



Report on the Consultation Process
Lakehead University Sexual Violence Response Policy

December 2016

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1) Background, Purpose and Structure of this Report:

Ontario colleges and universities owe a duty of care to their students to reasonably provide a safe and respectful environment to learn. They do this through a variety of measures including the development of policy and procedures to promote such an environment. Ontario Regulation 131/16 *Sexual Violence at Colleges and Universities* which comes into effect January 1, 2017, requires colleges and universities in the province of Ontario to develop a *Sexual Violence Policy*. Specifically, it requires colleges and universities to:

- (a) establish a process, in consultation with representatives of the college's or university's elected student governing bodies, for the provision and consideration of input from a diverse selection of students regarding the college's or university's sexual violence policy; and*
- (b) follow the process in the development of its sexual violence policy and every time the sexual violence policy is reviewed or amended.*

The President's Sexual Assault Taskforce ("Taskforce") was tasked to lead the consultation with the overall view of developing sexual violence policy. This Taskforce was comprised of a subsection of Lakehead University community members and included members from Administration, Faculty, Students and the community. The Taskforce, as a diverse and representative group, was invited to provide feedback on the policy.

The purpose of this report is to reflect on the process of consultation with the goal to identify what worked for the students of Lakehead University and provide recommendations, moving forward, as we consult and revise this policy annually. From the start, we hoped that consultation would accomplish two goals. First, to provide the opportunity for as many members of the Lakehead University community (students, staff and faculty) to provide feedback on a draft policy document. And secondly, to ensure that the voices reflected in the feedback reflect the diversity of our student population.

This report is written as a companion document to the Lakehead University *Sexual Violence Policy Consultation Process (November 4, 2016)* document. The goal of that document was to outline the process by which Lakehead University's *Sexual Violence Task Force* would structure and conduct consultation. This report will review each of the modes of consultation identified in the companion document and make recommendations to inform future consultations.

2) Review of Consultation and Sources of Feedback:

How individuals involve themselves in a consultation process is a personal decision. It is important to, in order to capture feedback from a diverse range of students, offer a variety of modes in which feedback can be provided. Lakehead University *Sexual Violence Policy Consultation Process* lists five forms of consultation, varying in the numbers of individuals and the depth of consultation. As most opportunities to consult were anonymous, individuals had the opportunity contribute feedback in one or more way. A review of consultations process with recommendations for future consultation is detailed below.

a) Online Tool:

With this tool in mind, various groups were targeted to provide feedback while engaging other members to share theirs. In consultation with the task force, it was decided that a *Google form* was an appropriate tool to solicit online feedback on the draft policy document. Task force members were also encouraged to use this tool. This opportunity was shared with the Lakehead University community by a *Media Relations* email on November 15th. It provided a link to the draft *Sexual Violence Policy* and the *Google form*. The Google form was intended to close on November 29th, providing a period of time to respond of 14 days. Appendix 1 lists the questions that were asked in the *Google form*. A 21 responses were submitted by staff, faculty and students in this manner. Information about the Sexual Violence Policy was mas emailed to students, faculty and staff on the November 15th *Media Relations* communications bulletin. In addition, the Athletics Department provided a link on their page and invited students in

that department to provide feedback. The link directed students to the draft *Sexual Violence Policy* and a questionnaire. Only one person chose to provide feedback in this manner. Deans, staff, faculty and students were also able to email feedback directly to humanrights@lakehead.ca.

Recommendation 1: As this is an important aspect of the consultation process, providing students, staff and faculty the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback, it is recommended that future invitations to use proactive measures in being able to engage more members of the university community.

b) Inviting Groups to Provide Feedback:

TASK FORCE

The task force was the first step in consulting with this policy. The task force was encouraged to provide feedback as well as provide feedback from their team members.

The task force consisted of members from the following departments:

- Office of Human Rights and Equity
- Department of Women Studies
- LUSU
- Human Resources
- Student Health and Counselling services
- Associate Provost Aboriginal Affairs
- Residence
- Athletics
- Gender Issues Centre
- Research and Innovation
- Orillia Associate Vice-President
- Student Affairs
- Department of Social Work
- Athletics Administration
- Legal Counsel

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS

Public information sessions were held at both the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses. Invitation to attend these sessions was initially advertised in the November 15th *Media Relations* email. Participants were invited to participate in the discussion and/or provide feedback online and/or on paper. Paper response forms asking the same questions as asked in the Google form (see Appendix 1) were available to participants to provide anonymous feedback.

Public information sessions were conducted as follows:

Orillia campus:

- November 21 from 1:00-2:00 pm
- November 23 from 4:00-5:30 pm
- November 30 from 11:30-1:00 pm

(this additional session requested by the November 23rd participants)

Thunder Bay campus:

- November 15 at 7:00 pm

Public information sessions were attended by a small number of staff and students, typically 8-20 participants in attendance. Participants were guided through the document and invited to provide feedback. Those in attendance were found to be very engaged in the process and provided very rich, thoughtful and constructive feedback. Points raised in the discussion were recorded in a document summarizing the discussion. Some of the participants self-identified in the sessions that they had a personal connection to the issue of sexual violence, either as a survivor themselves or as a relative or friend of a survivor of sexual violence. At the beginning of each session, the moderator read a script (see Appendix 2) to inform participants. At one session, a participant felt the need to step out of the session and speak with a counsellor.

STAFF AND FACULTY

This included a survey of groups that represent deans, faculty, staff and students at Lakehead University. This included Vice Provost Student Affairs. Deans, faculty, staff and VP Student affairs were encouraged to provide feedback from their teams. Student groups were asked to respond and provide feedback anecdotally in each section of the draft policy. By surveying groups that speak for many students, we can ensure that feedback can be considered from the diversity of Lakehead students. Below is a list of staff who were invited to provide input on the draft *Sexual Violence Policy*.

- Student Health and Counselling team
- Student Accessibility Services
- University Security Services
- Academic Advising, Records & Registration
- Recruitment
- Student Affairs Managers and Directors

STUDENT GROUPS

In addition to public meetings, staff at the Thunder Bay campus conducted focused discussion groups with specific groups of staff and students. Listed below are the groups involved.

- Students from the Law Faculty
- Students, Resident Assistants and House Presidents from Main Campus Residence
- Varsity Students
- Athletic Department Staff
- Self- Identified Survivors

Recommendation 3: As one university with two distinct campuses, it is essential that the elements of the consultation process be similar at each campus.

Opportunities for focused discussions could take place at both campuses. It is

recommended for future recommendations to use proactive measures in accessing more groups.

c) PROMOTING AWARENESS

Table sessions to promote awareness were held at the Orillia Campus in the *Learning Commons* at *Simcoe Hall* on the dates listed below. Students who stopped by the table were provided the opportunity to ask questions about the draft *Sexual Violence Policy* and find out about how they could provide feedback. Apart from information shared about the process in *Media Relations* emails and discussions initiated by some instructors, there was little visual information on campus that invited student participation in the process.

- Tuesday, Nov. 15: 1:00 – 3:00pm
- Thursday, Nov. 17: 1:00 – 3:00pm
- Wednesday, Nov. 23: 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Recommendation 4: Awareness of and engagement in the process is important for students to become involved in conversation about the draft *Sexual Violence Policy* and provide thoughtful feedback. For future consultations, there needs to be more visible information about the process and how to provide feedback. This could be accomplished through a variety of means, included but not limited to posters or digital messages.

3) Review of the Process in General Terms:

Effective consultation process is one that is accessible, widely advertised and inclusive. One of the great pleasures of the consultation process is the opportunity to discuss issues with students that concern them and they are passionate about. The comments below reflect observations and anecdotal comments by respondents and members of the Lakehead University *Sexual Violence Task Force* during consultations.

a) Accessibility & Communication:

With consultations taking place November 15-29 (14 days), many students reported that this was a busy time of year for them with assignments due and exams following in December. In addition, some student groups were not *on campus* during this period to participate in focus groups or public meetings. Although Deans were asked to share the google form with their faculties who should then share them with their students, this trickle down approach was not always successful. For these students, the only knowledge they had of the consultation process would have come from the November 15th *Media Relations* email and their opportunity to provide feedback limited to the Google form.

Recommendation 5: For a student to become more involved in consultation, timing of the consultation period should be considered. Future consultations should take place during a time when all student groups are on campus.

b) Sensitivity & Inclusiveness:

Sexual violence affects everyone but it does not affect everyone equally. Some of the most thoughtful and constructive feedback during the public information sessions came from staff and students who self-identified as having a personal connection. It was made very clear during consultations that language and terms of reference were very important to people who have experienced sexual violence. They identify as *survivors* rather than *victims* of sexual violence. Much of the emotional conversation during public information meetings focused on legalistic wording in the draft *Sexual Violence Policy*. Moderators during these meetings worked very effectively to frame the conversation in a manner that was very sensitive, caring and conducive to promoting a “safe space” for people to share their feedback.

Recommendation 6: In future consultations, maintain as a best practice to provide safe spaces where individuals can step forward and share their feedback.

Stepping forward to share thoughts and feedback requires courage and trust. Some students shared that many other students who shared their cultural or racial background would not participate in a process like this as there was a lack of trust. Historical and still today, the relationship between some members and groups of our society and those in traditional positions of authority and privilege are strained. To ensure that our consultations truly include feedback that reflects the rich diversity of our student population, relationships need to be established with groups of students who have traditionally felt marginalized in our society.

Recommendation 7: In future consultations, it is vital to utilize the diverse representation of the task force to make connections to marginalized voices.

4) Conclusion:

One of the most rewarding aspects of a consultation process is the opportunity it provides to speak with students. What one student is passionate about may not interest another. Though this process received feedback from a small percentage of the Lakehead University student body, those who provided their thoughts did so with conviction, honesty and trust that they are making a difference. Their wise, thoughtful feedback will not only enrich Lakehead University's *Sexual Violence Policy* but it has had a positive impact on many who participated in the consultation process.

Appendix 1

Sexual Violence Draft Policy Consultations: Google Form

Thank you for participating in Lakehead University's consultation on the draft Sexual Violence Policy.

The Sexual Assault Task Force aims to reach as many members of the University community as possible in the next few weeks, including students, faculty and staff. We thank you for setting aside the time to be part of a process that aims to develop a robust, procedurally fair, and principled policy that supports survivors of violence, and prevents and responds to sexual violence in the University community.

We recognize that sexual violence often intersects with other forms of violence and discrimination and hope that this consultation is a safe space for survivors and equity-seeking groups to give valued input.

With that being said, we recognize that discussions around sexual violence policy can still trigger trauma for survivors, or be an uncomfortable topic. As such, there is no requirement for participation, and we have several modalities for seeking input that might be more accommodating to persons including an on-line google document.

Please let us know if you need further accommodation.

There are information brochures that outline campus and community supports.

All information gathered here will not be ascribed to individuals, and we will report only on the feedback itself and the general nature of the participants to ensure that we are accounting for a diverse range of voices.

We encourage all constructive feedback and appreciate your participation.

We are seeking to consult with a wide variety of interested parties regarding Lakehead University's Sexual Violence Action Plan. If you are comfortable doing so, please tick the boxes that describe you and your experiences. Do note that these descriptors will be kept anonymous when reported.

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity>

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3535

Questions posed about the respondent:

Respondents were asked to provide some anonymous information about themselves. They also had the option to not provide a response to any question.

- Survivor of Sexual Violence?

- Relationship with Lakehead?
 - Current Student
 - Staff
 - Faculty
 - Other

- Sexual Orientation?
- Disability?
- Religion?
- Marital Status?
- Indigenous?
- Ethnicity?
- Gender?
- Age?

Questions posed to the respondent about the policy:

- Why are you interested in the Sexual Violence policy?
- What terms or definitions provided under the “Interpretation and Definitions” section need to be clarified or what terms/definitions are missing?
- What are the core values that you think need to be represented in this policy? Can/Should these values state a vision for the future?
- Is confidentiality clearly outlined? Are the limitations on confidentiality clear? If not, please explain or offer suggestions.
- Is the difference between “disclosing” and “reporting” clear to you? If not, please explain or offer suggestions.
- Is the complaints procedure clear? Is there anything you did not understand? What would help to make this complaints procedure clearer?
- What suggestions do you have around ways to communicate and educate individuals on Lakehead University campus about the issue of sexual violence?
- What are the forward-moving goals that this policy should outline?
- What is missing from this policy?
- What is good about this policy?
- What is problematic about this policy?
- Please offer any other feedback that pertains to this policy.

Appendix 2:

Script shared with participants at the Public Information Sessions.

Thank you for participating in Lakehead University's consultation on the draft Sexual Violence Policy. My name is _____ and I am _____ at Lakehead, as well as a member of the Sexual Violence Task force. As a task force we aim to reach as many members of the University community as possible in the next few weeks, including students, faculty and staff. We thank you for setting aside the time to be part of a process that aims to develop a robust, procedurally fair, and principled policy that supports survivors of violence, and prevents and responds to sexual violence in the University community. We recognize that sexual violence often intersects with other forms of violence and discrimination and hope that this consultation is a safe space for survivors and equity seeking groups to give valued input. That being said, we recognize that discussions around sexual violence policy can still trigger trauma for survivors, or be an uncomfortable topic. As such, there is no requirement for participation, and we have several modalities for seeking input that might be more accommodating to persons including an on-line google document. Please let us know if you need further accommodation. There are information brochures that outline campus and community supports. All information gathered here will not be ascribed to individuals, and we will report only on the feedback itself and the general nature of the participants to ensure that we are accounting for a diverse range of voices.

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