



From the office of the VP External Affairs

April 30, 2019

To: Office of the VP International and  
Student Affairs

Re: Rape Culture Working Group  
Recommendations

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On November 5h, 2019, the Mount Allison Students' Union (MASU) passed a motion acknowledging rape culture on the Mount Allison University campus and at the MASU. With the motion, a new political policy was put in place which outlined specific be it resolved clauses on how the MASU will tackle the prevalent issue of rape culture on campus and within its own organization.

In January 2019, the Vice President External Affairs (VPEA) and the Vice President Student Life (VPSL) formed a MASU Rape Culture Working Group (RCWG) consisting of the following members:

- Elise Vaillancourt, VPSL
- Emelyana Titarenko, VPEA
- Paige Percy, SHARE Intern
- Jillane Buryn, MASU Social Justice Coordinator and SHARE Intern
- Isabelle Spinney, former SHARE Intern
- Michelle Roy, Women and Gender Studies Society Representative
- Seth Winward, Catalyst Representative
- Kiara Bubar, Indigenous Student Support Group Representative

The MASU RCWG discussed key areas of issues surrounding sexual violence on campus but more specifically, rape culture. As result, the group put together a recommendation list of how the university, the MASU and the town of Sackville can work to improve the issues of rape culture.



**Recommendations on how the Mount Allison University should acknowledge and address rape culture that exists on their campus.**

*WHEREAS Mount Allison University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policy neither defines rape culture nor acknowledge its presence on campus nor the need to address it;*<sup>1</sup>

1. The university should create a University *Sexual Violence and/or Rape Culture Working Group* which shall have several representatives from different bodies of the university such as, but not limited to:
  - a. Representative from the International Centre
  - b. Indigenous Affairs Coordinator
  - c. Representative from the President Advisory Committee of Women and Gender Issues (PACWGI)
  - d. SHARE Advisor
  - e. Representative from the Meighen Centre
  - f. Representative from the Wellness Centre
  - g. Faculty Representatives
  - h. Director of Athletics
  - i. Representative from Residence Life Office
  - j. Representative from Security
  - k. Representative from the MASU
  - o This working group shall report to the Vice President International and Student Affairs as it works to discuss and confront the intersectional issues that arise surrounding rape culture that facilitates high rates of sexual violence on university campuses.<sup>2</sup> (do we need a citation for 'high rates')?
  - o This working group should work with an aim of improving existing policies on sexual violence, and to make recommendations that would promote an environment where members of the Mount Allison community can work and study on a campus free of sexual violence.
  - o This working group should participate in consultation with groups who have knowledge of sexual violence policies, practices and available support for those who have experienced sexual violence, as well as with key communities who are disproportionately affected by sexual violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Mount Allison University, Office of the Vice President International and Student Affairs (2016). [https://www.mta.ca/Community/Governance\\_and\\_admin/Policies\\_and\\_procedures/Section\\_1000/Policy\\_1006/Policy\\_1006/](https://www.mta.ca/Community/Governance_and_admin/Policies_and_procedures/Section_1000/Policy_1006/Policy_1006/)

<sup>2</sup> Alliance of BC Students, et al. Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Campus Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (2018). [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/casaacae/pages/2553/attachments/original/1536955429/Shared\\_Perspectives\\_A\\_Joint\\_Publication\\_on\\_Campus\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Prevention\\_and\\_Response.pdf?1536955429](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/casaacae/pages/2553/attachments/original/1536955429/Shared_Perspectives_A_Joint_Publication_on_Campus_Sexual_Violence_Prevention_and_Response.pdf?1536955429)

- This working group should also review and incorporate the recommendations made by the METRAC 2013 report. These recommendations should include but not be limited to the following<sup>3</sup>:
    - The establishment of a Sexual Assault Response Team, a “cross-functional team that includes health services, advocacy, housing and academic accommodations, Security Services, and law enforcement” (pg. 10)
    - Increased education surrounding key topics of drug use and alcohol consumption as they relate to sexual violence and rape culture (pg. 11)
    - Increased education and response surrounding the mental health of sexual violence survivors (pg. 14)
    - Ensure the recommendations surrounding the Sexual Violence Response and Prevention policy are taken into consideration upon the next policy review (pgs. 18-28)
    - Increase the SHARE Advisor to 1.0 FTE (multiple pages)
    - Continue to provide non-drinking options and promote safe-drinking practices, particularly at on-campus events (pg 29)
    - Work with the RCMP and the Town of Sackville to address harassment of students off-campus (pg 33)
    - Review the recommendations for action surrounding campus Security Services (pgs 35-36)
    - Develop peer support model for Residence Assistants to prevent burnout and secondary trauma, in order to enhance their ability to respond to students in crisis and work to diminish rape culture in the context of residence (pg 38)
    - Ensure all staff, including Security Services and student staff etc. are adequately trained in the intersectionality of sexual violence and rape culture, including discrimination (pg 39)
  - This group should also work to make sure that the Sexual Violence Response and Prevention policy or any other related policies have a transparent, adequate and effective review process.
2. The university should invest in making the SHARE Advisor position *full time (1.0 FTE)*.
- a. Currently, the university has one part time staff who is responsible for, but not limited to:
    - i. Overseeing the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response policy,
    - ii. Dealing with disclosures,
    - iii. Providing training to students, staff and faculty,
    - iv. Providing effective communication and education for all members of the university community,

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<sup>3</sup> Michelle Davis. METRAC: Creating a Safer Campus: Final Report on Mount Allison University Campus Safety Audit (2013).

- v. Acting as an advisor for all issues related to sexual violence,
  - vi. Sitting on and chairing committees related to sexual violence
  - vii. Collect and maintain confidential statistics in regards to reports, disclosures and advising.
- Having one part-time employee putting in 24 hours a week to effectively maintain the aforementioned tasks and more, is not realistic. This irresponsibility results in leaving the full range of tasks at risk of being neglected, and not dealt with beyond the bare minimum.
  - Over the last few years based on informal reports and observations, less departments are getting trainings, less education and communication is being distributed yet sexual violence is still the most prevalent issue on post-secondary campuses with 15% to 25% of North American college and university-aged women experiencing some form of sexual assault during their academic career.<sup>4</sup>
  - The fact that 1 in 5 women experience sexual assault during their studies<sup>5</sup> means that combating sexual violence on university campuses is a full-time job at the very minimum.
  - For a university committed to maintaining a safe and healthy campus environment by addressing sexual violence through: awareness, education, training and prevention programs; survivor supports; and timely, effective and fair handling of disclosures of sexual violence<sup>6</sup>, there is an evident necessity to have a full-time employee to successfully uphold the purpose of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response policy.

*WHEREAS awareness and education are key components in combating toxic stereotypes, attitudes and rape culture on campuses;*<sup>7</sup>

3. The university should establish a one year pilot project involving the creation of a full-time (1.0 FTE) Sexual Health & Violence? Educator position.
  - Before an issue can be addressed, it is crucial that there is proper education about the issue, its causes and its consequences. As a university that promotes its engagement in education and prevention of sexual violence,<sup>8</sup> it is crucial that there is a staff member whose sole commitment is to create, improve and facilitate education related to sexual health.

<sup>4</sup> Alliance of BC Students, et al. (2018)

<sup>5</sup> Our Turn. A National, Student-Led Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence (2017).

[https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/our\\_turn\\_action\\_plan\\_final\\_english\\_web.pdf?x26516](https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/our_turn_action_plan_final_english_web.pdf?x26516)

<sup>6</sup> Mount Allison University, Office of the Vice President International and Student Affairs (2016).

<sup>7</sup> Mount Allison Students' Union, Policy 2018-02 (2018).

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c9wtpilywONVidQXtifqmJr4hFGCbSYK/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>8</sup> Mount Allison University, Office of the Vice President International and Student Affairs (2016).

- This staff must be specialized in this field and must not be a current MTA student, or recent graduate lacking proper education and/or experience in the field.
  - This staff should be responsible for the education of key terms included in the policy along with the term rape culture.
  - This staff should be responsible for creating educational material that will be communicated as early as Fall Orientation (August 2019) since this is the time when sexual violence is the most prevalent.<sup>9</sup>
  - It has been found that of all sexual assaults that take place on post-secondary campuses during the academic year, almost two-thirds of them will happen within the first eight weeks of school.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that there is an urgency to have an additional staff that can relieve the SHARE Advisor of some of their responsibilities so that more time, effort and efficiency is placed on handling disclosures. This also indicates that incoming students need more education, resources and services provided for them than universities already offer.
  - Despite the majority of sexual assaults being found to occur during the first eight weeks of the semester, it is of high importance for this position of Sexual Health Educator to be maintained for the duration of the school year to facilitate ongoing education and awareness surrounding these key topics.
4. The university should make all departmental and staff (including coaches) trainings mandatory.
- For Mount Allison to be a safe campus, all those who hold positions of authorities, or roles of mentorship, should have the trainings necessary to help them understand the role of rape culture and how they can mitigate it within their departments, offices or teams.
  - For Mount Allison to be a campus that provides survivor-centric support, all administration, faculty and staff should have the trainings necessary that will allow them to properly deal with a disclosure or a survivor seeking guidance.
  - It has been acknowledged by a professor at Wilfrid Laurier University that to put an end to rape culture on our campuses, efforts need to be made by everyone, including faculty and administrators.<sup>11</sup> This is a fact that the MASU RCWG agrees with wholeheartedly. It is true that to tackle rape culture on the Mount Allison campus, the responsibility should not only fall on students, but it should fall on everyone, and especially those who work for the university with an intention of providing a safe learning environment for our students.
  - Over the years, the Mounties Football team has been receiving mandatory training facilitated by the SHARE Advisor. The fact that this is the only team to

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<sup>9</sup> Alliance of BC Students, et al. (2018)

<sup>10</sup> Alliance of BC Students, et al. (2018)

<sup>11</sup> Helen Ramirez, "Taking Responsibility: Faculty and Rape Culture at Laurier," WLUFAdvocate 3, no. 2 (November 2014): 1.

receive training helps foster rape culture by creating stereotypes. However, with the Athletics Department being such a huge part of the Mount Allison community within which many athletes become captains, role models and mentors, it is crucial that all teams receive mandatory training to better understand how to diminish rape culture within their teams, how to deal with a possible disclosure and what resources are available for them.

