended to include all essential aspects of survivor centric sexual violence policies.

Other provincial initiatives include MPP Peggy Sattler's "Safe Night Out Act" (Bill 147), which aims to expand Smart Serve certification to include harassment and bystander intervention training specifically on university and college campus bars, an initiative OUSA has advocated for.⁴² Additionally, OUSA also called on the government to conduct a provincial climate survey to gather and report data on the beliefs, attitudes, and statuses of university and college campuses in relation to sexual violence. As a result of such efforts, MAESD launched the Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey. All full-time undergraduate students received the survey by email starting in February; the survey concluded at the end of March.⁴³ Student Voices on Sexual Violence was developed over a span of 2-years with advisement from the ministry's Sexual Violence Reporting Advisory Committee, of which OUSA is part. The survey will provide information related to the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence on Ontario campuses.⁴⁴ Students want to emphasize that it is vital that this information be presented in a transparent and accessible way.

Additionally, OUSA also called on the government to conduct a provincial climate survey to gather and report data on the beliefs, attitudes, and statuses of university and college campuses in relation to sexual violence.

At OUSA, we believe that to build safer campuses we have to ensure our institutions are receiving greater oversight and guidance from the province, as well as operate on policies that prioritize the safety and autonomy of survivors.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS AND RESPONSES

As part of Bill 132, institutions were instructed to consider student inputs during the revision or development of their sexual violence policies. One of the main areas of concern OUSA has expressed is the absence of student voices and survivor-centric approaches in sexual violence policies, which can make policies ineffective and even harmful for survivors. It is important that there are mechanisms in place which will ensure students and survivors are involved and have an equal voice in shaping policy. At Wilfrid Laurier University several student organizations involved in consultations reported an engaged and positive experience when working with their institutions. The development of the Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy at Laurier University included a collaborative effort between the university and students via a committee made up of representatives and executive teams from Laurier's student unions. The university also hired a full-time Sexual Violence Support Advocate in 2015. In addition to providing student

support, the Support Advocate also headed a working group, which included students, that assisted in the university's policy development.⁴⁵ Similarly, Western University developed a comprehensive consultation plan for students to review and provide feedback on the university's sexual violence policies, including developing a student questionnaire.⁴⁶ In other cases, however, student experiences were not so positive.⁴⁷ At Carleton University, student groups struggled to participate during the development of the university's sexual violence policies, particularly surrounding the inclusion of survivor-centric policies, terminology, and the acknowledgement of rape culture. The final version of policy continues to be highly contested by the student population.⁴⁸

Universities have also taken initiatives to create sexual violence prevention committees and hire support personnel, in the cases where such resources were absent. One example is Laurier's Gendered Violence Task Force. The task force has taken the lead on guiding the university in its efforts to combat sexual violence, through

policy work and advocacy, and encourages student participation.⁴⁹ At Queen's University, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee developed a Sexual Violence Awareness Week, inviting speakers to discuss a range of topics including what sexual violence means and dispelling rape myths.⁵⁰ Earlier this year the University of Toronto released training modules online, available to all university staff, responders, faculty, and students.⁵¹ The module provides information about recognizing sexual violence, understanding the difference between disclosing and reporting, and how to refer available support services. While the university has highly encouraged participation in the module, completion is not mandatory.

Additionally, some universities have taken measures to provide survivors, and students in general, the ability to pursue resolution for incidences of sexual violence outside of the traditional investigation. Institutions such as McMaster University and Carleton University have developed a Student Support and Case Management office, which provides students with individualized support. This is primarily driven to support students through their university paths who might be facing a variety of situations such as experiencing mental illness, navigating a sexual violence claim, and more.⁵² This type of office provides students an avenue to obtain logistical, academic, and mental

health support if they have experienced sexual violence and are simply seeking accommodations. These offices usually have close relationships with student services, such is the case of McMaster University, where the Case Manager maintains a relationship with all of the MSU's peer support services.

While many institutions have taken proactive steps to develop sexual violence policies, there are still cases where harmful and ineffective policies remain. Last year, the student led advocacy group, Our Turn, released a report in which several of these institutional based sexual violence policies were assessed, providing recommendations

for improvement.⁵³ The report revealed that within some university policies there were still gag orders, loopholes within the investigations process, time limits for filing complaints, as well as missing immunity clauses and rape shield protections. Although universities have set in place policies that cover sexual violence, not all have set in place stand-alone policies. On top of this, in regards to developing sexual violence education and prevention training, not all institutions have made such resources available.⁵⁴ At OUSA, we believe that in order to create safer campuses we have to ensure our institutions are receiving greater oversight and guidance from the province, as well as operate on policies that prioritize the safety and autonomy

Students want greater oversight to ensure that grants like WCSG are supporting intersectional, evidence based, and survivor-centred efforts.

of survivors. Survivors and students should never feel intimidated, misguided, or neglected by their institutions when disclosing or reporting sexual violence. The provincial government plays a key role in ensuring this.

SUPPORTING SAFER CAMPUSES

One of the ways institutions can be supported in their efforts to combat sexual violence is through grants like the Women's Campus Safety Grant (WCSG).⁵⁵ The grant has been provided to post-secondary institutions through MAESD since 1991 to help address women's safety and combat sexual violence on campuses.⁵⁶ Funding is allocated for projects like educational campaigns that promote consent culture as well as infrastructure projects that seek to eliminate "dead spaces" and improve campus safety through environmental design.⁵⁷ Across post-secondary institutions, WCSG has been utilized in

different capacities and students want to ensure that the funding is being used appropriately on their campuses. As such, OUSA's membership recommends the prioritization of programs like bystander intervention training, early out reach programs, sensitivity training, as well as more diverse support programs. Students want greater oversight to ensure that grants like WCSG are supporting intersectional, evidence based, and survivor-centred efforts. Students would also like to be consulted or involved in the process of allocating such grants to ensure that their needs are being met.

Aside from the guidelines referenced above, the allocation of the WCSG is entirely up to the institution. This has lead, in some instances, to the WCSG not being allocated in ways that students and survivors want to see. At McMaster University, for example, the WCSG, valued at just above \$70,000, has been given directly to the campus

Awareness and education are key components in combating toxic norms, beliefs, and rape culture on campuses, which has been an important part of OUSA's policy stance on sexual violence.

Security Services. The majority of the funding is allocated to self-defence classes run by the campus's Security Services. We know that self-defence classes, in isolation, especially those that do not acknowledge rape culture, are not an adequate means of addressing sexual violence. Since then, however, the Equity and Inclusion Office at McMaster has accessed funding for lectures and campaigns on consent.⁵⁸

STUDENT LED EFFORTS

Awareness and education are key components in combating toxic norms, beliefs, and rape culture on campuses, which has been an important part of OUSA's policy stance on sexual violence. Moreover, students continue to contribute to these efforts through various initiatives on their campuses. Student unions like the MSU have crafted their own sexual violence policy as a way of contributing to current discussions and advocating for necessary changes. The policy paper, released this year, argues for an intersectional approach in sexual violence supports and prevention and response approaches. Additionally, the paper recommends mandated bystander intervention and response training.⁵⁹

At Laurentian University the Women's Centre is a "for student, by student" on-campus resource that delivers a wide range of supports, including providing legal information to victims of sexual violence.⁶⁰ Similarly, at Brock University, the student led sexual violence support centre provides resources like the confidential 24-hour support line where students can reach out

for support through text or email, in addition to providing other phone support services.⁶¹ Additionally, the support centre provides services for survivors seeking to report a crime of sexual violence through the court support program, so that no survivor has to go through the process alone.⁶²

CONCLUSION

Combating campus sexual violence takes a collective effort and holistic approach. From effective education and training, to survivor-centred response policies and accommodations, to creating a culture of consent, we all have a role in building safer and more inclusive campuses in our province. At OUSA, sexual violence prevention is an ongoing priority, and while the provisions laid out in Bill 132 build an important framework, more must be done to combat the persistence of sexual violence on Ontario's universities. Students and survivors are asking for concrete leadership from their government, including setting minimum standards, increased oversight, and additional funding for diverse resources both on and off-campus.

While it is not imperative of the provincial government to prescribe legislation on how institutions should meet the needs of their communities, legislation does have the capacity to set minimum expectations that can foster change. As a province we must actively work to ensure that no student ever faces sexual violence while pursuing their education.

Union étudiante du Québec

AUTHOR

Guillaume Lecorps

BACKGROUND

The last five years have been pivotal for the prevention of sexual violence in Quebec's post-secondary education sector. After the widespread media coverage of many deplorable incidents,^{63 64} the publication of a comprehensive study conducted by female university researchers and the advent of the Sans oui, c'est non! (Without a yes, it's a no!) awareness campaign, stakeholders in the higher education system became aware of the cultural change that needs to take place.⁶⁵

The disturbing data from the ESSIMU study and public testimony from many survivors in the media have largely contributed to a broad engagement by the university and college community. The study revealed that over a third of male and female respondents have been sexually harassed since they started university and that 18.3% reported unwelcome sexual behaviour. In response, student associations and university officials worked together to raise awareness on the prevention of

sexual violence on campuses and to reverse the general trend revealed by studies and the media.

Subsequently, several groups fighting sexual violence in higher education, including the Quebec Student Union, have called upon post-secondary institutions and the government to implement concrete measures to eradicate rape culture and sexual violence in universities and colleges.

Since then, significant progress has been made, and though the Quebec model is not perfect, we are witnessing a cultural shift, as well as a greater collective awareness. The purpose of this article is to take stock of the measures we have collectively implemented to fight sexual violence.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The alarming situation that prevailed after the start of the 2016 academic year, as well as growing pressure from student associations and groups fighting sexual violence, prompted the Minister responsible for Higher Education in Quebec to engage with these organizations and act on this issue in the Fall of 2016.

During the 2016-2017 year, the Sans oui, c'est non! campaign, a collaborative effort between university administrations and student associations, was turned into a non-profit organization. This gave the university system a collaborative mechanism to coordinate sexual violence awareness and prevention efforts. Additionally, colleges were also later included within the organization. All of Quebec university campuses are now Sans oui c'est non! partners, and the organization includes 55 education institutions and 56 student



associations across the province.

Student associations worked hard to prevent the Quebec government from banning welcoming activities on university campuses. After the associations argued that such a ban would result in a non-accountability on the part of the institutions rather than offer a solution to the problem, the Minister responsible for Higher Education backed down.

Student associations, allies, and groups fighting to end sexual violence on campuses insisted that all college and universities have the following:

- Sexual assault-specific policies;
- Effective awareness and prevention measures;
- Services for survivors;
- Government funding for these measures and services;
- A “single-window” service delivery.

In response to this, in the spring of 2017 the Minister of Higher Education launched public consultations to aid in the development of proposed legislation that would address sexual violence on college and university campuses. These consultations gave stakeholders from diverse sectors the opportunity to showcase their expertise by discussing the daily reality they face and to make recommendations to the Ministry. The Quebec Student Union was actively involved in these meetings, which were held across the province, by presenting a brief of the Union’s recommendations.⁶⁶

Following the consultations for Bill 151 by the committee, the National Assembly adopted the Act to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions on December 8, 2017.⁶⁷ Throughout the process, the parliamentary committee hearings provided the Quebec Student Union with an opportunity to present its latest recommendations, which were drawn from the achievements and shortcomings of Bill 151.

In the end, the resulting legislation set out various requirements for universities and defines certain government practices. Table 1 shows the provisions set out in the Act, which also echo the concerns and solutions brought forth by the Quebec Student Union.

TABLE 1 : REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT

Requirements	Details
Every institution must implement a policy to prevent and fight sexual violence.	Said policy must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be implemented in every institution • Establish processing times for reported incidents • Ensure the protection of every person who reports an incident • Establish penalties for policy breaches
Take into account the needs of those more at risk of being sexually assaulted.	Includes aboriginal communities, international students, disabled people, gender and sexually diverse persons.
Set up annual training activities.	These training sessions target the institution’s staff, student union and association representatives, and management.
Establish a code of conduct.	This code of conduct must specify the guidelines that should govern relationships between students and staff members in positions of authority.
Policy implementation, review, and follow-up process.	This process must include the student community and the institution’s staff and management.
Compliance deadlines.	Set deadlines for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting the policy: January 1, 2019 • Implementing the policy: September 1, 2019

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the last few years have enabled the Quebec community, particularly at the university level, to address the persistent issue of sexual violence on university and college campuses. The rise in collective awareness has strengthened the political will and created real obligations for university administrators and student associations to fight sexual violence and eradicate rape culture.

There is still a long way to go when it comes to introducing optimal strategies and services that are accessible and fair to everyone. However, progress made with respect to institution-specific policies, prevention and accountability measures, as well as government funding for a single window service in each institution, show a significant step in the right direction.

The inclusion and involvement of survivors in the process has been and continues to be a prerequisite for meeting their needs, and strengthening support. It is essential that local student associations and their institution's administration work together, as well as consider the particular needs of the different campuses in the province, in order to best implement smart and sustainable solutions.

Looking to the future, the Quebec Student Union is committed to the efforts in the fight against sexual violence across Canada and will continue to contribute to these efforts. The Quebec Student Union also looks forward to gaining insights from our Canadian colleagues' best practices and experiences. We hope to learn more from our partners and to find ways to continue to improve the work that we do.

New Brunswick Student Alliance

AUTHORS

Samuel Titus
Brianna Workman

INTRODUCTION

As the New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) geared up to celebrate its 35th anniversary at the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, a moment was taken to reflect upon the storied and nuanced history of the Alliance and its role in the post-secondary education sector in the New Brunswick. The path to 35 years has been paved, almost exclusively, by advocacy efforts aimed at addressing financial barriers to post-secondary education. These barriers have traditionally limited access to university for those in the upper-middle class or those willing to take on substantial student debt. However, in recent years, significant movement has been made on these files in New Brunswick, with the introduction of the Free Tuition Program and Tuition Relief for the Middle Class offering outstanding financial supports for low- and middle- income families from New Brunswick. These successes have allowed the NBSA to shift part of its focus away from primarily student financial aid, and look to meaningfully address some of the more complex and systemic barriers facing the sector. In doing so, the NBSA has attempted to remain current with the shifting narrative

surrounding what it means for an institution to be truly “accessible” for marginalized groups.

From an academic standpoint, the Alliance has always held the opinion that our institutions compare admirably to those across the country. This paired with recent investments in financial aid and youth employment opportunities have made New Brunswick a premiere location for students to receive a high quality education. However, this does not reflect the reality that, for a large percentage of our student population, sexual violence continues to



render university and college campuses unsafe. Until action is taken in addressing sexual violence on our campuses, they will remain fundamentally inaccessible.

Recently, in the wake of campaigns such as #MeToo and public accusations of sexual misconduct against high profile individuals, the conversation surrounding sexual violence has taken the form of formal advocacy and renewed demands for policy change. While there is no doubt that these conversations are important to have on a broader scale, the negative impacts of sexual violence remain an acute problem on our post-secondary campuses. In 2014, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) found that 41% of sexual assaults committed against Canadians above the age of 15 were reported by students. Whether the assault occurred on- or off- campus, the 261,000 reported incidents clearly indicate that students are a vulnerable group when it comes to sexual assault and violence. The demographic breakdown of New Brunswick's institutions also adds to the immediacy of this problem, with nearly 60% of students identifying as female. In a province that hopes to leverage the success of its youth to revitalize the economy, it would be wise to properly invest in the physical safety and well-being of its students and young people.

PROGRESS TO-DATE

Prior to 2017, there was little in the way of formal discussions surrounding sexual violence in New Brunswick at a province-wide level. Universities and institutions were, for the most part, tasked with undertaking the steps they felt were necessary on this file for their local campuses. Student unions and other on-campus groups have played active roles in these projects, and managed

In 2014, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) found that 41 percent of sexual assaults committed against Canadians above the age of 15 were reported by students.

to achieve a commendable degree of success despite no formal overarching long-term planning or supports. In the past few years, campuses have been expanding survivor supports, often involving the hiring of dedicated staff and implementing stand-alone sexual violence policies. In 2017, an agreement was signed between the University of New Brunswick - Fredericton campus, St. Thomas University, and the New Brunswick Community College, formalizing the Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocate (CSASA), which had existed as a pilot project the previous year. The CSASA offers support services to the students of the three institutions, as well as supporting a similar staff position at the Saint John campus of the University of New Brunswick. Likewise, Mount Allison University recently hired a Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Education Service (SHARE)

advisor, to support their students. In both cases, the intention of the program is to ensure that student safety is taken seriously on campus, and that dedicated services are available to survivors of sexual violence. While these steps have been welcomed by students across the province, their efficacy is stalled by the continued lack of credibility given to this file. Both CSASA and SHARE, despite the immediate and pressing need for in-person support and the notable benefits brought on by the positions, remain chronically understaffed and underfunded. In the case of CSASA, three Fredericton-based institutions are only supported by a single staff – despite there being nearly 10,000 students in the city. Saint John campus and Mount Allison University are also only supported by one staff member each. Despite being available 24/7, each staff member is only compensated for part-time work.

Additionally, while these supports are in place, they are only able to operate within the constraints of the sexual assault policies on each campuses, further limiting their potential impact. Currently policies are fairly inconsistent between campuses and often lack adequate reporting structures for survivors. In some cases, the sexual assault policy is folded within the non-

academic misconduct policy, and until quite recently, was not even the most egregious offence outlined by these documents. Even in situations where the sexual assault policy is stand-alone, the committee that adjudicates sexual assault complaints is not stand-alone, which can lead to serious instances of conflicts of interest or lack of expertise by those involved in hearing the complaints.

All that being said, the situation is not as bleak as it may appear. While on-campus resources are limited, for those that have relied on them for essential support, they have been indescribably beneficial. Much like the change in attitude around how best to address student mental health, even the smallest commitment by government or the universities signals to students that help is coming.

While on-campus resources are limited, for those that have relied on them for essential support, they have been indescribably beneficial.

For our part, the NBSA has been actively working to ensure that students' voices are being factored in during these discussions. In 2017, meaningfully addressing campus sexual violence was highlighted as one of the organisation's top priorities, and significant work has been completed since. Progress began with a thorough review of the NBSA's policy principles on

sexual violence, culminating in a series of consultations with stakeholders such as the CSASA, SHARE, the Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre, and St. Thomas University professor Dr. Karla O'Regan. Utilizing their advice and expertise, new policies were developed to reflect a multi-year approach on this file, focusing on three main goals: the need for standardization of campus sexual violence policies via legislation, an expansion of on campus support services, and the need for more robust and consistent education and awareness about sexual violence on campus. These three objectives were used to inform the Alliance's 2017 Advocacy Document, which was presented to nearly all members of the Legislative Assembly, senior civil service, and various external stakeholders at the NBSA's annual Advocacy Week. Moved by the words of NBSA delegates, members of the Official Opposition presented a motion that would have the government mandate all universities adopt stand-alone sexual violence policies, following the requirements outlined in our policy. The wording of the motion was then amended to say that the government "strongly encourage" such action, thus removing the crucial "mandatory" aspect from the motion. Despite the seeming failure of the motion, the momentum gained by this public acknowledgement that the status quo is insufficient and unacceptable has injected a renewed energy into the conversation surrounding sexual violence prevention. Decision-makers within the

larger machinery of government, university administrators, and students alike have not abandoned this cause and work continues to be done in ensuring the safety and accessibility of our institutions.

CONCLUSION

As the province prepares for what will surely be a contentious and exhilarating provincial election, the need to properly and honestly address campus sexual violence remains a topic of significant interest for the post-secondary sector. The government faces the tough reality of an election that offers less than certain victory, and the inability to seize on the opportunity to support and protect students through legislation has not been forgotten by students. Since first being elected in 2014, the Gallant ministry has insisted on being described as the "education government"; one that recognizes the vital role that education must play in economic and cultural growth. This insistence has been backed up by several major investments targeted at students, ranging from up-front grants to expanded student job opportunities, but until women, international students, members of LGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous learners, and other marginalized groups can attend post-secondary institutions without the fear of sexual harassment or violence, then we have failed at making our institutions truly accessible.

Students Nova Scotia

AUTHORS

Nicole Wambolt
Tristan Bray

WHO WE ARE

Students Nova Scotia (StudentsNS) is an alliance of Nova Scotia post-secondary student associations. We represent approximately 20,000 undergraduate, graduate, and college students across the province. We help set the direction of post-secondary education by researching challenges, identifying solutions, and making the political space needed for these solutions to happen. We advocate for an affordable and accessible post-secondary education system in Nova Scotia, that is of the utmost quality and is directed by the student voice.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a fundamental student issue. Study after study reveals alarming statistics that identify post-secondary students as a population who face an increased risk of experiencing sexual violence. Statistics like “1 in 5 women will experience sexual violence over the

course of their post-secondary education” uncovers a troubling reality on post-secondary campuses.⁶⁸ Nova Scotia students have tirelessly advocated for meaningful commitment and accountability measures from government and institutions. A huge change in how sexual violence was approached and understood in Nova Scotia was sparked by two highly publicized incidents on post-secondary campuses. In 2013, a welcome week chant condoning non-consensual sex at Saint Mary’s University went viral and sparked an important conversation across the province regarding sexual violence.⁶⁹ These chants revealed that Nova Scotia’s approach to sexual violence needed to consider both individual acts of violence



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and also a campus culture that perpetuated toxic ideas about consent. In 2014, this culture on campuses was exposed again through a Facebook group in which male Dalhousie dentistry students posted explicit comments objectifying and joking about sexual violence towards fellow female classmates.⁷⁰ The fallout from these two highly publicized incidents demonstrated that the approach to the issue of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses in Nova Scotia needed a drastic overhaul.

Over the past several years, the Nova Scotia government and post-secondary institutions have pledged to address sexual violence on campuses in order to foster safe student environments. Across the province, student leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that concerns surrounding sexual violence are brought forward to government and institution officials in order to enact change. Student associations have incorporated

discussions regarding consent, sexual violence, healthy sexual relationships, and information about resources available for survivors into important events like welcome week and have also established sexual violence awareness weeks on their respective campuses. Discussions around sexual violence prevention and resources tend to be dominated by university campuses, and often fail to recognize the unique circumstances of the Nova Scotia Community Colleges. Due to financial and resource limitations, community college student associations face significant barriers to representing their students and implementing important programs and supports in response to sexual violence. Despite the hard work of dedicated student leaders, sexual violence is still a very real problem on post-secondary campuses. Nova Scotia is a small province both in size and population, making resources scarce and budgets tight. With 10 universities and an expansive community college, many institutions are lacking the financial and physical resources needed to support students.

INITIATIVES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Across Nova Scotia, there have been a variety of initiatives that have targeted the issue of sexual violence. In 2015, the government of Nova Scotia released a report Across Nova Scotia, there have been

a variety of initiatives that have targeted the issue of sexual violence. In 2015, the government of Nova Scotia released a report titled *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence Prevention in Nova Scotia*.⁷¹ This framework was used as an outline to develop prevention strategies and increase supports for survivors. It also addressed the specific issues and experiences of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and attempted to break the silence and stigma associated with sexual violence.

In response to the growing demands from students for better supports for survivors on campus, the government included sexual violence in the 2015-2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the province and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP). The MOU is an agreement between the province and the universities that establishes particular criteria that the universities must meet in order to receive funding from the government. The 2015-2019 MOU explicitly mandates institutions to “develop sexual

violence policies which encompass sexual assault and sexual harassment”.⁷² Alongside the MOU, the province has been working with the Nova Scotia Community College to ensure the development of a stand-alone sexual violence policy for the network of community college campuses. With the deadline for this standard fast approaching,

there is still much work to be done to develop appropriate and comprehensive policies at Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions.

Following the signing of the MOU, the government and post-secondary institutions created a Sexual Violence Prevention Committee. In December 2017, the committee released the report *Changing the culture of acceptance: the Province of Nova Scotia’s and the Nova Scotia Universities’*

recommendations to address sexual violence on university campuses.⁷³ The recommendations within the report highlight the need to change the culture on campuses and provide guidelines for institutions to take action to address sexual violence.

Although these initiatives have had some success combating sexual violence on post-secondary campuses across Nova Scotia, more must be done to ensure that the commitments and promises by both government and institutions are upheld and sexual violence on post-secondary campuses is properly addressed.

Other provincial student groups have called upon the government to implement legislation that requires post-secondary institutions to develop stand-alone sexual violence policies, similar to legislation that exists in British Columbia and Ontario. In response to this, the province has reiterated its commitment to working within the MOU, which requires institutions to develop and update stand-alone sexual violence policies. StudentsNS recognizes the importance of holding institutions and government accountable in regards to the development of these policies in order to provide supports for survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. As student groups across the country have demonstrated, legislation is not a fix-all solution to the problems and concerns of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses. Due to the explicit mandate within the MOU for institutions to develop sexual violence policies, we believe that working collaboratively with institutions, the government, and the newly established provincial sexual violence strategy implementation committee is the most effective way to represent the concerns and needs of students. We must ensure that the government and institutions are held accountable throughout these processes to establish standalone sexual violence policies and necessary resources on all campuses.

In 2014, StudentsNS commissioned a report from the independent research

firm Martell Consulting Services Ltd. titled *Student Safety in Nova Scotia: A Review of Student Union Policies and Practices to Prevent Sexual Violence*.⁷⁴ The report included 21 recommendations for student union programming and advocacy to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence and foster communities where students respect and support each other. The most important finding from the review was that consent is not well understood by students of all genders and is a critical factor in many sexual assaults on campus. Following the release of this review, in partnership with our student members, StudentsNS launched More Than Yes, an educational campaign to promote greater understanding of consent among students. The campaign featured posters, stickers for condom wrappers, and a website. The website was advertised on social media platforms using a simple, powerful message that tentative responses such as “I guess” or even “...sure” are inadequate.

Although these initiatives have had some success combating sexual violence on post-secondary campuses across Nova Scotia, more must be done to ensure that the commitments and promises by both government and institutions are upheld and sexual violence on post-secondary campuses is properly addressed.

THE NEXT STEPS: ACTION TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

Educational campaigns, initiatives to reduce stigma, and long-term reduction strategies are a very important first step to combating sexual violence on post-secondary campuses. However, students need more than words. Students need action now. Government and institutions have made numerous commitments to address sexual violence on post-secondary campuses. It is imperative that these commitments and proposals are followed through and fully realized.

Beyond the mandate within the Memorandum of Understanding for institutions to develop stand-alone sexual violence policies, we must ensure that these policies follow best practices. There must be a clear and concise procedure that allows students to know and understand what their rights are, what resources are available to them, and what to expect throughout the process should they choose to report or disclose an incident of sexual violence.

In a well-developed stand-alone sexual violence policy, reporting refers to the procedures that a survivor chooses to use.

Reporting is a useful tool to measure if the policies and supports that are in place are adequate or need to be reconstructed. StudentsNS advocates for a method of reporting that protects the privacy and wishes of the survivor and the only purpose it will serve is to hold institutions and government accountable to their commitments and to measure if policy and procedure is adequate. The Atlantic Association of Universities' has developed a reporting template, yet there is no plan in place to require institutions to adhere to this guide.

One of the biggest concerns with data surrounding sexual violence is the low rate of reporting by survivors. It is always the right of the survivor to decide if they want

One of the biggest concerns with data surrounding sexual violence is the low rate of reporting by survivors.

to report an incident or not and that choice must be respected. Many survivors may disclose that an incident of sexual violence has occurred to university resources but may not wish to undertake the official

university reporting process. It is important for universities to track disclosures as they are another way to hold the policies and strategies implemented by government and institutions accountable and responsible, while respecting the privacy and wishes of survivors. When discussing sexual violence on campuses across Nova Scotia, it is

difficult to accurately reflect the reality and conditions without access to consistent or specific data. In order to identify areas for improvement, it is important to collect Nova Scotia specific data through the collection of reporting and disclosures. This is critical to understanding the unique environment of post-secondary campuses across the province and to developing appropriate and relevant policy that reflects these concerns.

CONCLUSION

Given the benefits that Nova Scotia receives from having a healthy and expansive post-secondary education system, it is imperative that pressing student concerns like sexual violence are taken seriously and are met with appropriate resources and solutions. Sexual violence requires more than just words in order to change the very real problems that students face on campuses. While government and institutions have committed to addressing sexual violence on campuses, students need solutions and recommendations implemented immediately. Investments in educational campaigns, reducing stigma surrounding survivors, and long term strategies aimed at reducing sexual violence rates are important, but the development of immediate policies and resources on campus is imperative to the support of current post-secondary students. StudentsNS believes that

institutions and government need to act now in order to address the concerns of students and provide supports for survivors. In partnership with government and institutions, StudentsNS recognizes that it is our shared responsibility to end sexual violence on our campuses, in our communities, and in our society.

University of Prince Edward Island Student Union

AUTHORS

Taya Nabuurs
Colin Trewin

INTRODUCTION

While sexual violence continues to be one of the most pervasive issues faced by Canadian society, this issue is particularly prevalent on post-secondary campuses. Some surveys indicate that 1 in 5 women will experience some form of sexual assault while attending an institution of higher education.⁷⁵ Not only are incidences of sexual violence particularly prevalent on post-secondary campuses, but they are also perpetually underreported. A CBC investigation examining sexual violence on campus indicated that it is particularly uncommon for students to report sexual assault to their university and college (cases of reports to post-secondary institutions are well below the national average).⁷⁶

In an effort to address issues of sexual violence and its underreported nature, four Canadian provinces have developed legislation outlining requirements for sexual violence policies at universities and colleges. Prince Edward Island currently does not have any such legislation, though the Provincial government says it is reviewing potential legislation which could be tabled and voted on this year. It is crucial

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that any legislation currently being drafted by the Province of Prince Edward Island is reflective of the needs of Island students and the particularly sensitive nature of sexual violence.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON ISLAND CAMPUSES

Prince Edward Island has two major post-secondary institutions: the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) and Holland College. UPEI has not yet developed a stand-alone sexual violence policy, though the university is currently working to implement one. Holland College has reportedly already put in place a stand-alone sexual violence policy, although this policy and its contents are not publicly available.

In May 2017, the UPEI Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Task Force was established. This group of students, staff, and faculty from across campus joined efforts with community leaders with the mandate to investigate the issue of sexual violence on campus, to review drafts of the stand-alone sexual violence policy for UPEI, and to provide recommendations for education and prevention programming for the university.

It is crucial that any legislation currently being drafted by the Province of Prince Edward Island is reflective of the needs of Island students and the particularly sensitive nature of sexual violence.

The UPEI SVPR Task Force is an excellent example of the power and importance of bringing numerous diverse voices together to implement sexual violence prevention and response strategies. Through the advisement of this group, UPEI is now developing a designated Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office equipped with full-time staff dedicated to developing prevention and education programming.

Consultations conducted by the UPEI SVPR Task Force on the subject of sexual violence at UPEI have revealed that there is still much work to be done. Among many other suggestions, the consultations

revealed a demand for making sexual violence prevention and response training more widely available for students and faculty. Students also highlighted widespread support for better education on campus, with requests for expanded scope and frequency of educational initiatives.

This feedback from students shows just how important it is that policies are not merely reactive, but that they also include commitments to proactive educational efforts.

LEGISLATION FOR PEI: WHAT IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE

While these initiatives on behalf of UPEI are a step in the right direction, we must ensure that the approach to combating campus sexual violence in Prince Edward Island is uniform across the province and adequate to meet the needs of our students. Legislation must do more than simply mandate the creation of stand-alone sexual violence policies on our campuses; it must also provide a set of minimum standards for these policies.

Following a presentation by the UPEI Student Union, the PEI Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development passed a motion on October 18th, 2017 stating: “that the Government of Prince Edward Island enact provincial legislation to ensure external oversight of sexual violence policies at its post-secondary institutions”.⁷⁷ Through consultation and meetings with different groups and associations, the UPEI Student Union recommends that any legislation implemented on the topic of campus sexual violence include the following general stipulations:

- *That every post-secondary institution in Prince Edward Island have a stand-alone sexual violence policy;*
- *That students, staff, administration, faculty, and community experts are thoroughly consulted throughout the process of policy development;*
- *That the policies outline requirements for educational programming and support services;*

- *That the policies include a recognition of the intersectional impacts of sexual violence;*
- *That the policies be easily accessible and their existence widely advertised.*

Additionally, we recommend that provincial government implement the recommendations of Our Turn UPEI, a student-led organization engaging students in the fight against sexual violence. Our Turn UPEI has recommended a number of minimum standards for campus sexual violence policies, such as rape shield protections, protection from gag orders, mandatory sexual violence training, and a definition of the standard for student consultation.

Implementing such legislation will be crucial in ensuring the students in PEI have the supports they need to feel safe and supported throughout their post-secondary education.

One victim of sexual violence is one too many, and the staggering statistics on campus sexual violence make the need to address this issue through robust and sustained initiatives all the more evident.

CONCLUSION

UPEI has made great strides in the 2017-2018 academic year towards the development of a stand-alone sexual violence policy, but there is still much work to be done in order to ensure that universities and colleges in PEI are places where everyone can feel safe and protected from any form of sexual violence. The UPEISU is excited to see that student advocacy has instigated the provincial government to examine the implementation of legislation on post-secondary sexual violence. It is necessary now that consistent and sincere consultation with students is facilitated so that this legislation will be accurately reflective of the needs of students.

One victim of sexual violence is one too many, and the staggering statistics on campus sexual violence make the need to address this issue through robust and sustained initiatives all the more evident. Provincial legislation which includes a set of minimum standards for sexual violence policies at post-secondary institutions in Prince Edward Island is the necessary next step forward for our province in ensuring that adequate policies and programs are in place to create safer Island campuses.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations

AUTHORS

Johnathon Rix
Parvin Sedighi

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) represents 255,000 students from 22 student associations across Canada. CASA envisions a post-secondary system where all students, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation, have access to a safe and inclusive learning environment. For such an environment to exist, students must be free from all acts of violence, including sexual violence. Unfortunately, for many students, this is far from the current reality. Too many students have been impacted or know someone impacted by sexual violence on Canadian campuses.

CASA believes that the federal government has a responsibility to provide leadership in this area, especially given the government's commitment to promoting gender equity. Thankfully, some steps are finally being taken. Over the last few years, there have been some promising actions taken by federal institutions to address sexual

violence on Canadian campuses. These include the work and recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO), the development of national data sets by Statistics Canada, and the commitments made by the federal government outlined in Budget 2018. While not solutions to the current crises in themselves, there have been appreciable efforts taken to make campuses safer.

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CANADIAN CAMPUSES

The prevalence of gender-based sexual violence in Canada, and by extension,



across Canadian campuses, is striking. According to Status of Women Canada, “gender-based violence” refers to “the way in which patterns of sexual violence are neither accidental nor occasional and hence avoidable; there are clear gender differences in who is most likely to victimize and be victimized by sexual violence”.⁷⁸ Additionally, this issue brief highlights that “Women are the vast majority of those assaulted, therefore gender can be seen as a fundamental determinant of sexual violence”.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Status of Women Canada outlines that “gender [sic] refers to the socially constructed roles and norms typically enacted and ascribed to people based on binary sex categories, and can exist on a wide continuum. When we think about violence perpetrated against women, it is primarily ideas about gender (i.e. what it means to be “masculine” and what it means to be “feminine”) that influence violence patterns”.⁸⁰ Recently, attention has been drawn to this in the context of post-secondary institutions by a student-led group named Our Turn, who has released an action plan outlining the extent of sexual violence on campuses and outlines appropriate responses for prevention, support and advocacy to end the issue. Our Turn reiterates the fact that 1 in every 5 women will experience sexual violence on a post-secondary campus during their studies.⁸¹

Of all sexual assaults that take place on post-secondary campuses during the academic year, roughly two-thirds of them will happen within the first eight weeks of school.

While specific post-secondary data isn't available, the action plan highlights that 1 in 6 men will also experience sexual violence during their lifetime.⁸² Furthermore, a U.S. study conducted by the National Centre for Transgender Equality conducted in 2015 reports that 47% of transgendered people will experience sexual violence throughout their lives.⁸³ When specifically focusing in on the experiences of women, 80% of female students who identify as survivors of sexual violence report that they were assaulted by someone they knew.⁸⁴ Statistics outlined in Our Turn's report also show that the first weeks of school, specifically around Frosh Week or Fall Orientation, is the time when sexual violence is most prevalent.⁸⁵ Of all sexual assaults that take place on post-secondary campuses during the academic year, roughly two-thirds of them will happen within the first eight weeks of school. This time is often referred to as “the red zone”.⁸⁶ The prevalence of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses is not a new issue either. In fact, an influential paper in sociology entitled “Male Sex Aggression on a University Campus” was released in 1957 first bringing attention to the issue.⁸⁷ It's only now that the government is starting to turn towards action on what has been a known issue for a while.

CURRENT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WORK

THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In March 2017, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women issued a report titled “Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada,” which outlines several key strategies to help address sexual violence on campus. First, the committee highlights the need to have ongoing, inclusive education on consent and promotion of consent culture. Other suggestions in the report include investing in proper training for faculty members and staff on how to properly handle instances of sexual assault, and improving on-campus support services for survivors. Many witnesses to the committee emphasized that post-secondary campuses across Canada have limited resources to properly support survivors through a survivor-centric approach when issues of sexual violence arise on campuses. There are a variety of judicial and service provisions that are necessary to ensure survivors get the best support possible, and financial resources are needed to ensure this happens. The committee report also highlights the importance of implementing survivor- and student-centred stand-alone sexual assault policies on post-secondary campuses. Within the official recommendations of the report, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women requests the Government of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness have

discussions around stand-alone sexual violence policies, the establishment of sexual assault centres on campuses, and ensuring that proper training be provided to administrators and faculty members.⁸⁸

STATISTICS CANADA: DEVELOPING NEW DATA

Without accurate data, it becomes difficult to establish an evidence-based approach to reducing instances of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses across Canada. There is currently a lack of data, both in the general Canadian context as well as in the Canadian post-secondary education context, with regards to the prevalence and nature of sexual violence. This has always been a barrier to developing solutions. However, students are optimistic that this data gap will be addressed in the near future, thanks to recent efforts by Statistics Canada to develop two surveys that will collect important information on gender-based violence. The first survey, entitled “Survey of Safety in Public Spaces and Private Spaces,” will examine the lifetime prevalence of sexual and physical violence, intimate partner violence, attitudes towards gendered violence, attitudes towards non-conforming genders, and cyber-violence and stalking. Although this survey does not focus explicitly on post-secondary campuses, it will be beneficial for developing the broader context in which campus sexual violence take place. Statistics Canada will also be issuing a second survey that will narrow in on campus-related experiences of sexual violence. Entitled, the “Survey on Sexual Victimization Among Post-Secondary Students,” it will measure the prevalence of sexual misconduct, harassment,

gender-based discriminations, and sexual assaults among post-secondary students. The combination of these two surveys should provide students, post-secondary administrators, and government officials with a solid, data-backed understanding of sexual violence on Canadian campuses in a way that has never existed before. Unfortunately, the results from both of these surveys won't be made available by Statistics Canada until 2020, meaning that data gaps will continue to hinder governments', schools' and students' ability to develop solutions on sexual violence for a while longer.

BUDGET 2018

The federal government's most recent budget, which centred around gender equity, included a new measure that will distribute federal money to Canadian campuses. The budget highlighted some sobering statistics: 47% of all sexual assault incidents reported in Canada were committed against women aged 15 to 24 and 41% of those who reported sexual assault were students. The government stressed the need for federal leadership to ensure a national framework is in place to create safe campuses and an environment that will support survivors who report sexual violence. Specifically, the government will be giving \$5.5 million over five years, starting in 2018-19, to the federal Status of Women Committee to work with stakeholders, provinces, and territories to develop a national framework that will ensure consistent, comprehensive, and sustainable approaches to addressing gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions. The budget also states that starting in 2019, for those university and college campuses that are not

implementing best practises addressing sexual assaults, would have their federal funding considered for withdrawal.⁸⁹ Though CASA is concerned that funding withdrawals could have unintended negative consequences for students, the federal government's clear commitment to address campus sexual violence is promising.

NEXT STEPS

The issue of sexual violence on campuses has been a known issue for well over 60 years now, and it's encouraging to see the Government of Canada, student organizations, institutions and many other stakeholders actively engaging in consultations on how we can move towards a post-secondary system free from sexual violence. Effective action will require buy-in at all levels of government and at every institution in the country. CASA recommends that every post-secondary institution have a stand-alone sexual violence policy that protects students, and we believe the federal government should play a leadership role in ensuring that this occurs across the country. CASA is encouraged to see Statistics Canada's commitment to developing surveys on the prevalence and nature of sexual violence on campuses, even if the data is still years away from release. Finally, CASA is looking forward to assisting with the work of Status of Women Canada and provincial and territorial governments to disseminate and develop best practices for addressing sexual violence. It's our hope that these steps will help make sure that all campuses are safe, welcoming and secure places for all students.

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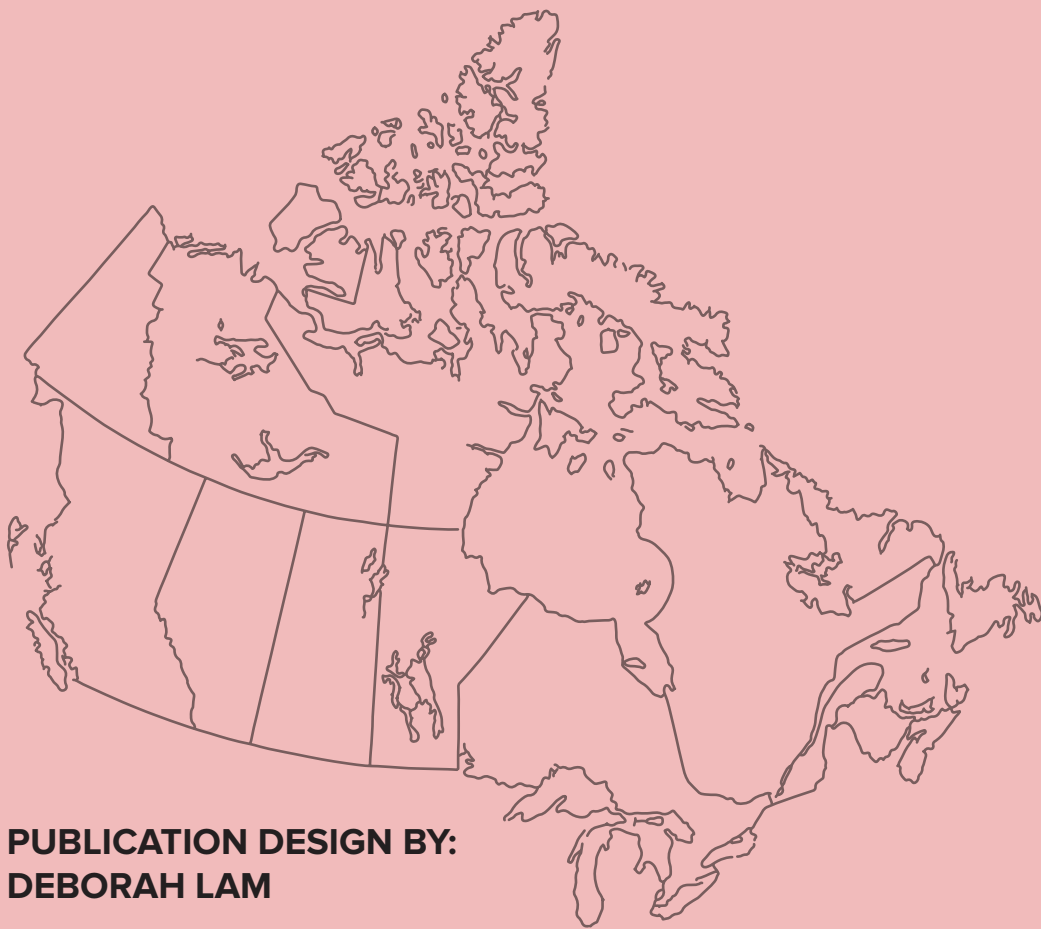
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