



Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Committee 2018-19 Annual Report

Executive summary

The Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Committee was formed in October 2017 in recognition of the need to better coordinate activities on campus, improve education and training to prevent and respond to sexualized violence, and to respond to concerns raised regarding the Mount's [Policy Against Sexual Assault](#). The committee is also working to ensure that the Mount successfully implements the 10 recommendations made in Nova Scotia's [Changing the Culture of Acceptance: Recommendations to address sexual violence on university campuses](#).

This year, the SVPAC improved our Policy Against Sexual Assault, responding to student concerns, both on campus and nationally. This new policy was launched on April 1st as part of recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness month.

2018-2019 Membership

| Committee Member | Role |
|----------------------------|--|
| Paula Barry Mercer (Chair) | Associate Vice-President, Student Experience |
| Lynn Cashen Basso | Manager, Residence Life |
| Dee Dooley | Community Resource, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre |
| Kelly Gallant | Associate Vice-President, University Relations |
| Kim Healy | Director, Human Resources |
| Ellie Lamothe | Student Representative |
| Lauren Leal | Manager, Marketing, University Relations |
| KelleyAnne Malinen | Faculty Representative |
| Kelly McMillan | Harassment & Discrimination Advisor |
| Madeline Mitchell | Student Representative |
| Stephanie Patey | Manager, Security |
| Meredith Ralston | Faculty Representative |
| Jillian Rankin | Interim Coordinator, Counselling Services |

Meeting dates:

| Date | Time | Location |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Monday, August 27, 2018 | 9:30 am – 11:00 am | McCain Centre, room 201B |
| Friday, October 26, 2018 | 10:00 am – 1:00 pm | McCain Centre, room 302 |
| Friday, November 30, 2018 | 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm | Evaristus Hall, room 305 |
| Friday, January 18, 2019 | 10:00 am – 11:30 am | McCain Centre, room 201B |
| Friday, March 1, 2019 | 10:00 am – 11:30 am | E. Margaret Fulton, room 130 |
| Monday, April 29, 2019 | 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm | Evaristus Hall, room 403 |

Awareness, Education and Training

| Committee Member | Position |
|---------------------|--|
| Lauren Leal (Chair) | Manager, Marketing, University Relations |
| Lynn Cashen Basso | Manager, Residence Life |
| Kelly Gallant | Associate Vice-President, University Relations |
| Kim Healy | Director, Human Resources |
| Madeline Mitchell | Student Representative |
| Meredith Ralston | Faculty Representative |
| Sarah Reddington | Faculty Representative |

The AET working group didn't meet as frequently as a group this past year, as we were awaiting approval of the revised policy (*we met once on June 27, 2018 from 2-3pm in McCain 201B*). The larger committee agreed that efforts would be best spent promoting the revised policy. The AET working group communicated primarily via email/over the phone in the lead up to the launch of the revised policy. Below is the work completed by members of the committee between April 2018 – April 2019.

Organized a Sexual Assault Awareness Month launch event

- Held on campus on April 1 to mark the beginning of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and introduce the University's revised Policy Against Sexual Assault
- Special guests included Ava Czapalay, Associate Deputy Minister at Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education, and Collette Robert, Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator
- Event was livestreamed on the Mount's Facebook page
- Story on the event and new policy appeared on the Mount's website
- Teal ribbons and copies of the Policy Against Sexual Assault Guide booklets were available

Produced Sexual Assault Awareness Month collateral

- SAAM flag with the Mount logo and msvu.ca/sexualassault url (will fly on the new flag pole attached to the front of Seton Academic Centre for the month of April – Sexual Assault Awareness Month)
- Sexualized violence prevention banner and stand
- Various 'I Ask' campaign materials
- Policy Against Sexual Assault guide booklet

Created a Policy Against Sexual Assault video

- Starred students, faculty and staff discussing the top 5 things the Mount community needed to know about the revised policy
- Was posted on msvu.ca/sexualassault and the Mount's YouTube channel (will be shared on the Mount's social media channels this fall), and was premiered at the SAAM launch event

Engaged students in education and training opportunities

- 1st ever collaborative 1-day workshop/training session for student leaders in Residence Life, Students' Union, and Orientation leaders planned and organized with Acadia University Residence Life Office. This was a joint initiative supported by the provincial funding strategy for sexual violence prevention.

- There were approximately 30 student leaders (Residence Assistants, Dons and Mount Mentors) training in the Bystander Intervention Program. There has been progress in the updates to the new Waves of Change Provincial Bystander program and we are hoping to roll out the new version to our student leaders in the Fall of 2019.
- A session overviewing consent education and sex positivity was offered to all new students during orientation (approximately 300 new students in attendance). Feedback has been considered for improvement to Fall 2019 programming.

Explored existing opportunities and communication where SVP messages could be incorporated

- SVP messages were incorporated into a number of communications, initiatives and events, such as Paula Barry’s Top 10 Enhancements message for students, emails to the Mount community from Dr. Mary Bluechardt, emails to faculty from Dr. Elizabeth Church, etc.

Policy Review:

| Committee Member | Position |
|----------------------------|--|
| Paula Barry Mercer (Chair) | Associate Vice-President, Student Experience |
| Kelley Anne Malinen | Faculty Representative |
| Kelly McMillan | Harassment & Discrimination Advisor |
| Stephanie Patey | Manager of Security |
| Kenya Thompson | Student Representative |

The Policy Review Working Group met 3 times:

| Date | Time | Location |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Tuesday, December 11, 2018 | 9:00 am – 10:00 am | Evaristus 201 |
| Friday, February 1, 2019 | 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Evaristus 201 |
| Monday, February 25, 2019 | 9:00 am – 10:00 am | Evaristus 201 |

Upon meeting, the working group reviewed the policy in detail and considered the checklist prepared by Our Turn, a national, student led organization working to end campus sexual violence: https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/our_turn_action_plan_final_english_web.pdf?x26516

Given the scope of changes we began considering, it was decided to re-write the policy.

A draft policy was approved by the working group and circulated to the larger committee for feedback. After committee feedback was incorporated a series of townhalls for both students and faculty and staff were held in November to seek further feedback. The final draft was approved by the Board of Governors on February 28, 2019.

The key policy changes are as follows:

1. The revised Policy clarifies the distinction between a Disclosure and a Report. It also confirms that individuals who make a Disclosure are entitled to supports and accommodations, even if they decide not to make a Report (see Section 6).

2. The Policy identifies four Responsible Authorities who can receive a Report (s. 8.03). This change is intended to limit the number of times complainants and respondents are required to share or repeat their story. Complainants who are uncomfortable reporting to a Responsible Authority, may choose to report to our Harassment and Discrimination Advisor (s. 8.04)
3. The Mount has incorporated feedback received from students, including the recommendations of the *Our Turn National Student Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence*. These changes include:
 - a. Expressly confirming that the Mount will not use information from a Disclosure or Report of sexual assault to initiate disciplinary proceedings against any student for possessing or using alcohol or drugs (Section 21).
 - b. Confirming that “stealthing” constitutes a sexual assault (s. 4.01). Stealthing is the practice of removing the condom during sexual activity, without one’s partner’s knowledge or consent.
 - c. Clarifying the exceptional circumstances in which the Mount would proceed with an investigation into an allegation of sexual assault without the participation of the victim/survivor (Section 15).
4. Reports of sexual assault brought against a student will no longer be referred to the Student Judicial Committee for an oral hearing, but will instead be investigated by a competent internal or external investigator, who will prepare a report for the Associate Vice-President, Student Experience.
5. The investigation process for students, faculty, and staff has been clarified. The investigator must still follow any investigation process and comply with any timelines established in any collective agreement that applies to the respondent’s employment (s. 10.05).
6. The Policy allows Reports to be resolved informally in appropriate circumstances (Section 13).

The Mount’s Policy Against Sexual Assault: A guide

In addition to the new policy, the group created a policy guide to provide a brief overview of the key components of the Policy Against Sexual Assault and what steps are taken after a disclosure or report. This guide has been published on our www.msvu.ca/sexualassault website and will be distributed widely next Fall.