



Report of Task Force on Sexual Assault Education, Prevention and Support

Chair: Lori Chambers – Faculty Member, Thunder Bay

Task Force Members:

Bott, Alexander – Student Representative, Orillia

Boucher, Doreen – Executive Director, Thunder Bay Sexual Assault/Abuse Counselling and Crisis Centre

Cappadocia, Frank – Associate Vice-Provost, Orillia

Chan, Karen – Manager, Student Health and Counselling Services

Chung, Jayal – Gender Issues Centre Coordinator

Eccles, Barb – Senior Advisor to the President and Legal Counsel

Fogel, Curtis – Faculty Member, Orillia

Gerrard, Diedra – House President (Residence) and Student Representative, Thunder Bay

Hare, David – Director of Residence and Conference Services, Thunder Bay

Herchak, Sherry – Harassment and Discrimination Coordinator, Thunder Bay

Jeppesen, Sandra – Faculty Member, Orillia

Kaucharik, Susan – Detective Sergeant Criminal Investigations Branch, Thunder Bay

Kaufman, Ian – President, Lakehead University Student Union, Thunder Bay

Kearney, Jessica – Student Representative, Orillia

MacDonald, Dawn – Manager, Ambulatory Services, SADVTC, Pre-Admission Clinic and Rehabilitation Services, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

McRae, Ian – Lakehead University Student Union, Orillia

Moffatt, Linda – Acting Manager (Security Services) Thunder Bay

Prisciak, Theresa – Security Services Coordinator, Orillia

Quinlan, Andrea – Faculty Member, Orillia

Ryks-Szelekovszky, Marian, Vice-Provost (Student Affairs), Thunder Bay

Stuesser, Lee – Founding Dean, Faculty of Law

Warden, Tom – Director of Athletics, Thunder Bay

Wesley-Esquimaux, Cynthia – Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), Thunder Bay

History:

This appointment of the task force was announced by President Stevenson on October 24, 2013.

The mandate of the Task Force, as articulated in October 2013, was as follows:

The task force aims to reduce or eliminate incidents of sexual assault. The task force will recommend policies and protocols to ensure that, when sexual assault is reported to the university, university community members have access to:

- Counselling;
- Assistance with medical care;
- Advocacy and support in choices with regard to the reporting or non-reporting of crime; and
- Assistance with academic concerns.

The task force will recommend means by which response shall be timely and shall be provided compassionately, in a safe, non-judgmental environment and with respect for the individual's right to dignity, self-determination and personal safety.

The terms of reference provided to the task force were as follows:

The goal of the task force on sexual assault education, prevention and support is to reduce incidents of sexual assault and to enhance support for university community members. The task force will undertake:

- Coordinated efforts to educate members of the university community - students, staff and faculty - about sexual assault, its connections to gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, Indigeniety, religion and ethnicity, the connections between alcohol, drugs, violence and sexual assault, and the harm created by sexual assault and the coerced silence which surrounds it;
- Systematic review of practices and policies with regard to sexual assault, services provided on campus and referrals provided to services off-campus;

- Education with regard to criminal charges and court procedures and support for informed choice in reporting;
- Systematic review of best practices from other institutions;
- Recommendations with regard to a first response protocol;
- Recommendations with regard to first response education and effective peer support for students;
- Recommendations with regard to potential changes to the *Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures*, including what sexual consent is, what it is not, and the explicit consequences for sexual assault and violence;
- Recommendations for potential changes to the *Employee Code of Conduct*;
- Recommendations for new policies and best practices at Lakehead University, with particular emphasis on the responsibilities of administration, professors and staff in providing assistance to students who are affected by sexual assault and/or sexual violence to address academic concerns; and
- Recommendations for the education of all stakeholders in the university community with regard to recommended practices and policies and their implementation.

Background

Students and staff may have a limited understanding of how to respond to sexual misconduct. When provided with appropriate education, administrators, student leaders, staff and faculty can play an important role in influencing attitudes and behaviours to reduce the incidence of sexual misconduct and to promote values which celebrate positive, consenting sexuality and sexual diversity.

An inclusive response to sexual misconduct requires acknowledgement of the complex and layered nature of this crime and of the fact that individuals face differing degrees of risk and different challenges in seeking assistance.

Although anyone can experience sexual misconduct, sexual assault is a gendered and racialized crime. Over 93% of reported adult victims are female and 97% of accused are men. Under-reporting is rampant. Women of visible minority groups – in Thunder Bay and Orillia, particularly women of Indigenous descent - and disabled women are at higher risk of being targeted for sexual assault because they are subject to multiple prejudices and stereotypes. Transgendered individuals are at heightened risk for sexual assault. Young women in their first year at university are at increased risk of experiencing sexual assault. Contrary to popular myths, 82% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows – a friend, acquaintance, date, teacher, family member, professor, or coach¹.

¹ Ontario Women's Directorate, 4.

Sexual assault is not about love, lust or unsatisfied sexual desire, but about power, force and control. In many cases, no overt physical force is used and the perpetrator instead pressures or manipulates someone into engaging in sexual activity against their will and desire. Drug and alcohol-facilitated sexual assaults are common.

All forms of sexual misconduct – harassment, bullying, stalking and assault - are traumatic and can have significant and lasting impact. Sexual assault can result in unwanted pregnancies, reproductive problems and sexually transmitted infections. The trauma of any kind of sexual misconduct can lead to chronic stress, anxiety and depression. Shock, fear and embarrassment may not only impair memory, but also make it extremely difficult for individuals to discuss their experiences or to report incidents of sexual misconduct. Those who experience sexual misconduct may suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or have difficulty with concentration, sleeping, and intimate relationships and may try to cope through substance use, social isolation and self-harming behaviours. The psychological and emotional consequences of sexual misconduct can be compounded when social media is used to harass or discredit an individual.

The consequences of sexual misconduct can negatively impact an individual’s academic career and/or social and working life. Although every individual reacts differently to their experience of sexual misconduct, it is the responsibility of all members of the university community to be informed with regard to proper practices when someone discloses sexual misconduct. On-campus services must respond with dignity and respect to individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct.

Many people think that sexual assault is the only form of sexual misconduct. In fact, it includes a wide range of behaviours, including sexual and cyber harassment and stalking. Although sexual assault is the most grievous form of sexual misconduct, ignoring any act of sexual misconduct can contribute to a culture in which violence and harassment are perceived to be acceptable

Process

The members of the Task Force met 7 times between November 5, 2013 and May 6, 2014. Sub-committees were created and tasked with drafting the sexual misconduct policy and protocol for response to sexual misconduct. In order to determine best policy:

- The committee undertook a systematic review of all related policies and practices on campus;
- Reviewed the policies and practices of 18 other universities;
- Solicited feedback from university stakeholders; and
- Consulted the Ontario Women’s Directorate’s recommendations for universities, “Developing a Response to Sexual Violence: A Resource Guide for Ontario’s Colleges and Universities”.

Drafts of policies, developed by the respective sub-committees, were approved by the committee of the whole, reviewed by legal counsel, and submitted to the Priority and Planning Group, the Ogimaawin Aboriginal Governance Council, Senate and the Board of Governors for approval. A sub-committee with regard to campus education was also struck in Orillia. In consultation with the wider committee, Dawn MacDonald and Karen Chan developed a draft framework for educational materials. Educational events were held on both campuses throughout the duration of the task force sponsored by the Gender Issues Centre. In addition to the policies developed by the committee, the following recommendations for the university community are submitted.

Task Force Recommendations

The aim of these recommendations is:

- To develop comprehensive policy with regard to sexual misconduct;
- To promote education within the university community with regard to the values of respect for all individuals, civility, diversity, dignity, equality, and freedom as articulated in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*²; and
- To suggest ways by which such policies might be given structural enhancement.

Policy

1. The task force recommends the acceptance of the attached policy: **Sexual Misconduct Policy and Protocol: A Policy Dealing with Sexual Harassment, Sexual Stalking and Sexual Assault**.
2. The task force recommends a review of all existing policies related respect, equality and dignity of the person, including, but not limited to:
 - *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*;
 - *Policy on Violence and Bullying*;
 - *Academic Accommodation Policy* ;
 - *Alcohol Policy*;
 - *Employee Code of Conduct*; and
 - *Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures*.
3. The task force recommends that all such policies, including the proposed **Sexual Misconduct Policy and Protocol: A Policy Dealing with Sexual Harassment, Sexual Stalking and Sexual Assault**, be reviewed on an on-going and regular basis.
4. The task force recommends the creation of a webpage that will make all such policies related to student, employee and staff behaviour readily accessible to members of the university community.

Education

Lakehead University should implement a campus wide strategic campaign and educational policy to enhance a culture of respect and inclusion and to prevent sexual misconduct. Inclusion reflects the values of Lakehead University as articulated in the Academic Plan and in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Inclusion means a celebration of difference, zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment and violence, and the promotion of bystander responsibility for ensuring communal safety.

The task force specifically recommends the creation of:

² *Ontario Human Rights Code*: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90001_e.htm.

- Mandatory educational sessions for new students during orientation;
- On-line training modules for staff and faculty;
- On-line training modules for students;
- Peer support training provided by qualified off-campus personnel;
- A wallet-sized information list of numbers that can be provided to students with regard to all emergency services on campus; and
- A webpage providing access to information regarding sexual misconduct that would be readily available through the university website.

Structural Support for these Recommendations

The task force recognizes that the recommendations above require institutional support. This would best be achieved through the creation of a Human Rights or Social Justice office on campus. This person/office would be responsible for:

- Review of policies as recommended above;
- Supervising and coordinating educational efforts with regard to inclusion and sexual misconduct;
- First response as outlined in the [recommended policy](#); and
- Other activities related to Human Rights and Social Justice education and response.