

Sexual Violence Prevention Report University of Ottawa

May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021



Presented by the Standing Committee on the
Prevention of Sexual Violence and the Human Rights Office

BACKGROUND

The Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence (SCPSV) and the Human Rights Office (HRO) jointly present this report on activities taking place from May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021.

The SCPSV was formed in 2016. Its mandate includes a) to work in collaboration with the University community to foster a safe learning environment; and b) to recommend relevant initiatives, strategies, or programs that ensure and improve the continuity of services, policies, processes and other prevention measures.

For its part, the HRO is responsible for responding to disclosures and complaints of sexual violence that concern members of the University community. The HRO offers a range of services to survivors in addition to information on the options and processes that apply under the relevant policies. Finally, the HRO implements prevention, awareness, and educational initiatives.

Over the past year, the SCPSV and the HRO have worked together to pursue the fight against sexual violence at the University of Ottawa. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in personnel, the 2020-2021 year has posed a unique set of challenges such as providing services through various virtual modalities and a smaller HRO team. This report is divided into three sections.

Section I – Overview

The report will first present an overview of initiatives implemented to raise awareness of sexual violence within the University community, inform the community of the services offered, and prevent incidents of sexual violence on campus.

Section II – Data

This section will present data on disclosures, complaints lodged, and the accommodation measures put in place to support members of the student community affected by sexual violence on campus. It will also discuss a review of the effectiveness of *Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence*, which was conducted during the period covered by this report.

Section III – Recommendations

As mandated, the members of the SCPSV have formulated recommendations, which also led them to implement a variety of initiatives over the past year. A list of these suggestions concludes the report.

Section I

PREVENTION, AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

In collaboration with several partners, both on and off campus, the HRO organized and/or participated in various prevention, awareness, and educational events. The HRO also participated in various committees.

KEY PARTNERS

- University of Ottawa Students' Union (UOSU)
- Women's Resource Centre
- Graduate Students Association of the University of Ottawa (GSAÉD)
- Student Life
- Housing Service
- Aboriginal Resource Centre
- Communications Directorate
- International Office
- Health Promotion Services
- Food Services
- Protection Services
- CALACS francophone d'Ottawa
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC)
- The Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Carleton University
- Algonquin College
- La Cité College

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

- #JustGotWeird Campaign
- uOttawa Orientation
- Bystander Awareness Trainings
- Fauteux 101

EDUCATION

Mobilizing the Bystanders workshop

Over the 2020-2021 Academic year, the HRO continued updating the workshop to include information gathered from the newest Statistics Canada reports and consultations with Mashkawaziwogamig: Indigenous Resource Centre (IRC).

This year, the HRO offered the workshop virtually to 40 participants. In surveying the participants after the workshop, 100% stated that the 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the statements "I intend to apply this new knowledge, skills and know-how" and "I feel able to use new knowledge, skills or know-how".

Other training sessions

- Training on managing disclosures, offered to Academic Accommodations
- Training that includes a component on sexual violence prevention and Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence, offered to the Faculty of Science
- Training offered to review committees and potential review committee members, as specified in *Policy 67b — Prevention of Sexual Violence*

COMMITTEES

Communities of Practice – Courage to Act

In addition to being a member of the SCPSV, one of the HRO's sexual violence prevention officer sits on the Francophone practice committee of [Courage to Act](#), a national initiative that aims to address and prevent gender-based violence on Canadian post-secondary campuses. This participation will certainly provide the University with new tools to combat sexual violence on our campus.

Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing

The director of the Human Rights Office also sits on the University of Ottawa's Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing, which strengthens the HRO's ties with its other partners on campus, allowing them to work together to meet the wellness needs of the student population. This also gives the HRO an opportunity to share important information on, and discuss issues related to, the prevention of sexual violence on campus.

Section II

DISCLOSURES, COMPLAINTS, AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021, the Human Rights Office received a total of 98 requests for services related to sexual violence. Of these requests for services, the HRO received at least 56 new service requests this year. This total includes 64 consultations (follow-up on cases opened in previous years, requests for accommodations, disclosures, etc.), 21 requests for information (referrals to internal or external services, information on *Policy 67b*, services, or the complaint process), and 11 cases that resulted in complaints.

Cyber harassment: 6

Domestic violence: 2

Sexual assault: 11

Sexual harassment: 16

Other (Incidents that survivors preferred not to specify): 57

During the period covered by this report, the HRO assisted community members in requests for accommodations 33 times. Such accommodations included: postponing assignment deadlines or exams; switching courses; applying preventive measures in class; letters of support in various appeals; requests for tuition fee reimbursement; and justifications for absences from class.

Finally, of the 12 complaints received, 4 resulted in external investigations, 3 were resolved through informal or alternative measures, and 1 was dropped. 4 of the complaints did not meet the requirements of *Policy 67b*, of which 1 was resolved through a referral to the Faculty.

EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY 67B – PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

During 2020-2021 academic year, the HRO and members of the SCPSV consulted each other to review *Policy 67b*. In light of the review from 2019-2020, several changes and a few clarifications were suggested to clarify certain sections as well as review key parts of the formal complaint process. The changes are expected to be brought to the Senate during the 2021-2022 academic year.

The HRO continues working on an in-depth review, and a broader consultation will be undertaken to gather comments from the University community. This will allow the University to implement a policy that will best meet the needs of its community.

Section III

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

During the period covered by this report, the SCPSV met several times; they discussed and recommended various initiatives. The members collaborated with the HRO on the implementation of these projects.

Creation of a new position to support the prevention of sexual violence

Since the data gathered has shown a significant increase in the number of disclosures and in requests for HRO services, the SCPSV recommended that the HRO create an additional position to assist in addressing sexual violence prevention. The incumbent would take charge of prevention, educational, and awareness activities, among other duties, within the HRO.

To this effect, the HRO is pleased to confirm that this position will be added and that the team will now comprise two full-time officers, in permanent positions, to meet the needs of the University community. At the time of this report, the HRO is actively working on filling this position.

Online disclosure form

Last year, the members of the SCPSV, as well as other partners on campus, raised the point that survivors may find it difficult to access services to disclose, or to obtain support in, circumstances involving sexual violence. This form, which is the product of collaboration between the HRO and the SCPSV, is now available on the [Sexual Violence: Prevention and Support](#) webpage, under the **Disclose/Report an Incident** tab. The form is presented during all trainings and workshops on sexual violence presented by the HRO. Thus far, 10 requests have been made using the online disclosure form during 2020-2021. The HRO will continue promoting this reporting option and will include it as a primary reporting option during the web site restructuring.

Data collection

One of the SCPSV recommendations is to collect data on disclosed incidents of sexual violence. The importance of gathering campus-wide statistics was raised and the creation of a data collection form was proposed. This form would be completed by the faculties, as well as several services and departments.

In collaboration with the SCPSV, the HRO created a data collection form that was sent to certain services, departments, as well as the faculties. This data gathering will allow us to better grasp the scope of the problem of sexual violence on campus and to work with the various sectors to support survivors in the University community.

To date, the HRO has received data each trimester from one of the services and data from off-campus community partners on a yearly basis.

Funds to maintain collaboration between the University of Ottawa and agencies that support survivors

For some years now, the University of Ottawa has partnered with two external agencies that specialize in

providing support to survivors of sexual violence, namely the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre and CALACS francophone d'Ottawa. The SCPSV believes in the importance of ensuring sustainable funding so that University community members have access to services for those affected by sexual violence. Moreover, the number of requests for such services has increased over the past few years, which demonstrates the importance of adequately funding such agencies to properly support University community members.

The HRO continues to explore partnerships with off-campus community services to provide services to community members who identify as survivors.

Online training

In response to a request that certain campus partners submitted to the HRO, the SCPSV received a proposal to implement online training in sexual violence prevention aimed at students. The HRO partnered with Concordia University to adapt Concordia's online training to make it available to members of the uOttawa community. This allows us to train a greater number of people on topics such as sexual violence, consent, the bystander effect, the survivor-centered approach, the services offered, and Policy 67b. The training is now available to all students through Brightspace, and the HRO is working with multiple service partners such as Health Promotions and Sports Services to ensure that students can voluntarily register to the training. Certain Faculties have also expressed an interest in making the training mandatory to students.

The HRO will be consulting with Concordia University to create a similar training for uOttawa community members who are not students during the upcoming year.

Training – Managing Disclosures

Another SCPSV recommendation is that the HRO identify and provide training to services where students may disclose incidents of sexual violence. The HRO has reached out to partners in Student Services, Protection Services, and Health Promotion to work on a plan for training that would meet these on-campus partners' needs. The HRO has provided training to Academic Accommodations Service and works closely with Learning Specialists to provide services to shared service users.

CONCLUSION

The Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence and the Human Rights Office are committed to pursuing their work and to collaborating with their various partners to help prevent and address incidents of sexual violence on campus.

The HRO wishes to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has diverted our attention to ensuring that all our services are provided through virtual modalities. This includes standardizing processes so that service users can reach HRO staff virtually, that staff is able to consult virtually and that, now more than ever, cyber security protocol is ensured and followed. It has also brought forth new service scenarios such as providing accommodations to survivors taking courses virtually as well as providing services to survivors located in various global locations. While these changes have been paramount to the HRO's ability to successfully fulfil service requests, it has limited the office's focus on efforts for campus-wide events that aim to promote consent education and sexual violence prevention efforts. The SCPSV and HRO plans to increase the amount of education-focused events during the upcoming year and has started planning for collaborative events during the 2021-2022 year.

We hope that the efforts made during this entire year, along with the initiatives implemented, will foster a healthy and safe environment for the entire University community.

In closing, we would like to sincerely thank students, faculty members, and support staff, as well as all our partners, for their commitment, support, and dedication to the fight against sexual violence on campus and in our community.