

# **STUDENT SAFETY IN NOVA SCOTIA:**

## **A Review of Student Union Policies and Practices to Prevent Sexual Violence**

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PREPARED BY:  
Martell Consulting Services Ltd.

PREPARED FOR:  
Students Nova Scotia

1673 Barrington St.  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 1Z9  
902.422.4068  
[www.studentsns.ca](http://www.studentsns.ca)

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## Executive Summary

Sexual assault, defined as “any unwanted act of a sexual nature imposed by one person upon another, including such activities as kissing, fondling, oral or anal sex, intercourse, or other forms of penetration without consent”<sup>i</sup> is a reality across Nova Scotia campuses.

In commissioning the following report, *StudentsNS* and the participating student unions have taken a pivotal step in formally acknowledging the existence of sexual assault on campus. With this report, they have broken the silence and demonstrated their commitment to making campuses safe spaces for all.

The report, prepared by Martell Consulting Services Ltd., provides an overview of sexual assault on Nova Scotia campuses, speaks to the role that student leadership can play in building a culture of prevention and intervention around sexual assault, and provides a series of recommendations to position student leaders as agents of change on campus.

The report also identifies the need for universities at the most senior level to formally recognize the existence of sexual assault and to work together with faculty, university staff, student unions and community partners to address the violence. The report recommends that universities across the province collaborate to address sexual assault, providing them with a collective opportunity to demonstrate that Nova Scotia universities put student safety as their first priority; and to showcase what they doing to ensure student safety.

## Methodology

In undertaking the study, Martell Consulting worked collaboratively with a steering committee made up of representatives from *StudentsNS* and student leaders from the six participating students unions including:

- Acadia Students’ Union
- Cape Breton University Students’ Union
- Dalhousie Agriculture Students’ Association
- Mount St. Vincent University Students’ Union
- St. Francis Xavier University Students’ Union
- St. Mary’s University Students’ Association

Some 73 campus-based interviews were held with student union leaders and university staff across these six campuses in addition to eight interviews with off-campus health experts. A limited literature review was also undertaken.

Feedback from the campus-based interviews confirm findings from the literature that:

- Consent is not well understood by students, including women and men.
- Alcohol is a high-risk factor for sexual assault.
- Acquaintance sexual assault accounts for 90-95% of all campus sexual assault; however **most if not all of** acquaintance sexual assault is not **formally** reported. Only about 5% of all sexual assaults are **formally** reported (i.e., to either the police or through the university's non-academic judicial process).
- Sexual predators exist on campus, target vulnerable first year students and use alcohol as a weapon. Sexual predators account for 90% of all **reported** sexual assault.
- Campus-related sexual assaults are higher during the first semester of classes.
- Student athletics and fraternity cultures are viewed as especially problematic, such that members are seen as more likely to perpetrate sexual violence.
- In some university towns, some off- and on-campus student housing environments have cultures similar to fraternity cultures. Today's rape culture, when combined with the alcohol culture found on campus, provides the ingredients for the 'perfect storm', a euphemism used to refer to the prevalence of sexual assault on today's campus.

Strategies to prevent sexual assault on campus include:

- Bystander programs that establish a community of responsibility and train participants to recognize potential situations for sexual violence and how to intervene safely.
- Programming that emphasizes everyone has the right to refuse sex at any time, with anyone, regardless of their relationship or previous degree of sexual interaction.
- Gender specific programming:
  - *Prevention* programming for men to teach what sexual assault is including its impact on the survivor, and how to interact with women respectfully without ignoring their needs or refusals of sexual advances. Programming also to stress that drinking is not an excuse for sexual violence and that deliberately getting a woman drunk to have sex with her constitutes sexual assault.
- Targeted programming for high risk offender populations including student athletes and fraternity members.
- Programming for students of all genders on sexual assault statistics, gender role attitudes and socialization, and rape myths.

## Recommendations

### FOR IMMEDIATE STUDENT UNION ACTION:

- Develop a position on sexual violence and sexual assault. Build it into the student union by-laws and student union handbook, publicize it on the student union webpage and promote it widely across campus using social media.
- Appoint one member of the student union executive as lead on the sexual violence file and support with an appropriate budget. Do not dilute their responsibilities by giving them additional responsibilities over and above the sexual dialogue file.
- Develop a web presence through the student union site that provides information and resources on sexual violence and assault, including dispelling myths on sexual assault and providing advice on sexual assault prevention. Provide regular updates on this site on progress undertaken by the student union on building a student response to sexual violence.
- Have all student union leadership take a public pledge to step up and intervene when inappropriate behavior is encountered. This includes from sexually degrading jokes in the cafeteria, to bullying in the residence to unwanted sexual overtures in the bar. Videotape student leaders taking the pledge, post the video-clip on the student union webpage and promote it widely across campus using social media.
- Invite all student leadership (house council, sports teams, resident assistants, bar staff, campus security etc.) across campus to follow the student union example. Develop pledge cards and see how many student leaders you can enlist. Publish the results on the student union website and promote it widely across campus using social media.
- Hold discussion groups with first and second year students aimed at identifying the kind of campus community they would like to live in with specific attention paid to values (safe environment, respect among student). Publish the findings on the student union website and promote across campus using social media.
- Host student discussion groups aimed at identifying activities run by the student union and house councils that support a 'rape culture' on campus. Discuss how these activities could be changed to build a safer, more respectful community.

### FOR STUDENT UNION ACTION IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS:

- Mail a letter to all first-year students and parents/guardians prior to start-up of classes, addressing the importance of consent in all sexual relationships; the potential for acquaintance rape in situations of heavy drinking; and the potential danger of off-campus parties where sexual predators may be in attendance.

- Plan a strategy for starting the dialogue on sexuality on campus. Consider some of the following activities to jumpstart the dialogue:
  - Screen relevant films (*Palindromes*, *The Education of Shelby Knox*, *Killing Us Softly*, *The Accused*, *A Jury of Her Peers*, *Defending our Lives*)
  - Host a panel discussion on sexual violence (Invite professors from Sociology, Women's Studies, Political Science, Anthropology; also invite emergency rooms nurses and doctors, sexual assault nurse examiners, and other professionals in the field)
  - Host a phone-in campus radio show on campus safety and sexual assault statistics.
  - Enlist the theatre department to present street theatre or flash mobs on situations of sexual assault and other sexual violence. Videotape these and post on student union website.
- Include in the strategy a series of campus consultations on consent, bystander intervention and the role that alcohol can play in sexual assault.
- Offer male-only programming, led by trained male facilitators, aimed at prevention of violence against women.
- Reassess what orienting new students to life on campus and the surrounding community should entail including expected outcomes, and designing events/activities to meet the outcomes.

#### FOR STUDENT UNION ADVOCACY:

- Advocate for the establishment of a campus advisory committee on sexual assault with representation, at minimum, from senior administration, university staff, faculty and the student leadership. Meet with the university president to discuss the need for a collaborative effort to deal effectively with sexual assault including the development of stand-alone policies and transparent procedures.
- Adopt the approach taken by the StFX Students' Union and make the *Bringing in the Bystander* training available to all student union and other student leadership on an annual basis. Include refresher training for previous recipients. Ensure that the following student union staff receives the training: bar management, bar servers and bar security and all other student security.
- Advocate for all athletic directors, coaches and male and female sports teams to receive *Bystander* training on an annual and on-going basis
- Advocate for the establishment of a team of male and female peer educators to be trained by and work under the supervision of the student health centre director (or other relevant campus body).
  - Pass a by-law to use student union funding to support the peer educators starting in the upcoming academic year.

- Recommend that the peer educators' primary focus be on alcohol consumption, sexual assault and the link between the two.
- Advocate for including discussion of the role of consent within the Canadian context in international student orientations.
- Advocate for the immediate establishment of a team of researchers drawn from each Nova Scotia campus, to develop and oversee a survey addressed to identifying the extent and nature of sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses.
  - Build a presence for *StudentsNS* on the team to ensure the student voice is captured.
  - Recommend that the survey is ready for implementation over the 2014-15 student academic year.
- The Cape Breton University Students' Union, in collaboration with CBU's senior administration, advocate for extension of the SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) program to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
- The Cape Breton University Students' Union advocate for CBU to develop a collaborative relationship with Every Woman's Place in Sydney.
- Acadia University Student Association, in collaboration with Acadia's senior administration, advocate for extension of the SANE program to the Valley Health Authority District.



## Glossary of Terms

### Consent

In 1992 a Canadian law was passed that defines “consent” as the voluntary agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. It is popularly known as the “NO MEANS NO” law.

The absence of consent defines the crime of sexual assault under Canada’s Criminal Code.

There is no consent when:

- Your acquaintance/friend/date/partner is passed out, asleep, incoherent, staggering or not aware of his/her environment.
- Sexual contact would be an abuse of power, trust or authority.
- You think you have consent because they are not resisting.
- You don’t think the person would agree to sex if they were sober.
- You and your acquaintance/ friend/date/partner have never talked about having sex together before now – when you are intoxicated – and you don’t know what the person would want.
- Your acquaintance/ friend/date/partner has indicated (verbally or non-verbally) that they are not interested.
- Even though you and the person have had sex before, they say they are not interested this time.
- Someone has stated what he/she is comfortable with, but when they are intoxicated to the point they are unable to articulate permission, you go farther than agreed upon.
- You are not sure.

### Date Rape or Acquaintance Rape

The term ‘date rape’ is sexual contact that is forced, manipulated, or coerced by a partner, friend or acquaintance. It is also referred to as ‘acquaintance rape’ or ‘acquaintance sexual assault’.

### Risk Factor

This term refers to risk factors that are either environmental (such as cultural norms or venues like off-campus house parties) or personal (such as decision-making around alcohol consumption) and can be related to victims, perpetrators as well as bystanders.

## Rape

Rape is a term used to describe vaginal, oral or anal intercourse, without consent. The term 'rape' is used interchangeably with the term 'sexual assault'. Although no longer used in a legal sense in Canada, the term 'rape' is still commonly used.

## Rape Culture

Rape culture is the dominant culture on campuses today. It is also a culture that permeates society in general, not just that on campus. Rape culture both makes excuses for and tacitly approves of rape. It is a culture where gender roles are strictly defined; men are hyper-masculine aggressors and women are their sexually provocative prey. It's a culture in which victim blaming is common (she was drinking, look what she was wearing) and in which consent is unclear (she was flirting, she didn't say no loudly enough or long enough).

## Rape Myths

Rape myths complicate society's understanding of sexual assault and contribute to a rape culture. They often blame or shame survivors of sexual assault instead of holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions.

## Sexual Assault

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 or anal sex, intercourse, or other forms of penetration without consent.

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

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is an overarching term used to describe any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. Sexual violence includes all forms of unwanted sexual contact as well as name-calling, sexual humiliation and sexual targeting.

## 1.0 Introduction

This report examines the role of student unions in student safety across six Nova Scotia campuses. It provides an overview of sexual assault on Nova Scotia campuses, speaks to the role that student leadership can play in building a culture of prevention and intervention around sexual assault, and provides a series of recommendations to position student leaders as agents of change on campus.

The research was conducted for *StudentsNS* and was made possible with support from six participating student unions:

- Acadia Students' Union
- Cape Breton University Students' Union
- Dalhousie Agriculture Students' Association
- Mount St. Vincent University Students' Union
- St. Francis Xavier University Students' Union
- St. Mary's University Students' Association

Martell Consulting Services Ltd researched and prepared the report. Funding was provided by the Province of Nova Scotia.

## 1.1 StudentsNS

Students Nova Scotia is the primary advocacy organization representing Nova Scotia post-secondary students, with over 38,000 members within eight independent campus associations. The organization has a mandate to promote the quality of post-secondary education, including ensuring that it supports students' lifelong wellness. It undertook its work on sexual assault prevention, in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia, in this review, because students have the right to be safe and feel safe on our campuses, and student unions share responsibility in guaranteeing this right.

This report is only a first step and will be followed by a province-wide social media campaign; funding is also available to assist participating student unions in implementing recommendations from this review. Sexual assault threatens lifelong wellbeing as well as learning, and can have no place in Nova Scotia.

### 1.1.1 THE ROLE OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

"Student success lies not only in the academic achievements we individually obtain while on our respective campuses but in the manner by which we support each other to succeed as a community. In this view, student leaders have a moral and ethical responsibility to create an environment at our institutions that is safe and positive. By reaching out to our sister/brother institutions to address the issue of sexual assault and sexual violence on our campuses and in our communities, we have the ability to create an impact that is both immediate and exponential. Unified, we can create a culture that does not condone, validate or encourage

sexual violence, sexual assault or harassment, influencing the values and experiences of the next generation of students in a truly positive way.”<sup>ii</sup>

## 1.2 Study Objectives

The overall goal of the study is to provide student unions with a set of strategies aimed at sexual assault prevention and the creation of safe and mindful cultures on campus. It is expected that the study results will also be used to inform *StudentsNS*’ proposed province-wide social media campaign.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Analyze what individual student unions are ‘doing right’ regarding sexual assault prevention policies and practices;
- Provide advice on what individual student unions can do better; and
- Provide student unions with comparative information on their provincial peers.

Supporting objectives include identifying the roles and responsibilities of student unions in:

- Shaping student attitudes and behavior towards sexual assault;
- Providing advice on sexual assault prevention;
- Dispelling the myths about sexual assault;
- Exploring the connection between overconsumption of alcohol and sexual assault;
- Ensuring student safety including when they return home after taking part in student union activities; and
- Ensuring that student union staff (bar management, servers, security and residence staff where relevant) are adequately trained with respect to sexual assault prevention protocols.

Additional supporting objectives include researching commonly accepted definitions for:

- What constitutes sexual assault;
- What constitutes date rape;
- What is consent and how does it go beyond ‘no means no’.

## 1.3 Study Approach and Methodology

In undertaking the study, Martell Consulting Services Ltd. worked collaboratively with a steering committee set up by *StudentsNS* to oversee the research. The committee was chaired by Acadia Students’ Union’s equity officer and includes representatives from each of the remaining five participating student unions, with the Executive Director and Campaigns Coordinator of *StudentsNS* serving in an advisory role.

The steering committee played a key role in identifying respondents to interview on campus and compiling an interview schedule.

Campus interviews were conducted over a six-week period beginning early October 2013. Each campus was visited over two to four days.

In total, some 73 student union and university representatives were interviewed for the study. The positions interviewed across the campuses varied but at minimum included representation from the following:

- Student Union executive
- Student Bar management
- Student Services/Student Life
- Student Health Centre
- Safety and Security
- Housing/Residence Life
- Athletics Department (with the exception of Acadia)

In addition, interviews were held on some campuses with representatives from:

- Counselling Services
- Sexual Diversity Centre
- Women's Centre

A further eight interviews were held with off-campus health experts including regional staff from Prevention and Health Promotion, Mental Health and Addiction Services; the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, Alternatives in Western Nova Scotia, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association, and Venus Envy.

In addition, the consultant attended two workshops over the study timeframe addressed to women, sexual violence and the link to alcohol.

## 1.4 Study Limitations

The tight timing required by the interview schedule meant that not all potential respondents were available on the days identified for the campus visits. In those instances the consultant attempted to either make a repeat campus visit while driving back from a different campus or do an interview by phone. Student class schedules also caused some difficulties on some campuses in scheduling extended interviews.

While it was initially intended to hold a series of group discussions with students across the campuses, this methodology was discarded due to the difficulty of planning group discussions within the time restrictions of the campus visits.

The research conducted across the six campuses for this report did not attempt to quantify the extent of sexual assault experienced across Nova Scotia's university population. Statistics that may be held by student health centres or student services are not collected in a systematic fashion and respondents report they are further compromised by double counting between on

and off campus support providers. Canadian universities are not required by law to collect statistics on sexual assault.

Nor did the research attempt to conduct a thorough analysis of sexual culture on and off-campus. While the topic of sexuality was raised across the interviews, and while some acknowledged its relationship to sexual assault and drinking, much more research is required to explore this very complicated topic.

Finally, although a limited review of the literature pertaining to sexual assault on campus and intervention strategies was undertaken, time and resource limitations precluded a thorough and complete review of the literature.

## 1.5 Acknowledgements

The author and *StudentsNS* would like to express our appreciation to all those who participated in interviews and discussions during the preparation of this report. Special thanks to the *StudentsNS* Sexual Assault Prevention Project Steering Committee representatives: Committee Chair and Acadia Students' Union Equity Officer Callie Lathem, *StudentsNS* Chair and StFX Students' Union VP Union Services Amy Brierley, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX Project Coordinator Annie Chau, Dalhousie Agriculture Students' Association VP Internal Jessica Compagnon, Mount Saint Vincent University Students' Union President Zach Gallant, SMU Women's Centre Coordinator Staci Simpson, and Cape Breton University Sexual Diversity Centre Coordinator Samantha White.

Thank you also to Heather Chamberlin of Venus Envy for your feedback on the draft.

## 1.6 Overview of the Report

The report is organized into an executive summary, a glossary of terms and five chapters:

- **Chapter 1.0:** Introduces the research, the methodologies characterizing the approach to the research, and the research limitations.
- **Chapter 2.0:** Presents an overview of sexual assault across North American campuses including statistics on sexual assault, risk factors for sexual assault and promising approaches to prevention, all drawn from the literature.
- **Chapter 3.0:** Presents a discussion of sexual assault across six NS campuses based on evidence drawn from in-person interviews; raises the need for a dialogue on campus on healthy sexuality; connects the NS evidence to known risk factors for sexual assault; and discusses campus culture that supports sexual violence.
- **Chapter 4.0:** Discusses the role of student leadership in building safe campuses; and identifies examples of student leadership in sexual assault prevention across participating campuses.

- **Chapter 5.0:** Discusses the role of university administrations in building safe campuses; provides a limited overview of policies and procedures in place across the six participating campuses; and identifies an effective approach for senior administration in responding to sexual assault on campus.
- **Chapter 6.0:** Provides student unions with a series of actionable items to address sexual violence on campus.

## 2.0 A Picture of Sexual Assault on North American Campuses

Sexual assault has long been a reality of campus life. This chapter provides an overview of sexual assault statistics on campus; identifies high risk factors associated with sexual assault on campus; and speaks to some promising approaches for sexual assault prevention.

### 2.1 An Overview of Statistics

There are few current statistics on sexual assault on Canadian campuses. Canadian universities, unlike their American counterparts<sup>3</sup>, are not required to collect data on sexual assault, and the most recent comprehensive set of Canadian statistics on campus sexual assault are outdated by two decades. A National survey<sup>4</sup> of sexual assault on Canadian campuses conducted in 1993 found that four out of five female undergraduates had been victims of violence in dating relationships and of this number, 29% had reported being sexually assaulted.

A Canadian survey<sup>5</sup> of male students around the same time (1992) reported the disturbing finding that 60 percent would commit sexual assault if they were certain they would not get caught. Another national survey found that 20 percent of male students believed forced sex was acceptable if someone spent money on a date, if the person's date was stoned or drunk or if individuals had been dating a long time.<sup>6</sup>

American college surveys from the same period report a third of males indicated they would rape a woman if they would not get caught.<sup>7</sup>

**Myth #2: Women lie about sexual assault.**

**Fact:** Women do not lie about sexual assault. In fact, ¼ of sexually assaulted women never tell anyone about the assault. Reporting sexual assault can be almost as traumatic as the assault itself. Women need to be supported and believed.

**Myth #1:** If a boyfriend or acquaintance buys a woman dinner and drinks, she owes him sex.

**Fact:** No one owes anyone sex. It cannot be assumed that friendlessness and openness are an invitation for sex.

A Justice Department Report<sup>8</sup> completed in 2000, found that as many as 20 to 25 percent of US female undergraduates were victims of a completed or attempted rape; but that fewer than 5% of completed or attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement agencies. The Justice report also found that in 80-90% of cases, the survivor and perpetrator knew each other.

Two decades later similar statistics are being reported. American research<sup>9</sup> from 2012 found that campus assault is still a significant problem; that women between the age of 18 and 21 are four times more likely to be assaulted than women in any other age group, and that female university students are at greater risk than their non-university peers. Between 20 and 25 percent of college women and four percent of college men report having been sexually assaulted during their college years; while the rate for gay, lesbian,



bisexual, transgender, and queer students is estimated to be slightly higher.

A joint community-campus study of sexual violence in 2010 found that 10 percent of gay and bisexual men reported being raped and between 15.5 and 16.9 percent of lesbian and bisexual women reported being sexually assaulted as adults.<sup>10</sup>

Thirty-four percent of sexual assaults and 45% of attempted sexual assaults of college women take place on campus. Almost 60% of these incidents take place in the survivor's residence, and 31 percent in another residence while 10% occur in a fraternity.<sup>11</sup>

## A GENDERED CRIME

Although men are also victims of sexual violence and women are also perpetrators of sexual violence, there is a clear gender difference when it comes to who is most likely to sexually assault and who is most likely to be assaulted: 85% of victims of sexual assault are girls and women, and 98% of sexual offenders are men.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout this report the emphasis is on cisgender<sup>13</sup> identities, however it is acknowledged that this is a limitation and that all gender identities are victims and perpetrators of sexual assault and sexual violence

## ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

Ninety percent of college women who are survivors of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault, report that they know their assailant.<sup>14</sup> The perpetrator is usually a classmate, friend, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend in that order. Because sexual assault on campus takes place between people known to each other, referred to in the literature as 'acquaintance rape', there is often confusion around whether this was really rape which lessens the likelihood of reporting. Not only are most sexual assaults still never reported (estimated at only five percent and often not officially counted), many acquaintance rape survivors do not label what has happened to them as 'rape'. Other factors for not reporting may include shame and stigma associated with being sexually assaulted, including victim blaming.

*Myth #3: Most sexual assaults occur by strangers.*

*Fact: The majority of survivors (as high as 90% in some studies) indicate that the person who assaulted them was someone they knew. This is known as 'acquaintance rape'.*

## 2.2 Risk Factors for Campus Sexual Assault

The literature, mostly drawn from American sources<sup>15</sup>, identifies a number of risk factors for sexual assault on campus some of which are discussed here.

### 2.2.1 TARGETING OF FIRST YEARS BY SEXUAL PREDATORS

The first few weeks of the college year are when incoming college students are at highest risk of being sexually assaulted.<sup>16</sup> First year students are young, 18 years on average, often impressionable and wanting to be socially accepted by their peers, all factors that contribute to vulnerability for sexual assault by sexual predators.

Research conducted by David Lisak, an American psychologist who has studied some 2000 male college students over a 20-year period, has found that 1 in 16 men had committed rapes, with serial rapists accounting for 90 percent of all **reported** campus rapes (estimated to be around 5 percent). Lisak found that these predators make a practice of targetting vulnerable first year students less experienced with drinking and deliberately use alcohol to get their targets intoxicated. On average, each of these men had committed about 6 rapes.

### 2.2.2 THE LINK TO ALCOHOL

In addition to alcohol being deliberately used as a weapon for sexual assault, there is an increasing body of literature that ties today's campus culture of heavy drinking and casual sex to an increased likelihood of acquaintance sexual assault through alcohol's psychological, cognitive and motor effects. While alcohol is not the cause of sexual assault, it appears to play a large role in sexual assault.

*Fact: If a person is too intoxicated to say 'Yes', there is no consent.*

The literature has documented that half to over three-quarters of assaults involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrator or the survivor or both<sup>17</sup>. One study across 119 campuses found that of the 4.7% of women who reported being sexually assaulted, nearly three-quarters were assaulted while heavily intoxicated – as opposed to being sexually assaulted through force or intimidation. A summary of research<sup>18</sup> compiled by a leading researcher in the field is reproduced here:

“Alcohol increases the likelihood of sexual assault occurring among acquaintances during social interactions through several interrelated pathways...including beliefs about alcohol, deficits in higher order cognitive processing and motor impairments induced by alcohol and peer group norms that encouraged heavy drinking and forced sex.” (Abbey, 2002).

Research shows that many men expect to feel more powerful, sexual and aggressive after alcohol consumption (Brown et al., 1980; George and Norris, 1991; Presley 1997).

Abbey et al. (1996b) found college men who had committed sexual assault when they were intoxicated had greater expectations that alcohol increased male and female sexuality than did college men who committed sexual assault while sober, suggesting beliefs of alcohol effects may have encouraged these behaviours.

*Fact: If a person is asleep or unconscious, there is no consent.*

Alcohol consumption impairs higher order cognitive processes, thus enhancing the misperception of sexual intent to the point of forced sex. Alcohol also affects motor skills,

increasing physical vulnerability.

Alcohol is often used as a justification for engaging in behaviours commonly considered inappropriate, most notably by perpetrators of sexual assault (Abbey, 2002)."

### 2.2.3 ATHLETES AND FRATERNITIES

The literature<sup>19</sup> reveals that athletes on American campuses are disproportionately reported to campus judicial officers for acquaintance rape. In one nation-wide study, one percent of 1,224 non-athlete students who were heavy drinkers reported having committed acquaintance rape, but five times as many student athletes—5 percent of 217 athletes—admitted to perpetrating this crime. At the same time, athletes are significant role models for many other students. As a result, if athletes commit acquaintance rape—and get away with it—they may encourage other students to engage in the behavior by helping to establish a school norm that sexual assault is acceptable behavior. Research also suggests that some athletes feel they are entitled, immune from regular campus rules, and take advantage of women who they perceive are sexually interested in them.

*Myth #4: When a woman says 'no', she secretly enjoys being forced or coerced into sex.*

*Fact: 'No' means 'no'. It's the law. If a woman says no, it is the responsibility of the other party to accept and respect her 'no'.*

*Myth #5: If someone stops resisting it means they want me to continue.*

*Fact: When women give up, it is generally because they are fearful of increased violence when the perpetrator is not stopping.*

In addition, the literature reveals a link between sexual assault and Greek organizations, documented through a disproportionate number of gang rapes involving fraternity members.

Fraternities are frequently housed near campus, in private residences, with many rooms, and are known for their unsupervised parties where alcohol flows freely. Some research has found that fraternity members approve of getting a woman drunk to have sex; and that the loyalty among fraternity members acts as a form of protection against accusations of rape.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.3 SOCIAL CONTEXT HELPS FRAME SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS EVERYONE'S CONCERN

For too long sexual violence has been framed as a woman's problem rather than as a community problem. This had led on many campuses, including those in Nova Scotia, to a perceived polarization of the campus community— feminist versus misogynist – with many men

(according to the interviews conducted for this study) reluctant to enter the conversation for fear of the misogyny label.

Other men have been happy to leave the discussion framed as a woman's problem as it relieves them from the responsibility of addressing sexual violence. Jackson Katz, for example, anti-violence activist and creator of the *Mentors in Violence Prevention* program, (the first bystander initiative), holds that framing violence against women as a "women's issue" gives men an excuse not to pay attention.

*Myth #6: Women provoke sexual assault by their behaviour or manner of dress.*

Katz contends that effective sexual violence prevention needs to:

- Involve a conversation about understanding violence against women as both a man's and woman's issue;
- Engage men and boys as allies in preventing sexual violence; and
- Give men permission and the tools to believe they can contribute to its prevention.

*Fact: No behaviour or manner of dress justifies an assault. Such a belief takes the onus off the offender and places it on the survivor.*

Men need information on what sexual assault is including its impact on the survivor, and how to interact with women respectfully without ignoring their needs or refusals of sexual advances. Men also need to know that drinking is not an excuse for sexual violence and that deliberately getting a woman drunk to have sex with her constitutes sexual assault.

People of all genders may benefit from information about sexual assault statistics, gender role attitudes and socialization, and rape myths.

### 2.3.1 SINGLE GENDER PROGRAMS

Single-gender programs appear to be more effective in sexual violence prevention than mixed-gender ones. One promising approach brings men into the conversation through male-only programming that explores what men can do both individually and collectively to prevent sexual violence. For example, The Men's Program<sup>21</sup> has been proven to teach men how to help women recover from rape, and increase their empathy toward female rape survivors. Evaluations of the program have found that high-risk men who take the program commit less sexual assault than high-risk non-participants.

Equally significant, evidence<sup>22</sup> exists indicating that the strongest influence on whether men were willing to intervene to prevent violence against women, was their perception of other men's willingness to do so. This finding that men have a powerful influence on one another means that men can play a crucial role in sexual violence prevention efforts to change social norms.

*Myth #7: Saying 'no' is the only way of expressing your desire not to continue.*

A single gender context also provides a safe environment for men to explore prevailing understandings of masculinity and gender stereotypes. In single-gender settings, men are better able to engage in discussions that are interactive and present positive aspects of masculinity.

*Fact: Many offenders rationalize their behaviour by saying that because she didn't actually say 'no', they thought she was consenting. The law is clear: without consent, it is sexual assault. Consent*

Attention to men can clarify for them the meaning of consent and of the phrase "no means no"; it can also help men identify behavioural precursors to assault (such as sexual harassment and stalking); and teach them how to interact with women respectfully. Men also need to know that drinking is not an excuse for sexual assault and that getting a woman drunk to have sex is a criminal offence.

The University of Alberta Students' Union has launched a campus-wide campaign – the Accountability Action Project – to make men more accountable for sexual violence. As one of its initiatives, the project has established men's circles, a

sharing and listening space where peer-led discussions are held on topics such as gender roles (e.g. restrictive masculinity, sexism, homophobia), sexual violence, and relationships.

Another men's group aimed at violence prevention is the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign that now operates in over 60 countries. The Toronto Argonauts is the most recent well-known organization to officially sign-on to the White Ribbon campaign. By wearing or displaying a white ribbon in public, men pledge never to commit, condone nor remain silent about violence against women. The campaign is also a call on governments and other institutions (e.g. universities) controlled by men to seriously address the issue. White Ribbon's basic philosophy is that while not all men are responsible for committing violence against women, all men and boys must take responsibility to help end it.

Women also need to know that:

- They have the right to refuse sex at any time, with anyone, regardless of their relationship or previous degree of sexual intimacy; and
- Being inebriated makes them less effective in resisting unwanted sex and puts them at a higher risk for sexual assault.

There is an increasing body of research that links heavy drinking with an increased risk for sexual assault. Educational programming aimed at emphasizing the negative consequences of heavy drinking framed around a discussion of personal vulnerability, rather than responsibility, offers a

*Myth #8: If you have been dating for a while, then it's not sexual assault if you coerce your partner into sex.*

*Fact: Sexual assault occurs anytime you engage in sexual activity without someone's consent. What's important is that you respect their right to choose if and when they have sex.*

*Fact: It is NEVER your fault if you are sexually assaulted. Perpetrators are solely responsible for their own behaviour.*

non-victim blaming approach to this topic. To further avoid the possibility of victim-blaming, the literature<sup>23</sup> recommends that such education be delivered to female-only audiences.

### 2.3.2 EMPOWER ATHLETES TO SUPPORT PREVENTION EFFORTS

Male-only programming can also start the conversation among high-risk groups including campus athletes and Greek organizations.

One of the key challenges faced by Katz in developing the *Mentors in Violence Prevention* program<sup>24</sup> was breaking through the ‘apathy and defensiveness’ of athletic directors, coaches and student-athletes. Knowing the enormous influence they hold in male peer culture, the program was developed to train student athletes – and other student leaders - to use their status to speak out against all forms of sexual violence. The program focuses on young men as empowered bystanders rather than potential perpetrators who can confront abusive peers. This positive approach has the effect of reducing men's defensiveness around the discussion of these issues, which provides the basis for the emergence of more proactive and preventive responses.

The program was expanded to include separate training sessions for female athletes and other female student leaders. It focuses on young women not as victims or potential targets of sexual violence, but as empowered bystanders who can support abused peers and confront abusive ones.

### 2.3.3 BYSTANDER TRAINING FOR ALL STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND UNIVERSITY STAFF

Bystander training programs have also been found to offer a significant opportunity to provide education to the wider campus community and thereby impact the larger campus culture. A variety of programs that train participants to recognize potential situations for sexual violence are particularly promising including the *Bringing in the Bystander* training referenced later in this report.

### 2.3.4 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Social media campaigns and preventative education (and in particular bystander intervention education) are among the most popular means of engaging society in primary prevention.

According to Wikipedia, “social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. The resulting electronic word of mouth refers to any statement that consumers share via the Internet (e.g., web sites, social networks, instant messages, news feeds) about an event, product, service, brand or company. When the underlying message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself, this form of marketing results in ‘earned media’ rather than ‘paid media’.”

Current research shows that these mediums can produce positive change in attitudes and behaviour associated with men’s perpetration of violence against women. Though community outreach strategies and social media campaigns are distinct strategies, when combined they

have been found to be particularly effective.

Social media campaigns can be used to foster healthy norms about sexuality. College men for example tend to overestimate their peer's adherence to myths that justify sexual assault, underestimate their peers' concern about risky sexual situations faced by women and underestimate their peers' willingness to intervene. By addressing these misperceptions through the publication of accurate information, social media campaigns can shift men's attitudes and behaviour.

An example of a successful social media campaign<sup>25</sup> at James Madison University used three posters to change campus men's behaviour towards women. Data was collected revealing positive attitudinal and behavioural norms and three messages were developed to advertise these norms:

- *A Man Always Prevents Manipulation: Three out of four JMU men think it's NOT okay to pressure a date to drink alcohol in order to increase the chances of getting their date to have sex.*
- *A Man Talks Before Romance: Most JMU men believe that talking about sex doesn't ruin the romance of the moment.*
- *A Man Respects a Woman: Nine out of ten JMU men stop the first time their date says "no" to sexual activity.*

An evaluation conducted after the campaign found a significant increase in the percentage of men who indicated that they "stop the first time a date says no to sexual activity" and a significant decrease in the percentage of men who said that "when I want to touch someone sexually, I try and see how they react."

An example of a particularly clever campaign aimed at changing attitudes around consent is the 'Pink loves consent'<sup>26</sup> campaign. Using Facebook and other social media the creators employed a humorous twist to expose how 'Victoria's Secret' uses rape culture to sell its underwear.

The *Consent is Sexy* campaign<sup>27</sup> offers a third example of a highly successful social media campaign. Rolled out across universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and in southern Africa, the campaign includes:

- A skills training workshop to train a team of student leaders to 'take ownership' of the campaign;
- Posters with 20 different messages and more than 50 different image choices, leaflet and website;
- Other promotional material including banners, display stands, t-shirt designs, buttons, bookmarks etc.;
- Themed events designed to create excitement and participation including open debates, slam poetry, guerilla theatre, flash mob ideas, film festival;
- Templates for collecting feedback on all aspects of the campaign.



### **Campus Sexual Violence Resources**

A comprehensive list of campus sexual violence resources can be found at:

<http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/campus-resource-list>

The site includes resources of student activities, administrators, and law enforcement. It provides information on:

- Primary prevention on campus
- Campus policy
- Statistics
- Training tools and resources
- Public Education
- Alcohol use and sexual violence.



### 3.0 Sexual Assault on Nova Scotia Campuses

The research undertaken in this study is the first attempt to provide a picture of what sexual assault might look like on Nova Scotia campuses and what factors may be associated with campus sexual assault.

The interviews conducted over this study confirm that sexual assault is a very real issue among university students in Nova Scotia and that student safety both on and off-campus is an issue that requires attention at the most senior levels of the university, student unions and government.

The interviews also confirm findings from the literature that:

- Many on-campus sexual assaults occur during the first two months of classes;
- Student athletics and fraternity cultures are seen as more likely to perpetrate sexual violence;
- In some university towns, some off- and on-campus student housing environments have cultures similar to fraternity cultures; and that
- Alcohol is a high-risk factor for involvement in sexual assault.

Finally, the research makes a link between the lack of dialogue on campus on healthy sexuality, and acquaintance rape.

#### 3.1 Lack of Dialogue on Sexuality

There was consensus among those interviewed that a framework and policies are required on campus to provide safe spaces for and safe conversations on sexual activity, rape culture, consent and sexual violence. Most reported that discussions on student sexuality are only beginning to be held across Nova Scotia campuses.

Individual student bodies have taken on activities aimed at starting the conversation (e.g. developing activities for sexual awareness month, developing poster campaigns), and residence staff on all six campuses has built programming around these topics for orientation week. But all these initiatives are short-term in nature. They are usually one-off activities, are not sustained over the year and are not part of an overall strategy to raise awareness and promote dialogue on healthy sexuality.

*"We need to talk about sexual violence; and challenge the university administration as well. Ask what they are doing about it? It is (also) important to have the student union's active involvement in activities like Sex Fest and it will be coming up very soon."*

*-Residence Staff*

### 3.1.1 CONSENT

A core theme running through the interviews is that **consent is not well understood** by either female or male students; and this holds especially true for first year students.

*“A lot of 1<sup>st</sup> year students may report experiences that they don’t recognize as being sexually violent per se. They don’t understand what’s ok and not ok; and it’s NOT ok that they accept it as a normal practice; they say an isolated incident doesn’t count. They also don’t report it because it is an acquaintance.” (Nurse)*

*“I am also seeing more males in my office reporting sexual assault. Men have been marginalized in the sexual assault discussion. Men have a physical reaction and the pressure is on them ‘to perform’. They don’t always see it as sexual assault either and afterwards they have great remorse.” (Nurse)*

*“I don’t think students understand what consent is about—even our RAs are shocked to learn what consent is. The latest statistics from Capital Health show that drinking starts under 13 years of age—this is when the conversation on consent needs to take place.”*

*-Residence Staff*

The culture of uneducated sexual activity has led to students not understanding particular incidents as sexual assault. “Acquaintance rape” is not often recognized by the victim/perpetrator as a sexual crime because the individuals knew each other or had participated in sexual activity together previously.

Respondents indicated a need for ongoing opportunities, including both separate and mixed spaces for male and female students for education and discussion on what constitutes and what does not constitute consent. The implications of ‘no consent’ need to be spelled out and the link needs to be made to the criminal code.

Suggestions were also made to engage faculty in this discussion through curriculum geared towards healthy sexuality.

### WHAT A DIALOGUE MIGHT LOOK LIKE

The University of Ohio has recently (November 2013) launched a series of campus conversations<sup>28</sup> aimed at providing education and encouraging dialogue on consent, bystander intervention and the role that alcohol can play in sexual assault.

*Myth #9: Consent is generally not something you can communicate because of the nature of sexual interaction.*

The conversation began with a 4-hour event in which students, faculty and staff were invited to come in small groups “to vent, ask questions and hear from each other” on issues relating to sexual violence.

The first conversation was followed by a second event that tackled men’s roles in improving campus climate through bystander intervention and sexual assault. This second event was

structured with speakers and workshops over the first 3-hour period with the 4<sup>th</sup> hour given to open discussion. The organizers intend to keep the ‘conversation alive and moving, and provide safe spaces for people to continue the dialogue’.

### ENTHUSIASTIC SEX CAMPAIGN

Student feedback also suggested that the ‘No means No’ campaign be replaced with a campaign that promotes a positive message around sex such as the Enthusiastic Sex campaign.

Taking the ‘enthusiastic’ approach is seen to provide a more positive message and may help clarify when consent is present. An enthusiastic approach teaches that consent means active and willing participation in sexual activity; in addition to providing a more enjoyable experience for both parties. It actually sets the bar for consent higher than with ‘No means No’; the ‘Yes’ must be meaningful. “Remember, the absence of a ‘no’ is not a yes. Communication is healthy and consent is sexy! Let’s start a movement to say “yes” ENTHUSIASTICALLY.”<sup>29</sup>

*Fact: If both parties are confident about engaging in sexual activity, they can communicate their consent to each other. Consent can be spoken, but it can also be expressed in action within a safe environment. If in doubt, ask. It will not ‘kill the mood’.*

### 3.1.2 THE MIX OF ALCOHOL AND SEX

Referred to as “the perfect storm”, respondents spoke of the preponderance on campus of sexual assault born out of the mix of two cultures – heavy drinking and hyper-sexualization and degradation of women. Combining the lack of education and communication about consent with elevated alcohol consumption has led to reports from respondents of students talking with remorse about what happened the night before, or simply not recalling what had happened.

Respondents estimate that 90 to 95% of the assault that happens on campus falls into this “very murky” territory where too much alcohol inhibits judgment and communication about consent. Examples were shared where police felt unable to lay charges because of the level of intoxication of both parties.

*“This is a real issue for students. Kids need to know the consequences of drinking and sex – it happens so much that women wake up the next morning remorseful.”* (Residence Coordinator)

*“Consent is a tricky issue at best of times. When both partners are drunk, that’s when it gets very blurry.”* (University staff responsible for managing sexual assault statistics)

Respondents even suggested that some students use alcohol as an opportunity to engage in behaviours they wouldn’t otherwise, including sexual encounters.

*“Alcohol removes inhibitions and allows women not to take responsibility for their actions. We see young women using alcohol as a means of losing control.”* (Safety and Security manager)

*“People drink to get laid. They can say they didn’t know what they were doing... so they don’t hold themselves accountable. They also create alter egos. They give themselves different names so they will say, oh that was Rick not me.” (Student union executive)*

Certainly, individuals can and do use alcohol deliberately to disinhibit themselves, at times with respect to sex, and in these circumstances individuals can have even greater difficulties assessing and communicating consent. These quotes speak to a legitimate concern about the vulnerability created by overconsumption of alcohol, but also somewhat reflect the blame that victims of sexual assault in Nova Scotia face for a host of “reasons”, including alcohol consumption. As discussed earlier, alcohol can also be used as a weapon, though it can also feed attitudes and judgements that may lead an individual to commit sexual assault. Notably, the emphasis on victims’ “risk” in consuming alcohol may neglect to recognize the impacts of alcohol on a person’s likelihood to perpetrate or be a passive bystander.

## 3.2 Evidence of Sexual Assault from the Interviews

### 3.2.1 SEXUAL PREDATORS

The interviews acknowledge the existence of sexual predators on campus who target vulnerable first year students and who use alcohol as a weapon to disable their victims.

*“We see it all the time at the (off-campus pub). The predators target young students who they think they will score with and the women think they’re just being nice, so they don’t question their behaviour.”*

*-Student union women’s center coordinator*

For example, an interview held with one of Nova Scotia’s sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) disclosed how a first year student on her first day on campus in September 2013, was invited to an off-campus house party. The student accepted the invitation, presumably had a few drinks and later that evening *“was sexually assaulted and thrown out of the house to make her own way back to campus”*. This incident occurred to a student attending one of the six universities included in this study. The invitation had come from a fellow student.

This example is a chilling mirror of Lisak’s research, which found that first year students are at particular risk for sexual assault by sexual predators. Lisak also found alcohol is the predator’s weapon of choice, used to *“get a victim intoxicated to the point where she’s coming in and out of consciousness.”*<sup>30</sup>

### 3.2.2 FRATERNITY PARTIES AND FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

A second example that speaks to the practice of targeting first year female students – this time by a Greek organization – came through interviews with student union executive and university staff on a Halifax-based campus.

Their interviews tell of a male student approaching first year female students in mid September with invitations to an off-campus ABC (anything but clothes) Fraternity party. An ABC party is a sexually explicit theme party that could lead to an environment of heightened vulnerability for

some.

One student acted swiftly. She approached the university president who in turn met with Security and Residence Life to identify and speak with the student who had been issuing the invitations. A campus wide alert was put in place advising of the incident, the student was identified and a conversation was held with him regarding the inappropriateness of his actions. Other conversations were held between the resident assistants and students in residence about the potential risks associated with Frat parties.

This example shows the effectiveness of a collaborative approach as well as the impacts of a pro-social bystander approach towards ensuring the safety of students, as well as demonstrating the trust that students had in their senior administration to act on their concerns.

### 3.2.3 FEAR OF RAPE BY ATHLETES

A third interview held on a third campus speaks to student fear of being raped on what is known as rookie night. Rookie night is organized by student athletes and occurs after the first weekend game in September. The scenario plays out in the following series of emails<sup>31</sup> between a student and manager of the campus women's centre. The correspondence took place mid September 2013:

First email: *I'm a first year student and potential volunteer at the women's centre. Today at lunch one of my friends warned us that **tonight is "date rape night" and not to accept any drinks, especially from sports team members.** I feel that the issue of rape in university is something that should be addressed promptly, because every day we get reminders like this of what goes on in our world. Even though it's early in the year, if workshops are being planned, I think rape culture should be the focus of one soon. It's a huge problem that's very close to my heart, because of all the personal stories I've been exposed to. It's much too prominent in today's world, and I'd really like to discuss ways we can combat rape culture within our school. Thank you for your time.*  
Name omitted.

Second email: *Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I agree that this is a problem that needs to be taken very seriously and addressed as soon as possible. Over the weekend, myself and a couple other students did attend "Bystander Intervention" training at StFX with the goal of helping preventing these sorts of acts. However, I do think it also needs to be addressed within the school administration, not just among individual students. Is it okay if I bring this story to the SU exec team? I don't have to include your name or anything. Other than that, what else would you like to see happen on this issue? I can definitely look into workshops, but if you have any other ideas, I would be glad to hear them.*

*"The predators on campus know that women who are new to campus, they are younger, they're less experienced. They probably have less experience with alcohol, and they want to be accepted. They will probably take more risks because they want to be accepted. So for all these reasons, the predators will look particularly for those women."*

-David Lisak

*Women's Centre coordinator*

Third email: *I'm not sure what the reality of this night ended up being, because my friends and I actually heard multiple rumors over the course of the weekend. Some of the time, it sounded serious, like people might have actual intentions of rape, but at other times, we were told it was just a "hazing" ritual and the most that would happen is being asked for underwear to bring back. Nobody unfamiliar was on our floor, and we checked a few times to make sure every door to our building was locked. **We were scared**, but I'm not sure if we ever had a reason to be in the first place, because we heard no word after Sunday night. I'm not sure what could be said about it, or how much alarm this particular instance should be causing, though if you would like to bring something up I don't mind. It's a little difficult, without a full picture. I'm happy to have the opportunity to at least talk about what I've heard and the fear we experienced, even though we ended up completely safe. **One of the worst parts is that it's such a real fear for most of us, it's so common, and at first we didn't even doubt that it was a real thing. It was sickening, that it might be, but not (an) impossibility in the least.** One thing I think would be good to highlight is that many of us hardly doubt that people are capable and willing to drug and/or rape others easily.*

*At this time, I don't have any ideas clearly thought out, though I am trying to develop some. Hopefully we can continue to discuss these and other issues (particularly women's issues) throughout the year.*

*Name omitted*

Upon receipt of the student's first email, the women's centre coordinator went to the student union executive who in turn advised the athletic director and residence director of the email's contents. University staff spoke with their team captains and resident assistants; however the email was not brought to the attention of the Security office and a campus-wide alert was not broadcast.

We do not know whether in fact date rapes had been planned for that night or whether any sexual assaults took place. What we do know, and what needs addressing, is that these students perceived they were unsafe on campus and that for them their fear was both real and frightening. Campus is students' home for four years or more and students should never feel unsafe in their home.

Nor we do not know whether the intervention by student leadership enhanced student safety that night. What is important is that student union leadership did intervene, drawing upon knowledge from their bystander training, to respond to potential sexual violence. What is disappointing is the lack of a campus-wide alert led by campus security to advise students of the potential danger.

This event suggests that culture on campus can normalize sexual assault and even something as explicit as a "date rape night". This implication is perhaps of still more far-reaching concern than the perceived or real risk from a single event or evening.



### 3.3 Campus Culture that Supports Sexual Violence

*Rape Culture can be defined as a culture in which rape is prevalent and pervasive and is sanctioned and maintained through fundamental attitudes and beliefs about gender, sexuality, and violence.*

Googling the term 'rape culture' brings up hundreds of references in the popular media from Huffington Post to Wikipedia. Most commentators agree that rape culture is the dominant culture on campuses today and that it both makes excuses for and tacitly approves of rape. It is a culture where gender roles are strictly defined; men are hyper-masculine aggressors and women are their sexually provocative prey. It's a culture in which victim blaming is common (she was drinking, look what she was wearing) and in which consent is not clearly understood (she was flirting, she didn't say no loudly enough or long enough). It is also a culture that permeates society in general, not just that on campus.

The lyrics and videos of today's music industry sell sexual aggression to young men while the fashion and alcohol industries sell sexual provocation to young women. But because this is the environment that surrounds them, many young people have become desensitized to the message.

- *"Students do not see themselves as individuals affected by the culture...they are desensitized to the culture that surrounds them... until they are tested and found to have a STI or are pregnant. Then they are devastated."* (Nurse)
- *"We have an alcohol culture and we have a rape culture too. And everyone has a responsibility but I'm not sure how to get that out to the students. People are saying sexual assault happens all the time but they just aren't talking about it."* (Addictions worker)
- *"Sexual assault is very complicated. Many students are unable to identify an experience as sexual assault. We normalize sexual violence; (today's) porn culture is an indicator of sexual assault. Only 5 to 8% of victims come forward. They are really struggling and blaming themselves; so if you're immersed in that culture..."* (Nurse)

Some of the outcomes of rape culture on campus reported over the interviews include:

- Students being pressured to behave in ways/ take part in activities they may not otherwise choose;
- High incidences of sexual violence and sexual assault and low reporting rates;
- Self blame and confusion by students across genders.

### 3.3.1 ORIENTATION AND OTHER CAMPUS ACTIVITIES THAT MAY SUPPORT RAPE CULTURE

Orientation offers students their first taste of campus life and can set the social norms and expectations for first year students. Orientation on many Canadian campuses, however, is filled with games and other activities laced with sexual exploitation and gendered stereotypes.

*“A lot of 1<sup>st</sup> year students may report experiences that they don’t recognize as being sexually violent per se. They don’t understand what’s ok and not ok; and it’s NOT ok that they accept it as a normal practice; they say because it’s an isolated incident it doesn’t count.”*

Examples collected across Nova Scotia campuses include banners strung from residence windows reading ‘Thank you, fathers, for bringing your virgin daughters’; to games in which Frosh are required to depict their favourite sexual position; to activities in which shaving cream was sprayed over 1<sup>st</sup> year students and older students did push-ups of a sexual nature over them.

Most of these activities can still be found occurring on campus during Frosh week. The latter activity however was discontinued after some students approached their campus health centre for help in dealing with the trauma of past assaults and incest, triggered by the event.

The sexual themes continue over the university year with some student unions booking performances with the ‘X-rated hypnotist’ who uses sex as the underpinning for his routine.

The interviews also suggest that first year students are pressured to conform to a culture where young women and young men act out hyper-sexualized roles.

These findings taken from the research are neither meant to pass judgement nor to victim-blame. They are presented to provide readers with some insight into the very complicated culture in place across campuses today.

*“A lot of first year women say you’re expected to dress a certain way; that pictures will be taken and put on Instagram. There is a specific dress code—provocative in nature. There are a lot of social expectations on campus.”*

### 3.3.2 Areas for Future Research

In undertaking the research for this report, a number of areas emerged where further research is warranted, which *StudentsNS* or others may want to pursue in collaboration with the student unions. These include at minimum:

- An analysis of the presence of ‘rape culture’ on campus and its relationship to sexual assault;
- An exploration of the understudied relationship between heavy drinking and acquaintance sexual assault on campus;
- Study of the fraternity-like cultures that can develop in certain off- and on-campus student housing environments and how these can relate to sexual assault.



## 4.0 The Role of Student Leadership in Building Safe Campuses

Student leadership is critical to bringing change to campus culture. The role of peer influence is well known and student leaders, by creating and implementing strategies to turn campuses into safe space for all, can shift culture in important ways. This chapter looks at examples of student leadership across NS campuses.

### 4.1 The Strength of Peer Leadership

Student leaders are role models for first year students on expected norms and social behaviour. Knowing that first year students take their cues in navigating campus culture from older students provides an opportunity for student leadership to act as change agents by modeling behaviour based on mutual respect and gender equity.

First year students want to feel part of the overall campus culture and in general will take their cues from student leaders around them. Strategically choosing first year students for instituting new campus norms may be a key step in shifting culture.

*"It is always a positive message for students to hear messages from their peers rather than from the Health Center director, Student Services director or Athletic director."*

The task facing student union leadership is to address sexual violence and assault on their campuses; to shift today's culture to a culture where all students feel safe and respected. Student unions can realize such a culture shift by enlisting student leadership across their respective campuses to join them in their fight. Student leadership not only includes student union executive, it can also include house council executive, society executive, peer educators, resident assistants, campus patrol, student security, student bar staff, and student athletes.

Collectively, student leadership on some campuses could amount to upwards of 10 to 15% of all students, a potentially powerful body for change.

### 4.2 Student Union Services

Some student unions, as shown in the following table, fund women's centres, equity advocates/officers, and other related services. Core funding comes through a mix of student member dues and other student union revenues (notably a \$2 per student fee for SMUSA's Women's Centre), and can be supplemented significantly through additional campaign expenditures. Staff and volunteers within these services already play a significant role on campus in running campaigns around gender and sexuality, and student unions should look to them for leadership and support in any future activities around shifting culture.

Student Unions	Women's Centre	Annual Budget	Other Relevant Services	Annual Budget
Acadia Students' Union	Yes	\$700	Equity Officer *	NA
Cape Breton University Students' Union	Yes	\$3000	Sexual Diversity Centre	\$3000
Dalhousie Agriculture Students' Association	No	NA	No	NA
Mount St Vincent University Students' Union	No	NA	Wellness Centre	\$2000
St. Francis Xavier University Students' Union	No	NA	Internal & External Equity Advocates*	NA
St Mary's University Students' Association	Yes	\$4000	No	NA

NA=not applicable

\*Receive modest honoraria from their student unions but do not dispose of their own budgets

### 4.3 Formal Recognition of Sexual Violence

Discussions held with student union leadership on sexual violence indicate that, although acknowledged by the student leaders as an issue, there has been in general minimal concentrated effort to address the culture surrounding sexual violence. This can be attributed to the relatively new focus placed by student leadership on sexual violence. As discussions, training and other initiatives directed at sexual assault awareness and prevention are emerging across campuses, student leaders are looking to this present *StudentsNS* undertaking to provide them with a blueprint for sustainable action on sexual violence.

Of the six participating student unions in this study, the St Francis Xavier Students' Union has the only governance statement that acknowledges the existence of sexual violence on and off campus, and that commits to action on sexual violence. The statement falls under their *Gender Issues* policy, and can be found on its student union website. The statement reads:

*"The (Student) Union will address issues such as date rape, sexual assault, equality between the sexes, and relationship abuse. Presentations will be given to on-campus and off-campus students to inform them about these issues."*

None of the remaining five student unions have, to date, developed written policies or statements to formally recognize or address the existence of sexual violence on campus.

### 4.4 Peer Leadership In Action: St Francis Xavier University

Given that most student unions lack a policy framework on sexual violence, it is not surprising that there have been few student union-led initiatives on preventing sexual violence on campus. The students' union at St Francis Xavier University is the exception and has been a key partner in the *Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX* initiative.

Over the past two years, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) & Sexual Assault

Services Association (SASA) have spearheaded this joint campus-community initiative aimed at engaging StFX students, university staff and faculty in sexual assault and violence prevention awareness and programming. It also includes a comprehensive and collaborative review of university policies that address sexual violence on campus. The project is funded by Status of Women Canada and has provided the StFX community with expertise and leadership in a number of prevention initiatives.

This case clearly demonstrates how local community resources and organizations can offer student unions great potential for prevention partnerships.

#### 4.4.1 POSTER CAMPAIGN WITH ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

One of the most strategic components of the *Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX* initiative has been the programming developed in partnership with the athletic department at StFX.

Over the 2012-13 academic year, the initiative developed a poster campaign featuring images of StFX football players and captions stating their commitment to ending violence against women. Examples read:

- *We need to set a positive example for others and let everyone know that violence against women is never justifiable. If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.*
- *Nobody has the right to hurt another individual. Once we step off the field, we keep our hands to ourselves.*
- *I believe women should be treated with respect, dignity and honesty.*

Due to the positive reception to the posters among the student body, the campaign was expanded over the 2013-14 academic year to include both female and male athletes from a variety of sports teams. The captions start with the statement '*I am a StFX varsity athlete and I take a stand against violence against women because*' and then continue with a statement of the athlete's own choosing:

- *Living without the fear of violence isn't a gift, it's every woman's right.* – X-Women Hockey
- *No one deserves to feel unsafe in their own home and community.* – X-Men Cross Country/Track and Field
- *Respecting women ultimately represents the respect you have for yourself.* – X-Women Soccer

#### 4.4.2 BYSTANDER TRAINING (STFX)

The *Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX* initiative was also responsible for introducing the *Bringing In the Bystander* training to Nova Scotia campuses.

Supported by *StudentsNS* and the Province of Nova Scotia, the initiative promoted the BITB training to student leadership across the province and in September 2013, brought in two professional trainers to deliver the training. Approximately 30 student leaders were trained representing five of the six universities included in this present research.

The **Bringing In The Bystander** training, developed out of the University of New Hampshire, is an evidence-based sexual violence prevention program aimed at encouraging student-participants to see themselves as potential bystanders who could intervene and stop an assault before it happens. Students learn the importance of speaking out against social norms that support sexual assault and coercion, how to recognize and safely interrupt situations that could lead to sexual assault, and how to be a supportive ally to survivors.

A large contingent from the StFX faculty and the StFX athletic department also received the training, strengthening their student union's efforts to spread the training more widely among StFX student leadership. Supported by university staff, plans are in place over the present academic year to train all the student union staff (over 200); house council leaders (70); XPatrol (50); and all student athletes (300)<sup>32</sup>. Residence life staff have also committed to providing the Bystander training to some resident assistants.

By the end of the 2013-14 academic year, it is conceivable that between 600 and 700

student leaders at STFX (or between 12 and 15% of the total student population) will have received the BITB training.

It may not be realistic however to expect student leadership from the other universities to roll out the bystander training on their own or just with off-campus partners. An important finding from the interviews indicates student leaders will likely require support from relevant university staff to successfully engage the larger student body in training.<sup>33</sup> This includes at minimum the health centre directors, athletic directors and coaches, campus bar managers, residence directors and other residence life staff. In the case of StFX, because the bystander training took place on its campus, university staff had been built into the training from the beginning. To roll out the training across the campus through a joint student union/university staff partnership, was a relatively easy next step.

#### 4.4.3 AN EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

The StFX student union's role in supporting the *Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX* initiative has brought knowledge and expertise in sexual violence to the campus; and partnering with the athletic department has turned a potentially high-risk population for offending into advocates against gender violence.

The collaboration with the athletic department is strategic on a number of fronts. First, it acknowledges the star power that many student athletes hold among the student population. Interviews conducted over this research indicate that athletes in general are looked up to on campus; seeing their faces on posters together with powerful statements against gender violence is a message that will be heard.

Second, by engaging student athletes in the poster campaign followed by education and training on gender violence, provide athletes the opportunity (possibly for the first time) to consider their own behaviour and come to the decision that they “don’t want to be that guy”.

Third, providing athletes with training and a set of tools to defuse potentially sexually violent situations proactively engages athletes as part of the solution.

#### 4.5 The RESPECT Team: Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University

A second example of effective student leadership encountered over the research is a peer educator program called RESPECT. While not a program of the student union, RESPECT is an example of programming that student unions could establish and/or support with funding across their campuses.

The program has been in place on the Agricultural campus in Truro for the past 19 years and consists of three to four peer educators trained and supervised by the student health centre director. The RESPECT team’s goal is to ‘educate and create awareness on health and lifestyle’.

*“Is it a night to remember  
or a night you never want  
to talk about again? What  
would you prefer?”*

*-RESPECT posting*

During orientation week, the RESPECT team does a mandatory presentation to all new students on what consent is and the implications of when consent is lacking. The peer educators also post facts and questions relating to consent and alcohol on bulletin boards throughout the residences.

On high-risk drinking days like St. Paddy’s, the peer educators stock the campus pub with condoms, tagged with the message, *“Did you get consent?”*

The peer educators also use the plasma TVs across campus (residences, cafeteria, Student Services) for their health-promotion messaging. One message depicted a young woman passed out on a bed with a young man standing over her, and the tagline: *‘Having sex with someone who is unable to give consent is sexual assault.’*

Perhaps the best-known aspect of the peer educators’ work is in developing the popular bathroom posters, which can be found on the backs of all bathroom stalls across campus. When these posters initially went up (encased in clear plastic frames), Security expressed concerns that they would be torn down. But the posters were not torn down and instead, have become a well-loved part of campus life. The peer educators create them in their own language, use humour and change them on a monthly basis. In October 2013, the posters focused on consent, November’s focus was on alcohol.

To test student response to the RESPECT team's work, the peer educators conduct surveys at year-end at the entrance to buildings where most students have classes. They ask whether students are aware of the RESPECT team, what kinds of activities it engages in and what activities have been most helpful. Last year all 110 students who completed the survey said they 'love the bathroom posters' and found them helpful.

## 4.6 Acadia Students' Union

A third example of student leadership comes from the Acadia Students' Union's efforts to change the culture of a popular social event, known originally as 'Slutten Cutten'...now rebranded as 'Cutten Classic'.

'Cutten Classic' is an annual party hosted at Cutten House, a student residence at Acadia, and sponsored by the student union. The social event has been held for over a decade and has been one of the best-attended student social events of the year. All profits from the event have gone to fund a variety of student activities.

*"At the party girls typically dress sluttily, very risqué, to the point some girls wore almost nothing, bras and lace panties. DJs provided feedback that they loved working the event because it was so provocative."*

Three years ago, the poster advertising the event featured a woman hanging off a stripper's pole stamped with the Acadia Students' Union logo.

Dress code was defined by the tagline 'CEOs and Office hoes'; male students would arrive in business attire while female students would arrive in very little clothing.

Three years ago, in response to student advocacy, student leadership examined the event through a gender lens and decided it was time to make some changes. The name was changed to 'SC Burlesque' and advertising was built on a burlesque theme. The dress code was promoted as 'CEOs and Office Beaus', and proceeds from tickets sales were promoted as going towards a local Women Shelter.

While maintaining the tradition of Cutten House, the student union repositioned the event under a 'Changing the Night' theme and added other components including a 'Take Back the Night-Slut Walk' walk through campus and downtown, flash mobs and educational sessions explaining the changes.

In response to further student advocacy following these changes, student union leadership made a second name change, this time to 'Cutten Classic' with the tagline 'we are the artists of our own image'. Student leadership also dropped the dress code in an attempt to respect students' right to dress as they choose and make their own decisions. The flash mob and slut walk have been maintained with the dance to follow those events. The Cutten House Council has also ordered buttons reading, 'We are the artists of our own image' to spread awareness.

## 5.0 The Role of Universities in Building Safe Campuses

The role that student unions can play to address sexual violence on campus in the absence of university policy and a framework on sexual violence is limited.

A shift in campus culture requires a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach with commitment from the most senior levels of the university, faculty, student leaders and community partnerships. An inclusive approach builds support for institutional change and harnesses the joint creativity of faculty, students and staff.

### 5.1 A Collaborative Partnership Required among NS Universities

To build an effective response to sexual assault on Nova Scotia campuses, a collaborative partnership of all Nova Scotia university administrations is recommended, with leadership for the partnership coming from the most senior levels. By recognizing the joint challenges they face and through identifying their joint strengths and weaknesses, universities will be better prepared to respond to the challenges of sexual violence on campus.

Building a collaborative approach to addressing sexual violence also offers university administrators a collective opportunity to show that Nova Scotia universities put student safety as their first priority; and to market to potential students and their parents/guardians what they are doing to ensure student safety

One of the first tasks of the collaborative partnership should be information gathering. Effective program planning begins with a clear understanding of the nature of the problem to be addressed. This present study confirmed that sexual assault is a reality experienced by students across the six participating campuses, identified a number of the key risk factors for sexual violence as well as strategies to address campus sexual violence. What is now required to inform a comprehensive approach to sexual violence prevention is a province-wide set of statistics and robust information on the extent and nature of the sexual violence experienced on Nova Scotia campuses.

As a first step in addressing sexual violence on campus, university presidents should bring together a team of researchers drawn from each campus to plan and oversee a survey addressed to sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses.

### 5.2 Sexual Assault Policies, Reporting Procedures and Programming

While outside the scope of this study to undertake a review of university policies on sexual assault, some effort was put into identifying how each of the participating campuses address the issue of sexual violence. If student unions are to be effective in their policies and practices to prevent sexual violence, they need to see where their efforts both fit and fill the gaps within the overall university response to sexual violence.



### 5.2.1 POLICY SPECIFIC TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Best practices speak to the importance of developing a policy on sexual assault that is separate from a policy on discrimination and harassment. A separate policy demonstrates a university's recognition that sexual assault is a reality on campus and signals a university's commitment to take action on sexual violence.

Of the six universities in the study, only **St. Mary's University** has a specific policy on sexual assault while the **Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie** has a set of response guidelines to sexual assault. Both are easily accessible through their respective university websites and are clearly written.

Two universities (**Acadia** and **St Francis Xavier**) deal with sexual assault through their harassment and discrimination policies, although in neither case is sexual assault clearly defined.

Neither **Mount St Vincent University** nor **Cape Breton University** has a formal statement or policy on sexual assault although the former university does include background information on sexual assault on its Student Services webpage.

### 5.2.2 RESPONDING TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

An assessment was also made of ease of access to and clarity of the processes for responding to and/or reporting sexual assault on campus, as well as services available to support victims.

The sexual assault policy at **St Mary's University** sets out clear procedures for responding to cases of sexual assault within the past 72 hours and beyond 72 hours. In addition, their Student Health Centre website sets out the procedures for reporting a sexual assault as follows: 'The RN/Manager in the Student Health Centre is also a SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) and is available 24/7 for information concerning an immediate sexual assault by calling 471-8129; or call the SANE Help phone at 425-0122.'

The reporting guidelines developed by the **Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University** are also clearly laid out on the Dalhousie website under the heading sexual assault, on its human rights, equity and harassment prevention page. The guidelines include steps to take in responding to reports of sexual assault within the past 72 hours and beyond 72 hours. They also provide local resources, contact names and phone numbers.

Reporting guidelines for sexual assault at **Acadia University** are found under 'counselling' on the Student Resource Centre webpage. The page indicates the Safety & Security Department and Equity Office 'will respond to and investigate all complaints of sexual assault confidentially with respect to wishes of the complainant. Options include processing charges through the Non-Academic Judicial System or bringing the matter to the Police.'

There are no statements on procedures for bringing forward complaints of sexual assault on the **Cape Breton University**<sup>34</sup>, **Mount St Vincent** or **St Francis Xavier**<sup>35</sup> websites.



## ACCESS TO SANES

Sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) are registered nurses with specialized training and education in forensic examination of sexual assault survivors. While widely accepted as a best practice that access to a sensitive medical response is critical to the survivor's immediate and long-term wellbeing, in Nova Scotia, access to the SANE program is limited to the Guysborough-Antigonish-Strait Health Authority region and the Capital Health District Authority region (Halifax Regional Municipality).

Halifax-based university students who have experienced sexual assault can access the SANE program at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, Dartmouth General Hospital, IWK Health Centre or the Cobequid Community Health Centre. Students at StFX can access the program through the emergency room at St. Martha's Regional Hospital in Antigonish.

While students at the Truro Agriculture campus, Dalhousie University can receive counseling through the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre, the services of a SANE are not yet locally available. Agencies are presently working to put together a sexual assault response team to service the Colchester area. The closest access to a SANE is the Cobequid Community Health Centre in Lower Sackville, a distance of about 85 kms.

The closest access to a SANE for Acadia students is also the Cobequid Community Health Centre, a distance of about 80 kilometers. The closest access to a SANE for Cape Breton University students is St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish, a distance of about 200 kilometers.

Feedback obtained in the interviews for this report indicates that not having access to specially trained nurse examiners may be one factor in the underreporting of sexual assault among university students. *"(In the absence of a SANE) the examination will be done likely by a busy matter-of-fact male doctor which could be traumatizing and not sensitive to a woman's needs... or to a male's."*

## ACCESS TO FOLLOW-UP COUNSELLING

In addition to having a strong first-response system in place for survivors of sexual assault, best practices acknowledge the importance of providing survivors with access to follow-up counselling and other supports.

Sexual assault is an act of aggression and power, and can be devastating emotionally, psychologically and physically. As one resident assistant noted in the campus interviews, *"I recall one student who was assaulted who didn't file a complaint. She thought she was okay but once she encountered the perpetrator, she realized she was not doing well."*

Specialized counsellors trained in sexual assault are available through the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre in Halifax on a self-referral basis; as well as through the Colchester Sexual Assault Centre in Truro, and the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association. University health centres at St. Mary's University, Mount St Vincent University, the Dalhousie Agriculture Campus in Truro and StFX University have developed strong collaborative

relationships with these community-based organizations and are able to refer student survivors to these services.

Interviews at Acadia University and Cape Breton University suggest similar services are either not available within their local communities or that collaborative relationships have yet to be developed between the university and community agencies.

### 5.2.3 THE ROLE OF RESIDENCE IN SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION

On most campuses visited, responsibility for speaking with first year students about sexual assault prevention rests with Residence staff. Residence staff in descending order includes the director, dons/residence coordinators and residence assistants (RAs). Students have the most contact with residence assistants who are typically students in their third or fourth year. Some campuses visited have a more developed residence system in place to ensure student safety than others.

**Mount St Vincent University** has an extensive training program for its residence assistants including a strong focus on sexual assault. RAs get training in the 'Just ASK' program, a joint initiative of the Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre. 'Just ASK' focuses on sexual consent and alcohol and drug facilitated sexual assault. The training provides RAs with information on sexual assault myths and gender stereotypes, statistics on sexual assault within a campus setting and ideas on how to create awareness events on sexual assault prevention. The 'Just ASK' training also includes detailed procedures for residence staff (and other campus personnel) when responding to survivors of sexual assault. The housing coordinator, residence life, and the coordinator of counseling services jointly deliver this training in late August prior to the arrival of the student body.

During orientation, the RAs deliver awareness training to all first year students on sexual assault that includes a focus on the link between alcohol and sexual assault.

Most first-year students at the Mount are housed in a high-rise residence. The entrance to this residence is an elevator located alongside the campus Safety and Security desk. This ensures that all visitors/guests to the residence are closely monitored.

**St Mary's University's** residence program recognizes the value of peer leadership and has put in place a ratio of about 1 RA for every 18 students. This strategy was established to build strong relationships and trust between the first year students and RAs to encourage open communication.

Training for the RAs draws upon the joint expertise of the student health centre SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) and campus conflict resolution counsellor. Training provided includes background information on sexual assault including sexual predators, how to respond to survivors of sexual assault, and emergency procedures. Capital Health staff contribute their expertise on the link between alcohol and sexual assault. St Mary's has recently hired a fulltime programming and engagement coordinator to spearhead residence-based programming with a specific focus on sexual violence and alcohol.

St Mary's also provides residences with teams of residence services officers (RSOs) (made up of two students each) who patrol the three campus residences on a regular schedule. For example, Sunday through Wednesday, the RSOs do patrols from 9pm to 1am. On Thursday through Saturday, two patrols are brought in and on extra-busy nights, a third patrol is brought in. Extra patrols are also added during Frosh week and the first three weekends of the first semester. These patrols are pro-active in their patrolling; visiting every public washroom and knocking on locked stall doors. The RSOs receive similar training on sexual assault as the RAs in addition to their security-related training and emergency response protocols.

All RAs at **Acadia University** receive training on sexual harassment, sexual assault and positive space training through a scenario-based model. The university's equity officer (RCMP background) and student union equity officer deliver the training.

Acadia's residence system also recognizes the power of peer leadership. RAs deliver training in sexuality and alcohol to first year students through the 'Arrival and Survival' show. The show's content is designed by students with input from residence staff and consists of skits and ambiguously worded statements designed to get students thinking about sexuality, consent and drinking.

Residents' safety is facilitated through controlled access and room phones which access security by pushing a button. The phones also feature call display.

At **St Francis Xavier University**, the onus for sexual assault prevention education falls to the student health centre nurses.

All residence staff at **Faculty of Agriculture campus, Dalhousie University** receive training from external health consultants and the student health service on sexual assault and alcohol. The training requires RAs to problem-solve scenarios drawn from past campus experiences. All residence staff including the RAs receives first aid certification.

The RESPECT team of peer educators (supervised through the Student Health Centre) delivers a mandatory presentation on consent to all new students. The peer educators also post facts and questions relating to consent and alcohol on bulletin boards throughout the residences. RAs have recently implemented a campaign on sexual assault across the residences using materials featuring 50 Dalhousie University students who were sexually assaulted.

All guests (limited to three per resident and reduced to two at times of large events) must be signed-in even if it is a guest from another residence on campus. All guests signed in must stay with their sponsor. Exterior doors are alarmed with the exception of the front door. On Thursday through Saturday, security guards are in the residence lobby from 7 pm to 2 am monitoring people coming into residence. The RAs are responsible for rounds in the residences.

Discussions with staff at **Cape Breton University** were unable to uncover any formal training in place for residence staff relating to sexual assault prevention or response protocols.

Residences have an 'open door policy' but RAs sit at the front door until midnight on regular days and until 1:30 am on 'party' nights. Two Atlantic Police Academy graduates patrol the four residences from 8 pm to 6 am seven days a week. They are trained in responding to sexual violence and the head of Security for CBU is a trained sexual assault investigator.

Interviews did indicate that students in residence at CBU feel less secure than residents on other campuses. Reasons given include residence doors that are hollow and easy to break into (examples were provided); lack of sign-in protocols for residence guests; lack of security in residence; and frequent absence of RAs on duty. (Feedback indicates that CBU hires student athletes as RAs and when there are games away from home, the position is not backfilled.)

### 5.3 Useful Tools and Guidelines

A set of tools, templates and other resources that universities can draw upon in developing their own policies and procedures for addressing sexual violence can be found in *A Resource Guide for Ontario's Colleges and Universities*<sup>36</sup>. This guide acts as a 'how to' manual for developing a campus-wide approach to sexual violence.

The *Resource Guide for Ontario's Colleges and Universities* contains:

- Template for sexual violence policies and protocols
- Sample statement of roles and responsibilities for campus groups
- Template for local services listing
- Template and sample campus safety alerts
- Glossary of terms
- Relevant legislation
- Provincial services and services association
- Examples of public education campaigns
- Resource guides and best practices for developing policies and protocols
- General sexual violence resources and materials

## Guidelines to Support A Campus Sexual Assault Strategy<sup>37</sup>

1. Develop a policy statement and directive from the university president/chancellor that demonstrates recognition of sexual violence as a problem, a commitment to reduce its occurrence, and action steps for the campus community.
2. Develop a multidisciplinary taskforce on campus to address sexual violence prevention and response services that includes high-level campus administration, academic leaders, student leaders, and community partnerships.
3. Create policies that reflect an expectation of civility, honor, respect, and nonviolence for all members of the community and encourage behaviors that build a sense of community.
4. Revise, **enforce**, and widely distribute disciplinary regulations in the student code that demonstrate an intolerance of all forms of sexual violence and implement sanctions for violations by faculty, staff, and students.
5. Educate disciplinary boards on perpetrator patterns and possible victim responses and patterns.
6. Provide comprehensive training on all aspects of sexual violence for campus administrators; campus law enforcement; health and counseling services staff; faculty; staff; and student leaders that includes the dynamics of sexual violence, access to care, victim response, and criminal law.
7. Integrate sexual violence prevention education into curricular and non-curricular activities.
8. Develop a coordinated, seamless, victim-centered response service between campus and community resources that offers the options of:
  - anonymous reporting
  - law enforcement involvement
  - judicial/disciplinary board actions
  - sexual assault nurse examiner care
  - emergency contraception
  - academic/housing accommodations
  - follow-up counseling, support, and advocacy
9. Offer residence hall and extra-curricular activities that are alcohol free.
10. Provide educational/outreach programming that:
  - teaches bystander intervention techniques
  - addresses the role of consent in sexual relationships
  - encourages the involvement of men in preventing sexual violence
  - addresses alcohol and the connection with sexual violence
  - provides concepts that encourage healthy, consensual sexual relationships
  - addresses acquaintance sexual violence and dispels traditional beliefs
11. Create an amnesty policy for underage drinking for victims who report sexual assault.
12. Publish and announce the availability of protocols on campus websites for all campus members to access resources, referrals, and helping strategies for survivors of sexual violence

## 6.0 Recommendations to Student Leadership

Student unions offer a powerful starting point for bringing change to campus culture. The work supported by the StFX Students' Union, for example, in collaboration with its partners, offers a positive model for other student unions to consider.

To address the high incidence rate of sexual assault on campuses today, student unions can undertake a variety of actions. Some of these actions can be implemented by student unions on their own within a single semester or at least within one academic year; others will require careful planning with their partners and a longer timeframe for implementation; still others are actions that student unions can and should advocate for.

The recommendations emerged from the interviews held across the six participating campuses, and are supported by the literature.

The recommendations that follow also address the various themes that emerged from the research.

### Research Themes

- *The influence of student leaders on their peers*
- *The opportunity to shift campus culture offered by first-year students*
- *The effectiveness of bystander intervention*
- *The value of engaging student athletes in sexual assault prevention initiatives*
- *The importance of campus wide dialogue on healthy sexuality*
- *The link between alcohol and sexual assault.*

## 6.1 For Immediate Student Union Action

- Develop a position on sexual violence and sexual assault. Build it into the student union by-laws and student union handbook, publicize it on the student union webpage and promote it widely across campus using social media.
- Appoint one member of the student union executive as lead on the sexual violence file and support with an appropriate budget. Do not dilute their responsibilities by giving them additional responsibilities over and above the sexual dialogue file
- Develop a web presence through the student union site that provides information and resources on sexual violence and assault, including dispelling myths about sexual assault and posting sexual assault prevention tips. Provide regular updates on this site on progress undertaken by the student union on building a student response to sexual violence.
- Have all student union leadership take a public pledge to step up and intervene when inappropriate behavior is encountered. This includes from sexually degrading jokes in the cafeteria, to bullying in the residence, to unwanted sexual overtures in the bar. Videotape student leaders taking the pledge, post the video-clip on the student union webpage and promote it widely across campus using social media.

- Invite all student leadership (house council, sports teams, resident assistants, campus security etc.) across campus to follow the student union example. Develop pledge cards and see how many student leaders you can enlist. Publish the results on the student union website and promote it widely across campus using social media.
- Hold discussion groups with first and second year students aimed at identifying the kind of campus community they would like to live in with specific attention paid to values (safe environment, respect among students). Publish the findings on the student union website and promote across campus using social media.
- Host student discussion groups aimed at identifying activities run by the student union and house councils that support a 'rape culture' on campus. Discuss how these activities could be changed to build a safer, more respectful community.

## 6.2 For Student Union Action in Collaboration with Partners

- Mail a letter to all first-year students and parents/guardians prior to start-up of classes, addressing the importance of consent in all sexual relationships; the potential for acquaintance rape in situations of heavy drinking; and the potential danger of off-campus parties where sexual predators may be in attendance.
- Plan a strategy for starting the dialogue on sexuality on campus. Consider some of the following activities to jumpstart the dialogue:
  - Screen relevant films (*Palindromes*, *The Education of Shelby Knox*, *Killing Us Softly*, *The Accused*, *A Jury of Her Peers*, *Defending our Lives*)
  - Host a panel discussion on sexual violence (Invite professors from Sociology, Women's Studies, Political Science, Anthropology; also invite emergency room nurses and doctors, sexual assault nurse examiners, and other professionals in the field)
  - Host a phone-in campus radio show on campus safety and sexual assault statistics.
  - Enlist the theatre department to present street theatre or flash mobs on situations of sexual assault and other sexual violence. Videotape these and post on student union website.
- Include in the strategy a series of campus consultations on consent, bystander intervention and the role that alcohol can play in sexual assault.
- Reassess what orienting new students to life on campus and the surrounding community should entail including expected outcomes; designing events/activities to meet the outcomes.
- Offer male-only programming led by trained male facilitators aimed at prevention of violence against women.



### 6.3 For Student Union Advocacy

- Advocate for the establishment of a campus advisory committee on sexual assault with representation, at minimum, from senior administration, university staff, faculty and the student leadership. Meet with the university president to discuss the need for a collaborative effort to deal effectively with sexual assault including the development of standalone policies and transparent procedures.
- Adopt the approach taken by the StFX Students' Union and make the *Bringing in the Bystander* training available to all student union and other student leadership on an annual basis. Include refresher training for previous recipients. Ensure that the following student union staff receives the training: bar management, bar servers and bar security and all other student security.
- Advocate for all athletic directors, coaches and male and female sports teams to receive *Bystander* training on an annual and on-going basis.
- Advocate for the establishment of a team of male and female peer educators to be trained by and work under the supervision of the student health centre director (or other relevant campus body).
  - Pass a by-law to use student union funding to support the peer educators starting in the upcoming academic year.
  - Recommend that the peer educators' primary focus be on alcohol consumption, sexual assault and the link between the two.
- Advocate for including discussion of the role of consent within the Canadian context in international student orientations.
- Advocate for the immediate establishment of a team of researchers drawn from each Nova Scotia campus, to develop and oversee a survey addressed to identifying the extent and nature of sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses.
  - Build a presence for *StudentsNS* on the team to ensure the student voice is captured.
  - Recommend that the survey is ready for implementation over the 2014-15 student academic year.
- The Cape Breton University Students' Union, in collaboration with CBU's senior administration, advocate for extension of the SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) program to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
- The Cape Breton University Students' Union advocate for CBU to develop a collaborative relationship with Every Woman's Place in Sydney.
- Acadia University Student Association, in collaboration with Acadia's senior administration, advocate for extension of the SANE program to the Valley Health Authority District.



## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> University of Guelph Sexual Assault Protocol. See: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/studentaffairs/home/documents/finalfordistribution-Updated-Jan2013.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Callie Lathem, Equity Officer, Acadia Student Union; and chair of the Steering Committee for this report.

<sup>3</sup> The Clery Act, signed in 1990, requires all colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs to keep and disclose information on crime – including forcible and non-forcible sexual offenses – on and near their campuses. The Act was named for Jeanne Clery, a 19 year old first year student who was raped and murdered in her campus residence hall in 1986.

<sup>4</sup> The Incidence and Prevalence of Woman Abuse in Canadian University and College Dating Relationships: Results from a National Survey, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Lenskyj, Helen. *An Analysis of Violence Against Women: A Manual for Educators and Administrators*, 1992. Quoted by Canadian Federation of Students Ontario in “Fact Sheet on Sexual Violence on Campus”. April 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, H. *Dangerous Domains: Violence against Women in Canada*. 1996. Quoted in Canadian Federation of Students Ontario in “Fact Sheet on Sexual Violence on Campus”. April 2013.

<sup>7</sup> The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing in Guide No. 17 (2002) “Acquaintance Rape of College Students”. See: <http://www.popcenter.org/problems/rape/1>

<sup>8</sup> Bonnie S. Fisher, Francis T. Cullen and Michel G. Turner, *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*. US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2000. See: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Campus Sexual Assault: Suggested Policies and Procedures, American Association of University Professors, February 2013. See: <http://www.aaup.org/report/campus-sexual-assault-suggested-policies-and-procedures>

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Rebecca Norman, reported in “Sexual crime on campus; not just a crime of men against women,” Investigate West, Feb. 25/10. See: <http://www.invw.org/node/941>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, “Sex offenders,” Juristat (March 1999, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia defines 'cisgender' (often abbreviated to simply cis) as a term to describe related types of gender identity where an individual's self-perception of their gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

<sup>14</sup> Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, *Sexual Victimization*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> In the United States the term 'rape' is defined as "'penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.'" The revised definition (2012) includes any gender of victim or perpetrator. It also includes instances in which a victim is incapable of giving consent because of mental or physical incapacity, such as intoxication. Physical resistance is not required to demonstrate lack of consent.

<sup>16</sup> Department of Justice, Canada. Fact Sheet on Dating Violence. 2003. Quoted in Canadian Federation of Students Ontario in "Fact Sheet on Sexual Violence on Campus". April 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Meichun Mohler-Kuo, George W. Dowdall, Mary P. Koss and Henry Wechsler, "Correlates of Rape while Intoxicated in a National Sample of College Women," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, January 2004; 37.

<sup>18</sup> Antonia Abbey, "Alcohol-Related Sexual Assault: A Common Problem among College Students," *The Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Supplement No. 14*: 2002, 126.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Finn. "Preventing Alcohol-Related Problems on Campus: Acquaintance Rape." A publication of the Higher Education Centre for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention. 1995, 32.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> [www.oneinfourusa.org/themensprogram.php](http://www.oneinfourusa.org/themensprogram.php)

<sup>22</sup> Fabiano, P., Perkins, H.W., Berkowitz, A.A., Linkenbach, J. & Stark, C. (2004). Engaging men as social justice allies in ending violence against women: Evidence for a social norms approach. *Journal of American College Health*, 52(3), 105-112.

<sup>23</sup> World Health Organization and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women, Taking action and generating evidence*. 2010, 47. See: [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/intimate/en/index.html)

<sup>24</sup> The MVP model has been implemented and evaluated on college campuses and high schools for over 13 years. Evaluation has shown that for the program to make effective inroads into campus culture, key administrators and faculty need to commit to annual training early in the year for all new student athletes. It also means that athletic personnel and other key university staff require training in train the trainer training (which can be framed as leadership training) in order to support the students in taking on the role of empowered bystander. <http://www.jacksonkatz.com/mvp.html>

<sup>25</sup> Berkowitz, Alan D. *Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence and Abuse: The Social Norms Approach*, May 2010, 19.

<sup>26</sup> <http://PinkLovesConsent.com>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.consentissexy.net/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://thepost.ohiou.edu/content/campus-conversation-invites-students-continue-dialogue-sexual-assault>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/SexPositiveCampaign>

<sup>30</sup> Taken from a radio interview with David Lisak by Joseph Shapiro. Special Series, Seeking Justice for Campus Rapes: “Myths that make it hard to stop campus rape”. March 04, 2010.  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124272157>

<sup>31</sup> Permission to replicate these emails was provided by the student and coordinator of the student union’s women centre.

<sup>32</sup> The athletic department’s role in the *Preventing Violence Against Women at StFX* initiative did not stop with the poster campaign. The department has also partnered with the local RCMP and Naomi House to train all campus athletes in the *Neighbours, Friends and Relatives* program. The program, out of Ontario, is designed to reach neighbours, friends and family members of women and children who are experiencing abuse. The program was ‘tweaked’ to adapt it to a university setting and was delivered to all sport teams over the 2013-14 first semester. Plans are also in place to provide all athletes with the *Bringing in the Bystander* training over the second semester.

<sup>33</sup> Most students leaders interviewed who had received the training indicated they would welcome assistance from university staff in delivering the training. Most university staff interviewed indicated a keen interest in receiving the Bystander training and working together with their respective student unions to deliver the training to student leaders.

<sup>34</sup> Students and university staff at CBU indicated in the interviews that they are not aware of how to report a sexual assault.

<sup>35</sup> A sexual assault response document was underdevelopment at StFX through the campus health and counseling centre until the resignation of the director in 2012. Remaining staff are unable to free up time from their busy schedule to complete the document and the director’s position has not been backfilled.

<sup>36</sup> A Resource Guide for Ontario’s Colleges and Universities can be found at:  
[http://www.women.gov.on.ca/english/resources/publications/campus\\_guide/campus\\_guide.pdf](http://www.women.gov.on.ca/english/resources/publications/campus_guide/campus_guide.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> These guidelines are taken from an American College Health Association publication, *Position Statement on preventing Sexual Violence on College and University Campuses*. December 2011, 2-3. See:  
[http://www.acha.org/Publications/docs/ACHA\\_Statement\\_Preventing\\_Sexual\\_Violence\\_Dec2011.pdf](http://www.acha.org/Publications/docs/ACHA_Statement_Preventing_Sexual_Violence_Dec2011.pdf)

Similar guidelines for policy development can be found in Antonia Abbey, *Alcohol Related Assault: A Common Problem Among College Students*