

An Update from the President's Council Action Team

December 2014

INCLUSIVE SAFETY
CONSENT
RESPECT SOCIAL CHANGE EDUCATION
DIVERSITY
BYSTANDER



SAINT MARY'S
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

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Message from the President

On behalf of Saint Mary's University, I am pleased to provide this update on the implementation of the President's Council Report, "Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect, and Consent at Saint Mary's and Beyond."

It is now a year since the President's Council Report was released, and at that time I committed to accept the recommendations and follow the three-year roadmap to seek cultural change in the prevention of sexualized violence and the promotion of a safe and respectful environment for our students, faculty and staff.

This has been a very busy year, and a great deal has been accomplished in effecting change on our campus.

Our work is not complete, and creating cultural change requires an ongoing commitment as well as the support from all members of the University community.

Please be assured that Saint Mary's University is committed to the prevention of sexual violence and

the promotion of a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning and working environment.

This has always been our position at Saint Mary's and we remain true to our commitment.

The Action Team, led by Dr. Esther E. Enns, is charged with driving and monitoring the progress of implementing the recommendations and reporting to all stakeholder groups on a bi-annual basis. This is its second report and I want to thank and commend the Action Team on its work – work which is having an impact not only on the Saint Mary's campus but across Canada.

J. Colin Dodds, Ph.D.

President and Vice Chancellor,
Saint Mary's University



Introduction

In response to the chant at Orientation 2013, Saint Mary's University is taking significant steps in the prevention of sexualized violence and the promotion of a safe and respectful environment for students, faculty, and staff.

After the events of last September, Dr. Colin Dodds, President of Saint Mary's University, established a President's Council that examined the situation and provided Saint Mary's with a series of recommendations to foster cultural change.

In December of 2013, the President's Council released a report entitled 'Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect, and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond.' The report presented a series of recommendations that were grouped into three categories:

- Build a Foundation for Cultural Change
- Drive Cultural Change
- Demonstrate Accountability

Two immediate action items were executed by the end of January:

- The University's public commitment to action and to implementing the report;
- The formation of the Action Team

A year has passed since the release of the President's Council Report. We continue our work to promote a safe and respectful environment for all members of the University. The Action Team, with the support of members of the Saint Mary's community and the broader community, has worked to implement the recommendations of the President's Council Report.

In establishing a work plan and identifying priorities, the Action Team reviewed the recommendations of the President's Council Report and used some of the following criteria: there are risks to student safety, the issue is critical and urgent, and there is work underway that can be brought to the forefront.

We have made significant progress and look forward to the challenges ahead. We are pleased to highlight our actions to date.



Increase the Understanding of Consent

The President's Council Report included the following statement:

“The most critical preventive measure a University can take to reduce sexualized violence is to educate members of its community about healthy sexuality, consent and the victim-blaming rape myths that discourage victims from reporting acts of sexualized violence.”

Research reports show that consent is not well understood on the part of both women and men. In the past year, this topic has been a key area of focus for the broader community.

Creating cultural change requires all members of the University community to understand the meaning of sexualized violence and its effects on people. It is important that everyone understand the policies for the prevention of sexualized violence and building a respectful environment for all.

The University understands that cultural change is a complex undertaking that will require a number of educational strategies and an ongoing commitment so that all members of the University community understand healthy sexuality and the meaning of consent.

To this end, the following initiatives have been undertaken:

- The Action Team has developed on-line training modules, and consent is a key topic in this safety program;
- The University incorporated educational sessions around consent and healthy sexuality into this year's orientation process and these will be part of all future orientations;
- The University has included the definition of consent in its revised sexual assault policy;
- Consent is a significant component of all bystander training;
- The University has worked extensively on the development of a 'Consent Awareness Campaign' which is set to launch in January;
- The Centre for Housing and Residence Life is conducting educational sessions throughout the year on the topic of consent;
- Targeted programming for varsity athletes;
- We will continue to collaborate with our student union, other universities, and the provincial government on educational initiatives.



Welcome Week

The Orientation Steering Committee was established to oversee the development and execution of orientation at Saint Mary's University, a special focus being the first week of September. The focus of the week was on first-year students, and on education around the key values of the University: respect, safety, and community. Creating a more focused Welcome Week required combining orientation activities for both international and domestic students.

The Orientation Committee adopted the view that 'orientation' at Saint Mary's needs to be an ongoing process extending beyond the first week of September. As such, it needs to include activities throughout the year that support the students' transition into the University.

The Orientation Steering Committee created numerous sub-committees to undertake the work of designing Welcome Week and the year-long orientation process. The objectives of the Orientation Steering Committee were identified as:

- Define a clear purpose for Welcome Week;
- Plan programs and experiences designed to support these objectives;
- In consultation with University and Residence Security, work collaboratively to address student safety on campus;
- Provide training, direction, and mentoring for Welcome Week leaders;

- Annually evaluate Welcome Week and set improvement objectives for the following year;

Welcome Week focused on a combination of academic and social integration thereby creating diverse opportunities for incoming first-year students.

Educational sessions included topics such as consent and diversity. These were designed in response to the President's Council Report statement that consent was not understood by students and how education and conversation needed to occur to bring this topic to the forefront.

Welcome Week attracted positive feedback from both members of the University community and external communities. An internal report on Welcome Week has identified strengths and weaknesses of the event, and these observations will be taken into consideration in 2015-2016 orientation planning.

The University has enlisted a full-time orientation coordinator to take responsibility for coordinating events and educational initiatives throughout the academic year.

The Action Team will build on this strong foundation established for 2014-2015 and further develop the University's approach to Orientation. There is a need to clearly define roles and responsibilities of those involved in the design and delivery of Orientation, and to develop a structure that combines co-curricular, extra-curricular, and curricular activities.



Sexual Assault Policy and Procedures

Saint Mary's University has the distinction of being one of a small number of universities in Canada that has a separate sexual assault policy. The University is making improvements by having its longstanding sexual assault policy and the current structure of the core response team reviewed and updated in consultation with legal counsel.

Through this process, the University has updated the current policy and procedures, and most importantly, has made them more visible on the website. The revised sexual assault policy now includes the definition of consent.

In addition, the University surveyed best practices to confirm that most universities are dealing with reported incidents of sexual assaults through a core response team.

The Sexual Assault Response Team will coordinate the response to a sexual assault and ensure the procedures outlined in the sexual assault policy are followed, and that the appropriate processes are in place. The Sexual Assault Case Manager will be the lead on all files.

Individuals who have committed sexual assault will be held accountable and be subject to consequences as outlined in the sexual assault policy. Adjudication will take place through the Student Code of Conduct, and more formal

proceedings will be in the purview of the criminal justice system.

The University is committed to promoting a safe educational and working environment for its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The University will work to prevent sexual assault through education and provide support to victims/survivors.

Declaration of Respect

The President's Council Report recommended that a university-wide code of conduct be introduced. The Action Team considered this recommendation in the context of existing policies as well as best practices in the sector.

The Action Team recognized that Saint Mary's has a longstanding commitment to respectful behaviour. Expectations in this regard are expressed in the University's Mission and Values, as well as wide-ranging policy documents.

Rather than a code of conduct, the University has developed a Declaration of Respect that affirms core values and aligns with existing Saint Mary's policies and procedures. The Declaration of Respect was introduced during Welcome Week as part of a traditional matriculation ceremony to welcome new students to the Saint Mary's community.



Click here to view the Declaration of Respect.



Gather Data and Shed Light on the Problem

The University community has conveyed that it wants to understand the scope of sexualized violence on our campus - people are looking for more information. With its large complement of Occupational Health and Safety researchers and scholars, Saint Mary's is uniquely equipped to respond to this challenge for information and data. A group of faculty and students proposed a research project to the Action Team. We are supporting the initiative, and look forward to the insights that will result from the research.

The researchers have developed an anonymous survey to assess the health and safety climate of the entire University community. The survey is modelled after the University of Montana's annual "Safe Campus Survey." The survey will be distributed in January 2015 and results will be reported in the spring.

Address Alcohol and Drug Use

The University has an Alcohol Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from Student Services, SMUSA, Security, Residence, Health and Wellness, Faculty, and Alumni.

The Committee is responsible for recommending University policy related to the provision of alcohol services on campus. The Committee is reviewing its current alcohol policy and will revise it using the Acadia Strang Report as a framework.

The overarching goal of the alcohol policy is to reduce problems associated with alcohol abuse by creating and maintaining a University environment which values, promotes, and reinforces the responsible use of alcohol, and alternate choices to alcohol.

The University endeavors to support the well-being of its community members through the provision of factual information, educational experiences, practical staff training, assistance for those whose quality of work and/or academic life is adversely affected by alcohol-related problems, and stimulating social programs that create a positive environment.

The University is continuing to take measures to change the drinking culture while at the same time recognizing that such change will take time. As the University's alcohol policy undergoes revision, broad engagement and dialogue across campus communities will continue and be expanded. A new policy is expected to be available by late winter of 2015.



Programming efforts have been designed to promote and maintain health through the responsible use of alcohol and to minimize the risk behaviours of overuse. Such initiatives include:

- Introduction of numerous alcohol-free events;
- Introduction of alcohol-free floors in residence, with eight floors fully occupied for 2014/2015;
- Inclusion of alcohol-related risks as one of the key topics in the on-line safety briefing modules;
- Saint Mary's membership in the Canadian Collaborative led by Acadia University whose primary goal is to reduce harms with excessive drinking on university campuses;
- Establishment of standards for advertising;
- Peer education programs;
- Intervention training for Resident Assistants;
- Server intervention program for bar services and security staff;
- Development of creative alcohol-free programming throughout the academic year;
- Promotion of visible alcohol-free beverages in the lounge;

Beyond these programming initiatives, the University is establishing a team responsible for programming and education related to the use of alcohol. In addition, a monthly survey will be introduced in the

Spring of 2015 that will provide data on drinking patterns of students. Such data is expected to be helpful in continuing program development, and will allow us to measure the effectiveness of our initiatives.

Empower the Bystanders

All members of the University community have a role to play in the prevention of sexualized violence and to help ensure the safety of everyone on campus. To this end, bystander training has become a key focus in the Safe and Respectful Saint Mary's initiative.

As with a number of the recommendations, the Action Team looked at best practices and identified a prominent training program offered by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) known as 'Bringing in the Bystander.'

The University of New Hampshire has earned a reputation for its strong track record and expertise in this field, and helps inform the White House Task Force to address sexualized violence on US campuses. As a result, its trainers have been in high demand to deliver the training to universities across Canada and the United States.

St. Francis Xavier University introduced the model on its campus in 2013, and this year Saint Mary's chose to participate in the training. We took the opportunity to study the training model in July, 2014 when members of the UNH training team were visiting



Nova Scotia under the auspices of Students NS and the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. Delegates from Saint Mary's travelled to Antigonish to receive training from members of the UNH training team, with members of provincial organizations and other Nova Scotia universities attending as well.

The University of New Hampshire structures its training to allow those individuals who have received the training to return to their organizations to deliver the workshop to members of the university community. In the case of Saint Mary's, the people who received the training in July came back to campus and formed a Bystander Training Committee. Considerable preparatory work was necessary before the training could be launched at Saint Mary's, and members of the committee took immediate action. There was significant support for the training initiative: students, faculty, and staff stepped forward to deliver the training across campus, and many members of the University community have conveyed their wish to receive the training. To date, over 300 people have attended 'Bringing in the Bystander' workshops and further workshops are being coordinated for the winter and spring.

Saint Mary's has booked the University of New Hampshire to be on campus March 9, 2015 to deliver the training to other members of the University with a view to having them become trainers and deliver future workshops.

In early December, the Action team invited Dr. Loreleigh Keashly to the campus to provide bystander workshops to faculty and staff. It was

Dr. Keashly's second visit to Saint Mary's, the first one having taken place in March, 2014. She is an associate professor in the Department of Communications at Wayne State University, Detroit - her research and consulting focuses on conflict and conflict resolution at the interpersonal, group and inter-group levels. She develops strategies to address negative work relationships, and her recent focus has been working with universities on these issues. The workshops were well received and attended by over 100 members of the University community. It is expected this training will be offered annually at Saint Mary's.

Communicate Constantly and Purposefully About Expectations and Risks

It is critical that all members of the University community understand policies as they relate to the prevention of sexualized violence and building a respectful environment at Saint Mary's. To that end, there is a need for campus awareness programs, education, and safety information relating to sexualized violence and alcohol harm prevention. Providing information about key policies and procedures, the on-line safety training modules developed by the Action Team are foundational.



Through reviewing best practices, the Action Team identified a model for on-line safety training produced by the University of Montana, and has adapted this programming for the needs of Saint Mary's University. This project has been met with enthusiastic support. The University has started to pilot the modules with members of Saint Mary's and broader communities. Some faculty members will use them in class to engage students in discussion on the topics covered, and get their feedback on the effectiveness of the modules.

A communications plan is being developed to introduce the modules to all members of the University community in 2015. The goal is to include the modules in orientation programming as part of required safety training for all new students. Other educational initiatives will also be included in the communications plan.

Topics covered are: University policies and procedures, definition of consent and sexual assault, alcohol and drug use, how to be an effective bystander, and understanding response procedures in the event of an incident on or off campus.

Promote a Culture of Equity

The University is committed to accessibility, diversity, and the provision of a positive and supportive learning environment. Promotion of a culture of equity is at the heart of the educational and scholarly enterprise of the University. It is comprised of a

community of scholars who frequently address themes of social justice both in their teaching and research. By engaging students and wider communities in the study of themes such as violence and discrimination on the human level and in the context of social systems, they are serving as catalysts for cultural change in their roles as teachers and scholars.

The University's commitment to a culture of equity is evident not only in curriculum and scholarship, but also in administrative practices of the institution, particularly those relating to conflict on campus.

Saint Mary's continues to reflect a progressive and proactive approach to the management of organizational conflict by way of its Office for Conflict Resolution. These services would not have become a reality without the dedication and support of students, faculty, and staff at Saint Mary's who promote a culture of peace. The University's longstanding involvement in the Peaceful Schools International movement is an important element of its commitment.

The Conflict Resolution Advisor provides information sessions to faculty, staff and students relating to the University's policy on the "Prevention and Resolution of Harassment and Discrimination."

The Conflict Resolution Advisor provides information sessions and programs on topics such as:

- Cyber-bullying;
- Sexual Assault Policy and Procedures;



- Violence in the Workplace: Prevention and Response;
- Bringing in the Bystander;
- Peace education in collaboration with Peaceful Schools International;
- Partners for Human Rights;
- Day for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women;
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

For more than 30 years, Saint Mary's University has played a leadership role in ensuring that higher education is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Since its establishment, the Atlantic Centre has been dedicated to meeting four main objectives:

- Encouraging the participation of persons with disabilities in higher education;
- Providing direct support services to students while they pursue their education;
- The placing of graduates into career related employment;
- Conducting and encouraging research relevant to the education of persons with disabilities.

The Atlantic Centre has been a model of service and a resource centre for educational institutions throughout Atlantic Canada, and now it is a global resource. The Centre extends an invitation to

institutions around the world who wish to replicate the Atlantic Centre in their respective communities.

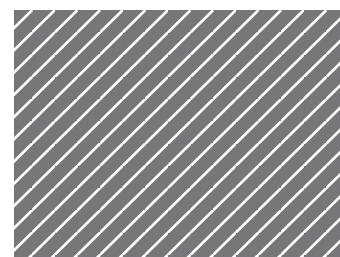
The University has made a commitment to report annually to Senate and the Board of Governors on positive actions taken to improve the employment of women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, and people with disabilities.

On another level, Saint Mary's University is a leader in the Maritimes as well as across Canada in bringing international students into its academic programs. The University has a strong commitment to internationalizing its community through the development of its overall teaching, service functions, and supports for student success.

Saint Mary's University has been committed to developing initiatives to provide guidance on internationalization at home, to enhance support for international student engagement on campus and to expand opportunities for all students at Saint Mary's University.

This environment provides exciting opportunities to advance intercultural learning for both domestic students and international students by developing a deep understanding of cultural differences and underlying values.

The goal of the University is to support international and domestic students in their relationships and interactions with persons and groups of other cultures to cultivate global citizenship through practice and example.





Improve Safety

In 2006, the University implemented the “Violence in the Workplace: Prevention and Response” policy, which applies to all members of the Saint Mary’s Community. The policy was then revised in June 2009.

Since that time, the Human Resource Officer (OHS & Wellness) has provided education sessions to the University community on a semi-annual basis.

The Security Manager also provides information sessions relating to preventing violence. Additionally, Security provides services which enhance personal safety on Campus:

- Lone Worker Program - students, as well as faculty and staff are encouraged to advise Security when they are working late, coming in alone on weekends, or working in isolated areas. Security will then include them in their regular rounds.
- Safety Walk Program: Upon request, Security will escort faculty, staff and students anywhere on Campus.
- Additionally, Security will monitor a specific area, upon request from an employee, e.g. a faculty member meeting with a distraught or upset student.

Emergency Awareness sessions are also offered, semi-annually by the Security Manager and the Human Resource Officer (OHS & Wellness). While these sessions also cover other topics, the main

focus is on personal safety during an emergency situation where a weapon is being used. Saint Mary’s is the only university in Atlantic Canada to have a voice-automated mass notification system. Plans are underway to expand the system to include text messages. A four-minute video has been created to explain the mass notification system to students. Faculty play the video in class at the beginning of each semester. Also, information on emergency preparedness is provided to all people who contract for space through Conference Services, the Arena or the Homburg Centre.

The Province of Nova Scotia has enacted Violence in the Workplace Regulations, which require employers to assess the workplace for the potential for violence, as follows:

“An employer must conduct a violence risk assessment for each of their workplaces in accordance with this Section to determine if there is a risk of violence in the workplace and prepare a written report concerning the violence risk assessment detailing the extent and nature of any risk identified by the assessment.”

The CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety with participation from the JOHSC (Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee), and the OHS Office, will issue a survey to all faculty and staff in January of 2015. The CN Centre will then report on the results of the survey, and make recommendations to the University relating to a violence prevention program. A revised policy is expected within the year.



The University contracted an external consultant to assess the University for physical safety using a well-recognized assessment tool – CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). CPTED depends on natural access controls and natural surveillance for curbing undesirable behaviour in and around buildings. Audits were performed during the day and night on the grounds and within targeted buildings, and included:

- Neighbourhood, Perimeter, Campus Grounds, Parking
- Building Exteriors, including door & window access, shrubbery, lighting
- Building Interiors, including door and window surveillance, alarm systems, stairwell surveillance.

The report will be available in late December.

Teaching and Research Excellence - Community Engagement

The liberal education at the heart of the University shapes young people's values and attitudes, and inspires all of us to build just and safe communities. In this way, education is the key to preventing sexualized violence. The University has a responsibility to ensure that all members understand healthy sexuality and the meaning of consent.

The University understands the prevention of sexualized violence and the promotion of a safe and respectful environment is a shared responsibility within the Saint Mary's Community.

To this end, Saint Mary's continues its ongoing effort to encourage and create the infrastructure for teaching and research excellence in areas related to sexualized violence and critical race studies.



Click here to see our list of courses relating to the topic.

The Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Culture at Saint Mary's provides an active forum for scholars, researchers, and students to cultivate and promote the study of culture across academic disciplines. Part of the Centre's objectives is to foster alternative ways of knowing, thinking about, understanding, and participating in culture.



The Language Centre at Saint Mary's University is one of the leading language centres in Canada offering language and culture courses.

International Development Studies is a flagship interdisciplinary program at Saint Mary's University. It is internationally renowned, and is a leading example of the University's commitment to a relevant and internationalized undergraduate and graduate curriculum with a social justice focus.

The President's Council Action Team is working with the Council of 3M National Teaching Fellows, a community of award-winning teachers who undertake projects to enhance teaching and learning in Canadian post-secondary institutions. The Council of 3M National Teaching Fellows has agreed to take the issue of addressing sexualized violence on university campuses into its forum to ensure that this important topic is a key focus in university education across Canada.

Collaborate with Others

As outlined in the President's Council Report, campus safety and the prevention of sexualized violence are issues that concern all universities here in Nova Scotia and across the country. The University has begun to work with the broader community and continues to identify opportunities for collaboration.

These include:

- Work with the University of Montana to develop on-line safety training modules and a climate survey;
- The President of Saint Mary's promoted a new cross-Canada Collaboration among Universities and Colleges to reduce high-risk drinking on Canadian campuses, sat on an AUCC committee to develop best practices for orientation, and spoke at a conference aimed to take action to improve students' well-being and educational success;
- Saint Mary's has launched a student-oriented research initiative to make sense of rape culture – potential partners will include the Government of Nova Scotia, Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and other universities across Canada;
- Consultation with universities across Canada to help guide their process;
- Work with the University of New Hampshire to help bring Bystander Training to the Halifax region – the goal is to make it available to other universities– we are working with the Department of Community Services to help realize this goal;



- Work with the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre to develop a protocol for responding to sexual assaults;
- Pilot-testing of our on-line safety training modules to the broader community;
- Work with the Halifax Regional Police on sexual assault prevention and education – the Action Team is planning to incorporate training by HRM in future orientations. Discussions will begin in January 2015;
- Saint Mary's is working with Halifax Regional Municipality as a member of its Municipal Alcohol Committee.
- Saint Mary's is part of the Canadian Collaborative led by Acadia University whose primary goal is to reduce harms with excessive drinking on university campuses.

Saint Mary's University, supported through leadership from the Action Team, is making progress effecting cultural change in the prevention of sexualized violence and the promotion of a safe and respectful environment for students, faculty and staff. We are seeing that cultural change is possible.

Our work is not complete and we are committed to moving forward - building on the progress that we have made to date.

The ultimate objective of a Saint Mary's education is to nurture and support productive, critical, and responsible citizens. The true value of a university education is realized when it also instills in all members of the University community a strong sense of personal worth, and a commitment to social responsibility.



Work Plan Summary

Build a Foundation for Cultural Change	Completed	Immediate and Ongoing
Communicate a Commitment to Action	✓	
Identify a University Lead and Create Action Team	✓	
Develop a University -Wide Code of Conduct	✓	
Gather Data and Shed Light on the Problem		✓
Re-claim and Re-design Orientation Week	✓	
Revise the University's Sexual Assault Policy	✓	
Identify a Sexual Response Team and Improve Access to Resources and Training	✓	
Investigate and Discipline the Perpetrators	✓	
Clarify and Formalize the University's Relationship with Student Associations		✓
Create the Right Structure, Clarify Roles, and Allocate Appropriate Resources		✓
Encourage and Create the Infrastructure for Teaching and Research Excellence in Areas Related to Sexualized Violence		✓
Drive Cultural Change	Completed	Immediate and Ongoing
Increase the Understanding of Consent		✓
Address Alcohol and Drug Use		✓
Empower the Bystanders		✓
Communicate Constantly and Purposefully about Expectations and Risks		✓
Promote a Culture of Equity		✓
Improve Safety		✓
Continue to Engage the University and Broader Community		✓
Collaborate with Others		✓
Demonstrate Accountability	Completed	Immediate and Ongoing
Evaluate Progress and be Accountable		✓



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