
INTRODUCTION
The review of the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention, Education and Support (GP 44) Policy, spearheaded by SFU’s Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office (The Office), commenced in September 2019 and ended in March 2020. The review involved having two rounds of conversations with members of the university community, including student groups, labour unions, faculty, and staff as well as inviting feedback through two online surveys. The input provided by the university community along with the research done by the Office, exploring promising practices in sexual violence and misconduct prevention and intervention, have led to significant insights about both the policy strengths and recommendations to further enhance the policy. Not all the feedback, however, was policy-based, and the purpose of this document is to provide a summary of both the review process, a high-level overview of the policy revisions made and the non-policy actionable tactics that in turn support the implementation of the policy.

REVIEW PROCESS
The review process consisted of two components that occurred simultaneously: research and community engagement. During both, the Office grappled with the following questions:

- What are the emerging promising practices in sexual violence and misconduct policies across Canada?
- How does the Office align the policy with relevant legal frameworks while it also navigates jurisdictional considerations?
- How can the Office enhance the survivor-centered nature of the policy while balancing procedural fairness?
- Can the policy be elaborated on to clarify key feedback offered and questions posed during the review process? Are they more appropriately placed in the policy or in a procedures attached to the policy document?

The final question led to the idea of creating a much-needed separate document dedicated for procedures – those processes, actions, and methods used to put the policy into practice. Work on this document is currently underway, and the document is expected to be ready in Fall 2020.
CHANGES TO THE POLICY

The key changes to the policy that emerged from the policy review consist of:

1) Flushing out 1.1.a. in the preamble of the document to be more explicit about the importance of recognizing intersectionality as well as the systemic nature of sexual violence and misconduct. In addition to this, an additional point (1.1.b.) was added to recognize the impacts of rape culture.

2) Articulating under which circumstances the University may move forward with a formal reporting process without the consent of a Survivor (8.7).

3) Providing clarity to section 8.5. as this section has created confusion amongst some members of the University Community.

4) All other edits have been included to clarify and simplify language.

KEY FINDINGS

Policy Strengths

Our conversations with the university community and the survey responses have shed light on the positive aspects of the policy:

- It is comprehensive in scope.
- It provides support to everyone on campus.
- It provides a necessary specialist office for sexual violence and misconduct.
- Its educative role in that it helps translate the policy objectives into actionable items.
- Its rather accessible language unlike other SFU policies.
- It provides a balance between survivor-centrism and procedural fairness.

“[The policy] covers every aspect of sexual violence and misconduct.”

“Low-barrier approach is what I admire about the policy.”
Satisfaction with Proposed Changes

The suggested edits to the policy from the first engagement period received positive approval among university community members who participated in the review process with 53% of the individuals who provided feedback answering an unequivocal ‘yes’ to the question *Do you agree with the suggested changes?* and 10.4% expressing disfavour.¹ The remaining percentage, however, either left the answer blank or simply suggested new edits to the policy.²

Recommendations

In the course of the review, SFU community members identified the following areas where the policy and procedures have the potential to grow:

1. mapping out the reporting and investigation process
   Those who are interested can visit the Office’s procedural maps online [http://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/get-help/make-a-report.html](http://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/get-help/make-a-report.html). More details can be found in SFU’s (four) collective agreements, Human Rights Policy (GP 18) and the Student Conduct Policy (S10.05) [http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student/s10-05.html](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student/s10-05.html).

2. clarifying timelines if applicable
   Those who are interested can visit the collective agreements, Human Rights Policy (GP 18) and Student Conduct Policy (S10.05) for more information on timelines during the complaints process.

3. clarifying point 5.2.c of section 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the policy
   The procedures document will address the accommodations process more fully.

¹ Some members expressed that “the prevention piece for the Office remains unclear” and that “the policy is still much too vague.”
² The total number of individuals who gave their feedback in January 2020 including the people the Office met with in the in-person sessions is 49.
4. flushing out section 4.0 Definitions and include examples
   The definitions will also be clarified through the procedures document. Current definitions are available on the SVSPO’s website (https://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/education-prevention/sexual-violence-definitions.html).

5. outlining how section 6.0 Awareness, Education and Training can be operationalised
   Check out the SVSPO Intervention and Prevention Education Plan for an elaboration on the steps taken towards education (https://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/education-prevention/education-plan.html).

6. teaching the university about the policy, the Office, and the services available
   This is addressed in the SVSPO Intervention and Prevention Education Plan.

7. having a coordinated response
   The Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office is intended to be the central office that links individuals affected by sexual violence and misconduct to the different university offices and departments that provide adequate and appropriate support. There exists a close collaboration between the Office and the other support services on and off campus that has resulted in a highly coordinated response to disclosures and/or reports of sexual violence and misconduct. That said, feedback from the consultation rounds have pointed to the need to clearly communicate this to the university community as some members expressed a lack of knowledge of this aspect of the Office’s work. This is an educational piece that merits more attention, and the Office will channel more efforts into addressing it.

   "We want to make sure survivors know where to go to file a complaint or raise an issue. NOW it’s too many entry points, too many policies.”

   “Be explicit about a centralised office that links other policies together.”
EDUCATION & AWARENESS

This section captures some of the feedback shared with us that illustrates the discrepancy between the established services by the Office and the lack of awareness among SFU community members of those services. Those insights present an opportunity to explore how the Office can best communicate to the university community the existence and range of its services and supports. The insights offered cover four areas: culture change, policy outreach, raising awareness about the Office and increased support.

Culture change

For culture change to take place, it is critical for the prevention of sexual violence and misconduct to take place on an ideological level. The SVSPO Education Plan for 2019-2020 does underscore the significance of taking proactive steps as one of its desired outcomes:

“... actively challenging rape culture at all levels of University activities (such as during event planning) is necessary.”

Support the creation of a safe(r) and respectful university environment - increase an understanding of the root causes of sexual violence; build capacity to engage critically with social media and popular culture; build the capacity to recognize and understand the impact of rape culture; and enhance the capacity of key student, staff and faculty to address systemic causes of sexual violence. (SVSPO Education Plan, 2018, p. 4)

To achieve this goal, the Office will:

- maintain and strengthen collaborations with campus offices, groups and departments to establish more channels for the promotion of consent culture among members of the university
- continue to strengthen and implement its Education Plan.

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3 Consent culture is one in which sexual pleasure and activities are centred around mutual consent and where rape myths and attitudes are not tolerated. For more information, visit [https://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/education-prevention/what-is-consent.html](https://www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence/education-prevention/what-is-consent.html).
continue to develop, enhance and support educational training opportunities and campaigns like the bystander intervention and responding to disclosures workshops and the two annual awareness campaigns, #consentmatters and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Making a cultural shift continues to be a primary goal of the university and the Office. The Office recognizes that it takes all of us to foster and maintain a consent culture on campus.

Policy outreach

During our conversations with key stakeholders, it became evident that there was a lack of awareness of the existence of the policy. One member suggested setting up a webpage for the policy which already exist on the Office’s website as well as on SFU’s Policy Gazette website. Such comments reinforce the understanding that there remains work to do in raising awareness about the policy with university community members. In many ways, the policy review in and of itself was an educational opportunity that helped to inform university community members that such a policy exists and is supported by the Office.

During the review process, a few participants shared with us a few strategies to support the Office and the university in raising awareness about the policy. Such suggestions include developing an infographic, developing an abbreviated version of the policy and developing a webpage that highlights the policy itself. The Office will explore these and other options further to maximise university members’ knowledge about and engagement with the policy.

Raising awareness about the Office

During the review process, the Office learned that a number of individuals were not familiar with the services it provides. One student commented, “I didn’t know about the resources available from the first year”, and a staff member emphasised, “[w]e want to make sure survivors know where to go to file a complaint or raise an issue.” The Office has strived to make its resources
more known to the public since it opened. Some strategies include: social media, educational workshops (e.g. Healthy Relationships, Bystander Intervention, Responding to Disclosures, etc.), its events and campaigns (e.g. #consentmatters), tabling on special days (during events and support campaigns, like the Sexual Assault Awareness Month on SFU’s three campuses) and through its student leadership program, the Active Bystander Network. From April 1, 2018 until August 31, 2019, the Office has provided educational opportunities to 3,854 members of the university (2018/2019 Annual Report, 2019, p. 2).

To address the current gap in outreach, the Office will:
- promote established educational initiatives
- assess the effectiveness of educational initiatives on a regular basis
- explore new ways to communicate and raise awareness about its support and educational services to the university community in order to boost its outreach potential
- build on existing university partnerships to help raise awareness about the Office

Our goal is to ensure that all members of the university community are familiar with the support and educational services available through the Office.

➢ Increased Support

During the review process, many participants asked about the exclusion of members of the Fraser International College (FIC) from the policy’s definitions of “Student” and “University Community”. Although FIC is not explicitly mentioned in the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention, Education and Support (GP 44) Policy, all members of the FIC community can access confidential support, referrals and information from the Office thanks to a new Service Agreement between SFU and FIC.

Moving forward, the Office will work closely with members of the FIC community to raise awareness around the supports and services offered by the Office.
FUTURE CONVERSATION

The following points were recommended by SFU community members during the consultation rounds to strengthen the policy; however, they require further assessment to help guide further conversations and considerations.

Mandatory Training

In our engagement rounds, mandatory training was a recurring theme. While it is a significant issue that is thought to have the potential to contribute to the prevention of sexual violence and misconduct on campus, more research is needed to understand the impact and efficacy of mandatory training in culture change. Therefore, it remains a topic for continued conversation as we explore promising practices in this area.

Anonymous Reporting

An additional suggestion by community members was to expand the options of reporting to include anonymous reporting. Anonymous reporting is a process where a Survivor or, in some cases, a third-party could share information about an incident of sexual violence and misconduct with the university without needing to identify oneself. This option has the potential to encourage Survivors to come forward and empowers them to choose to self-identify when they want to. That said a barrier to implementing anonymous reports at the institutional level is a need for more exploration to understand how anonymous reporting intersects with provincial privacy legislation and labour law. More research and a firmer understanding of anonymous reporting should be explored before deciding to development of such a reporting mechanism.

A form of reporting presently available to Survivors is third party reporting within the provincial context. While this is not linked to university records or formal internal reporting processes, this option does allow Survivors to report their experiences of sexual violence to the policy anonymously through a third party, such as community support services like WAVAW (link) and Surrey Women’s Center (link). For more information about third party reporting, visit EVA BC’s webpage (link).
References
