

Sexual Violence Prevention Report University of Ottawa

May 2021 – April 2022



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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, 2021, to April 30, 2022.

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 2021-2022 year has posed a unique set of challenges such as balancing the need for services through various virtual modalities as well as in-person needs. 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 present 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.

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
- Mashkawaziwogamig: Indigenous Resource -Centre
- Office of Communications and Government Relations
- International Office
- Health Promotion Services
- Food Services
- Protection Services
- CALACS francophone d'Ottawa
- Centre for Treatment of Sexual Abuse and Childhood Trauma (CTSACT)
- The Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Carleton University
- Algonquin College
- La Cité College

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

- #JustGotWeird Campaign
- uOttawa Orientation - Know Your Rights Info Session
- Bystander Awareness Trainings
- Fauteux 101

EDUCATION

Mobilizing the Bystanders workshop

Over the 2020-2021 Academic year, the Mobilizing the Bystander workshop was a mandatory component of the training that all varsity student-athletes completed. Competitive student-athletes were also invited to these trainings. In total, 304 student-athletes completed this training in a synchronous, virtual environment.

Other training sessions

- Faculty of Music – Professional Conduct Presentation (in collaboration with Career Services)
- Faculty of Science - Harassment in the Workplace
- uOrientation - Training of the Guides
- U101 Guides' Training
- Health Promotion - Training Student Staff on Sexual Violence
- Faculty of Engineering - Formation sur la discrimination, harcèlement et prévention de la violence sexuelle
- Residence Life Staff - Adjusting Student Support
- 6 Weeks of Sexual Violence Prevention Events
- Panda Games - Volunteer Training

- TLSS Workshops for Professors and Teaching Assistants
- Academic Accommodations Training
- Begin By Listening
- Sexual Violence Prevention flyers
- Varsity Student-Athletes – Mobilizing the Bystanders
- Online Training – Prevention of Sexual Violence (886 students registered)

COMMITTEES

Communities of Practice – Courage to Act

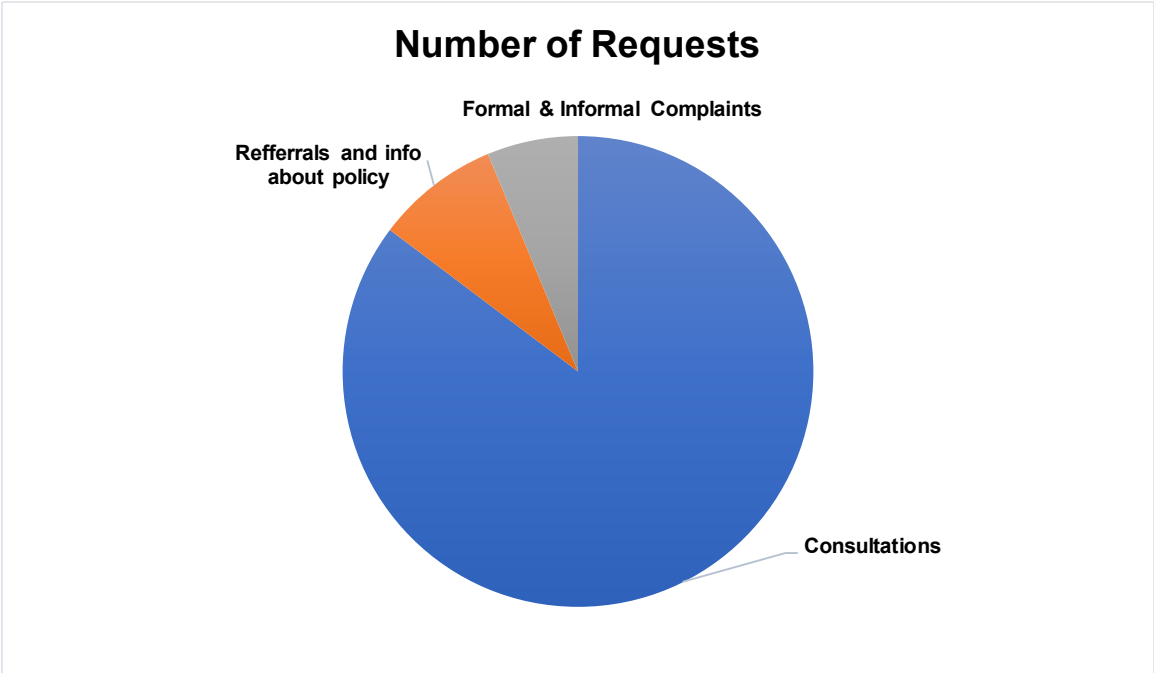
In addition to being a member of the SCPSV, one of the HRO's sexual violence prevention officer sits on the Francophone practice committee of [Courage to Act](#), a national initiative that aims to address and prevent gender-based violence on Canadian post-secondary campuses. This participation will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

Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing

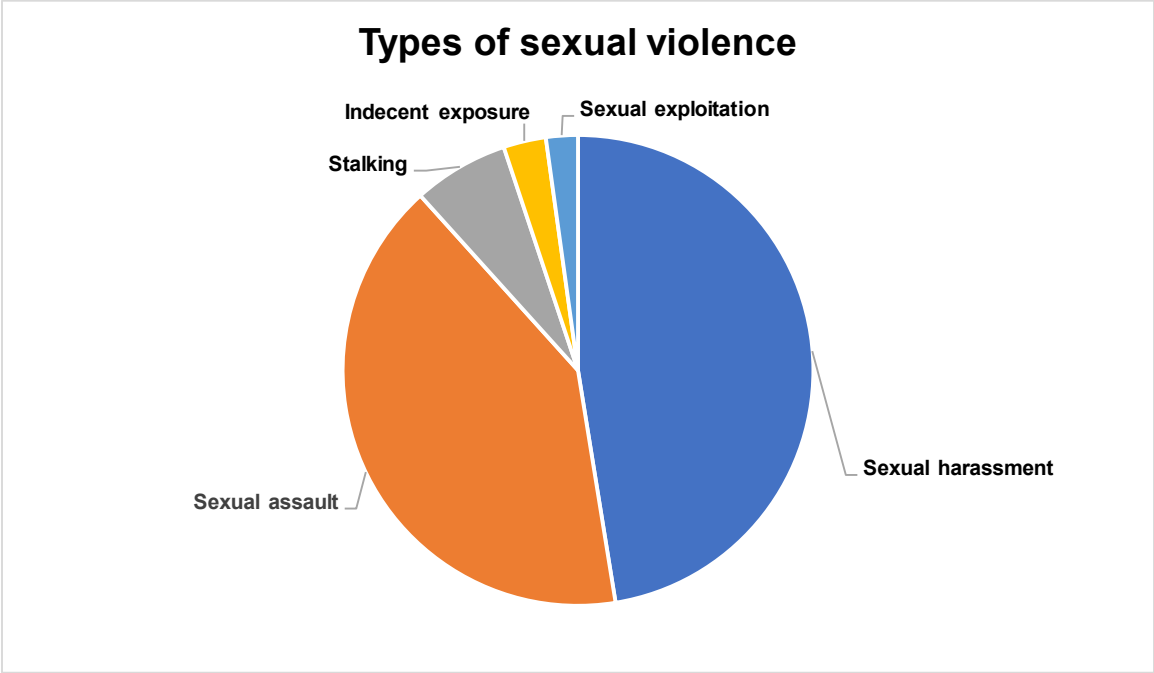
The director of the Human Rights Office also sits on the University of Ottawa's Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing, which strengthens the HRO's ties with its other partners on campus, allowing them to work together to meet the wellness needs of the student population. This also gives the HRO an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

DISCLOSURES, COMPLAINTS, AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Between May 1, 2021 and April 30, 2022, the Human Rights Office received a total of 224 requests for services related to sexual violence. These statistics include 191 consultations (new disclosures, services related to past disclosures, requests for accommodations, consultations to uOttawa staff that received disclosures, etc.), 19 requests for information (referrals to internal or external services, information on Policy 67b and services, the complaint process, etc.) and 14 formal or informal complaints.

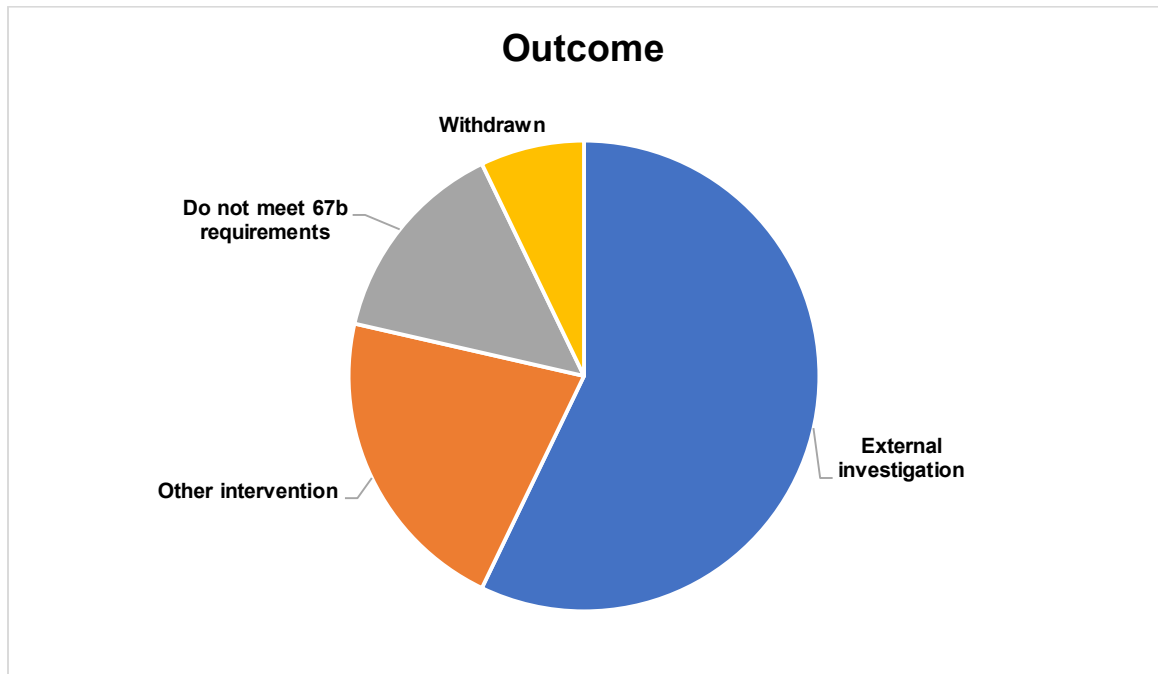


While most of the requests for service did not include details on the type of sexual violence, many of the cases were related to sexual harassment (65), sexual assault (56), stalking (9), indecent exposure (4) and sexual exploitation (3).



Of the 224 requests for service, 54 of them included request for accommodations such as 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 14 formal/informal complaints that were received, 8 were formal complaints where external investigators were contracted, 3 were informal complaints that were resolved by processes other than investigation, 1 was withdrawn, and 2 did not meet the requirements under Policy 67b.



EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY 67B – PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

During 2021-2022 academic year, the HRO and members of the SCPSV consulted each other to review Policy 67b. The HRO completed an in-depth review, which included broad consultations with several groups within the University community, as well as an online consultation process that all uOttawa members could participate in. The changes were confirmed by the Senate in June 2022 and are currently in effect.

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.

Resources dedicated for sexual violence prevention, due to the increase of service requests

The HRO has two permanent positions titled “Human Rights Officer, Prevention of Sexual Violence and Dispute Resolution”, as per the recommendations from the SCPSV in 2019-2020 and in 2020-2021. The HRO does not have a budget specifically for the prevention of sexual violence.

Since last year, the HRO received an increase in service requests of 128%. The SCPSV believes that this increase, in part, is due to the second permanent position. This position allowed for the HRO to allocate time and resources in establishing trusting relationships and educating more members of the University community. We believe that this resulted in consultations that favored prevention and early intervention. It is expected that the HRO will continue to receive service requests at an exponential rate as students make a physical return to campus during the 2022-2023 year. Additional time and resources focused on building relationships within the community and expanding the scope of awareness would allow the HRO to continue building on this momentum.

The SCPSV recommends that the HRO be provided with additional resources to address this marked increase, whether it be in the form of additional part-time positions or funding specifically related to the sexual violence education and training.

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. 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.

While the HRO organizes and funds this initiative, the SCPSV is aware that many other University services and faculties refer students to these external agencies. Thus, the SCPSV suggests that the HRO collaborate with these services to track the number of referrals made by campus support and counselling services (other than the HRO) to these external services to help ensure the University secure sustainable and permanent funding to these external agencies. Additionally, the SCPSV recommends that the Campus Safety Grant prioritise access to basic and equitable support to survivors by ensuring sufficient and consistent funding is dedicated to these external agencies. The Ontario government changed the grant’s title from the “Women’s Campus Safety Grant” to the “Campus Safety Grant” in 2021 in response to recommendations by the OUSA.¹ However, the SCPSV notes that the Ontario government also expanded the grant’s eligibility based on the OUSA’s recommendation to include salaries and program evaluations with a view to supporting “larger programs aimed at changing the culture and programs that are meant to

¹ “Ontario Government Takes Action to Protect Students From Sexual Violence”, *Ontario* (19 March 2021), online: <<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/51595/ontario-government-takes-action-to-protect-students-from-sexual-violence>>.

evaluate those programs”.² Accordingly, the SCPSV recommends that the Campus Safety Grant should act as one of the primary funding sources for the University’s contracts with external survivor support agencies.

Online training

In response requests 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 via Brightspace to members of the uOttawa community, namely students. This allows us to train a greater number of people on topics such as sexual violence, consent, the bystander effect, the survivor-centred approach, the services offered by the University, and Policy 67b. Following the example set by the Varsity Athletics, and in other universities, the SCPSV recommends that the University allocate sufficient resources to create a process and enforcement mechanism to make this training a mandatory requirement for graduation.

In addition, the HRO is in the process of modifying the online training for University employees for consistency with current evidence and best practices. The SCPSV recommends that Human Resources, Information Technology and the HRO collaborate and dedicate sufficient resources to ensure that this online training replace the current mandatory training to help ensure the university community benefits from the updated training material.

Training – Managing Disclosures

In 2020-2021, the SCPSV recommended that the HRO identify and provide training to services where students may disclose incidents of sexual violence. Since then, the HRO has provided training on managing disclosures to countless faculties and services. This includes training to students, student-staff, and employees. Of particular note is the collaboration between the HRO and the Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS). TLSS and the HRO worked together to create a one-hour webinars for educators (professors and teaching assistants) at the University. The training is offered each semester. It is expected that in addition to the three webinars offered yearly, the HRO will also offer the training to teaching assistants in 2022-2023.

Given that over 70% of post-secondary students experience or witness incidents of sexual violence (Stats Canada, 2020), we believe that managing and responding to a disclosure of sexual violence will be a required skill for members of the University that work closely with students. The SCPSV recommends that more faculties and services organize regular training on this matter.

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.

² Raechel Huizinga, “OUSA looks to expand ‘outdated’ Women’s Campus Safety grant”, *Queen’s University Journal* (13 February 2020), online: <<https://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2020-02-13/news/ousa-looks-to-expand-outdated-womens-campus-safety-grant/>>.

The SCPSV wishes to note that most of the 2021-2022 year focused on implementing trainings, education and case management within the virtual environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included standardizing processes so that service users can reach HRO staff virtually, that staff is able to consult virtually, that the campus was educated on sexual violence within the virtual environment and that cyber security protocol is ensured and followed. While these changes have been paramount to the HRO's ability to successfully fulfil increased service requests, the University will need to focus their efforts on in person, campus-wide events that promote consent education and sexual violence prevention efforts to students who may have never been in an in-person post-secondary learning environment.

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.