



BOARD OF GOVERNORS SEXUAL VIOLENCE REPORT 2022-2023

As per the Ministry requirement (Pursuant to Subsection 17(7.1) Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act): A Sexual Violence Annual Report be presented to the Board of Governors for each academic year on or before September of each calendar year. The academic year is defined as May 1, 2022, to April 30, 2023.

Background

In 2016, the Ontario Government passed the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. Section 3, specific to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and University Act's intent is to make campuses safer spaces through enforcement of a sexual violence policy, increasing support to survivors of sexual violence, and formalizing how institutions address incidents as they arise.

In March 2019, the Ontario Government announced additional action-based and reporting requirements for each publicly assisted post-secondary institution. This includes the requirement that each post-secondary institution report annually to its Board of Governors on sexual violence and that this report would be publicly available. The government announcement also included a requirement that every publicly-assisted college and university in Ontario have a task force devoted to tackling sexual violence on campus and be required to report its findings to both their respective Board of Governors as well as to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. On our campus the Action Against Gender Based Violence (AAGBV) serves as the sexual violence task force.

Action Against Gender-Based Violence Committee

The Action Against Gender-Based Violence (AAGBV) Committee is comprised stakeholders, faculty, staff, students, and university departments and groups who work together to establish best practices for sexual and gender-based violence education and prevention:

- To reduce occurrences of sexual and gender-based violence on campus; and
- Improve responses to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence within our community.

The AAGBV does this by:

- Providing a space to discuss emerging issues and initiatives related to sexual and gender-based violence.
- Providing educational awareness about sexual and gender-based violence.
- Suggesting improvements to policies, services, and resources.
- Creating a campus culture where sexual and gender-based violence is understood and well responded to; and
- Developing and implement campus-wide initiatives to support the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence.

The AAGBV committee met three times during the academic year on April 22, 2022, November 22, 2022, and March 2023. The AAGBV investigated virtual online reporting options to add as an additional pathway for student survivors to access support and reporting options. A subcommittee of the AAGBV met additionally to research and review available software options and provided a recommendation to the AAGBV.

The AAGBV explored Restorative Justice as a practice that could be incorporated into sexual violence support and prevention policies and other areas across the institution. Dr. Leslie Thielen-Wilson led the AAGBV through discussions around why Restorative Justice practices are important, what approaches to Restorative Justice practices could be used, and how Restorative Justice practices could be implemented in a proactive (educational) and reactive (post-incident) approach for our community.

Nipissing University's Commitment

Nipissing University's SVPSR Policy outlines the University's commitment to addressing sexual violence through (Nipissing University, 2019):

- Awareness, education, and prevention training.
- Support and response for students who have experienced sexual violence.
- Responsive, coordinated, and fair procedures in response to disclosures and formal reports of sexual violence.

Awareness & Outreach

Consent Belongs Here is Nipissing University's campaign to end sexual violence through education, prevention, and outreach. Consent Belongs Here organizes events and initiatives focused on sexual violence prevention and education throughout the year. This academic year Consent Belongs Here partnered with departments, faculties, and community members to host 23 sexual violence prevention events and outreach initiatives through 9 awareness campaigns. These campaigns included, Take Back the Night, Consent Awareness Week, 16 Days of Activism, Campus Safety Week, Consent Action Week, Sexual and Reproductive Health Week, International Women's Week and Social Work Week, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

Education & Training

Sexual violence prevention education was offered to groups of student leaders (14 trainings) as well as the general student population (23 trainings). In total, 269 students received training on the topics of consent, bystander intervention, gender, allyship, and sexual violence disclosure response. New partnerships with faculty to bring these workshops within the classroom setting were an extremely successful avenue to reach students with the material. Most of the training was offered in online format and some dates were hybrid/in-person.

Response & Support

Between May 1, 2022 - April 26, 2023, several student survivors of sexual violence were supported by Student Counselling services (22) and/or the Sexual Violence Prevention & Education Coordinator (7). These numbers are not presented as a cumulative total as some students may have engaged with both services. Additionally, three student respondents, persons who caused harm, were supported by Student Counselling Services.

The Sexual Violence Prevention & Education Coordinator provided support for 1 university formal report, support through 3 criminal investigations, and academic accommodations for 3 students. Of situations reported to the SVPEC, 5 incidents of sexual violence occurred on campus/while participating in university programming.

Future Directions

Bill 26

In October 2022, Bill 26, Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, was passed. Bill 26 requires all publicly funded institutions to have a policy on sexual misconduct toward students by employees by July 1, 2023. The policy should cover rules about sexual behaviour involving employees and students and should include examples of disciplinary measures that may be taken against employees who break the policy. Nipissing University Human Resources, along with the Action Against Gender-Based Violence Committee and other stakeholders, are working together to ensure that the Sexual Violence Prevention, Support and Response Policy for Students is updated to meet the requirements of Bill 26.

Reporting Software

The AAGBV plans to proceed with implementing the committee's recommendation of REES sexual violence reporting software. This software is intended to serve as an extra means of communication for survivors, enabling them to record their experiences, seek assistance, and report incidents. However, it will not replace any existing support and reporting pathways available to students.

Restorative justice

The AAGBV is committed to further exploring Restorative justice approaches and their potential implementation within the Sexual Violence Prevention, Support and Response Policy for Students.

Faculty partnerships

Collaboration with faculty is vital in providing effective sexual violence prevention programs and education. This approach helps us reach students where they are most receptive to learning and willing to make a change. Our goal is to promote social and cultural transformation by providing continuous learning opportunities both in and outside the classroom.