

Proposed Position on Sexual Violence & Sexual Assault for Student Unions

A: Stated Position on Sexual Violence and Sexual Assault

Any form of sexual violence and sexual assault is unacceptable.

Sexual violence is defined as any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targetting sexuality. Sexual violence includes all forms of unwanted sexual contact as well as name-calling, sexual humiliation and sexual targetting.

Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted act of a sexual nature imposed by one person upon another and includes such activities as kissing, fondling, oral, vaginal or anal sex, or other forms of penetration without consent.

- Sexual assault can occur in a dating relationship or marriage;
- Sexual assault can happen between people of any gender or sex;
- Sexual assault is an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.

B: Core Principles

The Student Union's position on sexual assault and sexual violence includes the following core principles:

- Forms of sexual violence are criminal acts as indicated in the Canadian Justice System. That said, other actions or communications may not fall under the Criminal Code, but indicate a culture which promotes sexual violence. The institution, as a place for learning and growing, must be one that is free of all forms of sexual violence and one that is pro-active in addressing cultural dynamics that promote sexual violence, as it is uniquely and particularly experienced by young people and students.
- Survivors should be believed, provided clear and accessible information on options for support and reporting, and respected as the final decision-makers about their own best interests. Believing survivors requires the entire campus community to incorporate an approach that is free of victim-blaming and perpetrator-deflecting messages in its varied prevention and response efforts to sexual violence.

- Disciplinary measures must be framed as promoting the support and safety of the survivor, as well as the wellbeing of the campus community.
- Student safety should be the foremost consideration in managing information on sexual assault within and around the campus community.
- Individuals found to have committed an act of sexual violence should be held accountable by the institution, face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, and receive education and rehabilitation to prevent further acts of violence.
- Opportunities for public education and prevention activities need to be an ongoing part of campus life to broaden discussion and awareness of sexual violence. Where appropriate, public education activities should be framed through a sex-positive lens and provide safe spaces for open discussion about consent.

C: Policy and Resources

The Student Union is committed to working collaboratively with senior university leadership to develop a university-wide Sexual Assault Policy and related procedures.

- One member of the Student Union executive will be appointed as lead on the sexual assault file and be the Student Union's representative on the university-wide sexual assault policy committee.
- All student organizations/associations must receive training on the policy and be accountable to the policy.

The Student Union is also committed to the institution establishing a full-time Sexual Assault Response coordinator position dedicated to addressing issues of sexual assault and combatting rape culture on campus. While the priority of this position should be sexual assault on campus, as incidents of sexual assault and sexual violence are not isolated incidents, a holistic approach in which harm reduction is considered on a larger scale may be an element of this position. Any focus on drugs and alcohol should be explicitly linked to how such substances complicate gaining explicit consent and resolutely avoid victim blaming.

