

Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group

2021-2022

Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence Prevention Annual Report

April 1, 2022

Introduction

In March 2015, the province of Ontario launched an action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment against women across the province. Sexual violence is defined as “any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s consent. It includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation” (Ministry of Colleges and Universities Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act – Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment, 2016, S.O. 2016, c. 2 – Bill 132). As part of this plan, all Ontario Colleges collaborated in the development of a common Sexual Assault / Sexual Violence Policy – SA16 at Algonquin College.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities Act that outlines the Board Report requirement:

Information Required for Minister

Every college or university described in subsection (2) shall collect from its students and other persons, and provide to the Minister, such data and other information relating to the following as may be requested by the Minister, in the manner and form directed by the Minister:

1. The number of times supports, services and accommodation relating to sexual violence are requested and obtained by students enrolled at the college or university, and information about the supports, services, and accommodation.
2. Any initiatives and programs established by the college or university to promote awareness of the supports and services available to students.
3. The number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students, and information about such incidents and complaints.
4. The implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Annual Report to the Board of Governors

(7.1) Every college or university described in subsection (2) shall provide its Board of Governors with an annual report setting out, in respect of the preceding year, the information described in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of subsection (7).

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m19>

The number of times supports, services and accommodation relating to sexual violence are requested and obtained by students enrolled at the college, and information about the supports, services, and accommodation.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*
Total number of students who presented at Counselling/Health Services seeking support, services or accommodations, due to sexual violence, sexual exploitation and/or stalking	23	27	11	20
Total number of students requesting accommodations	8	6	0	2

*This is the first year that sexual violence data was split between instances that occurred in this reporting period, or previously.

It is worth noting that the vast majority (10 of 20) of disclosure's related to off-campus incidents from more than 12 months ago (this is the first year that this data has been collected). The significant drop in students seeking support is consistent with both the vastly reduced student numbers on all three campuses and in residence during the pandemic and with other health agencies' pandemic experience across the province.

During the pandemic the number of cases of sexual violence reported to Counselling Services has decreased significantly, and reflects the reduced student population on campus and in residence. It is anticipated as students return to the campuses and residence that this number will increase again, in line with pre-pandemic norms. As students return to campus in the Fall 2022 semester, there is an opportunity for sexual violence programming to ramp up with a view to reaching as many students as possible with messaging about consent, healthy relationships and supports that are available for survivors of sexual violence.

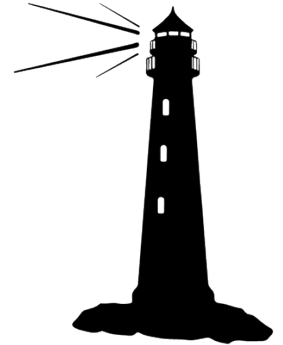
Supports and services accessed by students on campus included Counselling Services, Health Services, the Wellness and Equity Centre and Security Services and a number of off-campus partners, including:

- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
- Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa
- Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Program (available 24/7)
- The Ottawa Hospital-Civic Campus
- Renfrew Victoria Hospital
- Lanark County Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Program
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Ottawa Police Services (OPS)

Any initiatives and programs established by the college to promote awareness of the supports and services available to students.

Sexual Violence Prevention Efforts

In January 2017, Algonquin College hired an expert in sexual health and sexual violence prevention as a 'Sexual Violence Prevention and Harm Reduction Coordinator'. Since January 2017, this individual has been responsible for leading a wide range of activities, campaigns and events on all three of Algonquin's campuses through Project Lighthouse. Project Lighthouse is Algonquin College's sexual violence prevention project, aiming to shine a light on sexual violence and promote healthy relationships. Activities offered by Project Lighthouse in this reporting period have included:



- Providing leadership to both student employees and placement students.
- Liaising with institutional leads at colleges and universities across the province, sharing best practice information, ideas, and expertise; and
- Developing new materials for students and employees, including booklets, swag, podcasts, and videos.

Online Programming

Due to COVID-19 all programming continued in a digital format and was delivered online in the reporting period.

	2020-2021	2021-2022
Number of sessions facilitated by Project Lighthouse during the reporting period	104	102
Number of events	55	45
Number of training sessions	7	20
Number of Facebook/Instagram Live events	38	40
Number of classroom presentations	2	8
Number of groups run	N/A	40
Number of students participating in outreach efforts	55,694	12,602*

*The drop in participation year over year is related to a drop off in students watching videos compared to the year before, where the initial interest was very high, but has since plummeted.

Activities Included

Social Media Initiatives

Project Lighthouse participated in a social media campaign called 'Just Got Weird' with students online through geo-fencing at all four post-secondary campus in Ottawa. This allowed the project to reach over **258,332** people that interacted with the messaging. The second initiative, two radio appearances on XM satellite radio promoting Project Lighthouse and Healthy Sexuality, were heard by an estimated **20,000** people.

Peer to Peer Support

This year Project Lighthouse launched "The Beacon" which is a peer to peer drop in space for students speak to fellow students who can offer support and connect students with useful resources. Students can chat with a trained Algonquin College student peer about mental health, sexual health and sexual violence, and substance use. Support is offered in a one-on-one or drop-in service, and is non-judgmental, confidential, and is an accessible virtual space. To date 14 students have accessed these supports. A physical drop in space is ready for students once they return to campus. A launch party is being planned for The Beacon just before mid-term break week 2022.

Maximizing Internal Partnerships

The College sought opportunities to maximize existing internal partnerships with the Students Association, the Residence, the Mamidosewin Centre, Counselling Services, Health Services, and the International Education Centre. This was achieved by coordinating each semester's programming through the Mental Health Steering Committee and delivering programming in collaboration with these College partners.

Participation in Orientation Activities

Project Lighthouse participated in "AC Day 1" activities, Campus Village events, and the "Get to Know the College Services" events.

Honoring and Action Events

Project Lighthouse lead and coordinated the College's "December 6th Day of Remembrance" and "Action on Violence Against Women" events, as well as through "Ask an Expert" social media series, and "Glitter and Gab" sessions in which participants across the country were mailed crafting materials to create a shared virtual forum through which to have open and honest conversations about sexual health and consent.

Project Lighthouse Program Evaluation

In 2021, the Project Lighthouse Team completed an evaluation of the project in order to address the following questions:

- A) Are the program activities effective at reaching the target population?
- B) Are the program activities achieving the intended reactions from Algonquin College students?
- C) Are the program activities effective at raising awareness of gender-based violence, consent, and healthy relationships among Algonquin College students?

This evaluation was completed using a mix of instruments, including an online survey of students, qualitative interview, and literature and media review.

The findings for question A were that the program has effective reach with socialization and engagement, with enjoyable activities for education and awareness. The reach barriers were a clash of programming with class schedules and lack of multiple timeslots. The interview highlighted a lack of awareness of program activities, and the literature and media review found misconceptions among students regarding sexual assault and consent.

The findings for question B were that the materials were understandable in the Project Lighthouse session, and 81% of students thought about the topics that were discussed in the session. The interview highlighted that students are engaged and learning various topics with a fun and positive implementation of activities and online training, and the literature and media review found that sustaining students' engagement and interest is challenging.

The findings for question C were that the program increased awareness of consent and health sexual relationships among students, supporting education, open discussion, and proactivity regarding sexual health. There was a reported increase of awareness and support within campus, particularly regarding sexual violence. The interview highlighted that students understand Project Lighthouse's message of consent, and the review of literature found that a knowledge of policies decreases sexual violence on campus.

Overall, 78% of students reported that they planned to discuss the Project Lighthouse activities and sessions with friends, family or colleagues. There was high participation of minority groups in project lighthouse activities, and approximately 68% of participants in activities were between the ages of 17-29, meaning the program has effective reach. The materials in Project Lighthouse were understandable and participants reflected on the contents of the sessions. The program is generating positive changes and awareness on campus.

In order to have more comprehensive changes, more promotion of program and activities is needed. The creative and enjoyable programs are equally as important as the message. From this evaluation, Project Lighthouse may explore reducing reach barriers, such as class

schedule clash, with multiple time slots and more online programming, expand popular programs, enhance focus on sexual health and consent, and focus on targeted programming. Campaigns will further promote Project Lighthouse activities and will continue to integrate student feedback.

Residence – Ottawa Campus

During the pandemic all Project Lighthouse events and programming have been available to all students on each campus and in residence. During this reporting period Project Lighthouse launched a new online Sexual Violence prevention training module, so far 341 students living in Residence have completed the module.

Residence specific events have included “Banging Brunch”, “Hot Drinks and Hot Topic’s”, “Sexual Health Awareness”, “Jeopardy”, and several “Glitter and Gab” craft-making sessions.

Residence campaigns and events were scheduled to coincide with high-risk periods of the year like Valentine’s Day, Canada Day, St Patrick’s Day, Halloween, Christmas and New Year’s Day.

Women’s Campus Safety Fund

Algonquin College has received funding through the Campus Safety Fund for over 14 years. These funds can be used for programming, resources, equipment, and events, and employee salaries. During this reporting period, Algonquin College received \$154,957 from the provincial Campus Safety Fund. These funds to date have been allocated as follows:

- \$22,009 – for multiple events, promotions, prizes, supplies and guest speakers.
- \$6,578 – for contract services, for events, group facilitation etc.
- \$4,632 - to Security Services for an enhanced security emergency broadcast system, Campus Safety app.
- \$118,429 - in staff salaries for the Sexual Violence Prevention and Harm Reduction Coordinator and the Student peer staff.
- \$3,309 on miscellaneous costs.

The number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students, and information about such incidents and complaints.

Data collected between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022, by Security Services at all three Algonquin College campuses indicated the following:

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*
Total number of formal complaints/reports of sexual assault reported	25	34	25	30
Incidents of sexual harassment reported within the total number reported	16	17	14	18
Incidents of stalking reported within the total number reported	2	2	2	0
Incidents of indecent exposure reported within the total number reported	1	1	1	3
Incidents of voyeurism reported within the total number reported	1	2	1	0
Incidents of sexual exploitation reported within the total number reported	0	1	0	1

*This is the first year that sexual violence data was split between instances that occurred in this reporting period, or previously.

The data for 2021-22 paints a mixed picture, with reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment higher than the previous reporting period, and stalking and voyeurism both lower than the previous reporting period. The gradual return to campus and residence is key to the increase in sexual assault/harassment. **Digging into the data it becomes clear 23 of the sexual assault/harassment cases occurred off site, 9 occurred more than twelve months ago and 16 were not related to Algonquin college in any way**, which indicates Algonquin's services are impacted by wider societal issues and that services are creating an environment where students feel safe disclosing historical incidents or incidents that are not related to Algonquin – which is a good thing because we can then offer support to these students.

It is worth noting that students can present both to Security Services and to Counselling Services for support and assistance, but not all students that report incidents to Security Services elect to attend Counselling Services, or vice versa. This explains the difference in the number of incidents reported to Security Services and Counselling Services.

Incidents reported by students to College services are typically a mixture of new incidents and historical incidents. Irrespective of when an incident occurred, supports are offered to the students in question.

Students seeking support were assisted through the College's Security Services, Health Services, and Counselling Services, and where appropriate, by community partners in Ottawa, Perth, and Pembroke.

The implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence Policy

The Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence Policy SA16 is an existing policy that was originally approved by the Algonquin College Executive Team (ACET) on April 25, 2015. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee were informed of the new policy via a detailed transmittal, prior to approval, at the committee meeting of March 26, 2015.

This policy was developed as part of a directive issued by the Provincial Government. Efforts to establish a policy was coordinated by Colleges Ontario in 2015, to ensure a consistent approach to sexual assault/sexual violence across all Ontario Colleges.

A provincial announcement on September 16, 2021 outlined regulatory amendments in an effort to create a safer environment for all students attending publicly assisted colleges and universities, as well as private career colleges. The changes require institutions to update their sexual violence and harassment policies in order to protect students from irrelevant questions during sexual violence investigations at institutions and ensure that they may safely bring forward complaints without fear of disciplinary action. Institutions are required to review the sexual violence prevention policies and amend them by March 1, 2022.

The Sexual Violence Working Group met on November 8, 2021 to discuss updates to the policy in response to a Provincial Announcement on September 16, 2021 in regards to regulatory amendments that will help create a safer environment for students attending all publicly assisted colleges and universities, as well as private career colleges. These changes will require institutions to update their sexual violence and harassment policies in order to shield students from irrelevant questions during sexual violence investigations at institutions and ensure that they can safely bring forward complaints without fear of disciplinary action.

Institutions are required to review their sexual violence policies and amend them by March 1, 2022 so that institutions' sexual violence policies will provide that:

- A complainant acting in good faith, who discloses or reports sexual violence, will not be subject to actions for violations of the institution's policies related to drug and alcohol use at the time the sexual violence took place.
- During the institution's investigative process, students who share their experience of sexual violence through disclosing, accessing support, and/or reporting to the

university or college, will not be asked irrelevant questions from institution's staff or investigators, such as those relating to past sexual history or sexual expression.

Algonquin College has added both items to the revised policy. The second item was already in an appendix (page 16 item E. Immunity Clause for Minor Substance Use) of the existing policy, but has also been added to the body of the policy for more clarity. **It is also important to note that both items above were already well entrenched in Algonquin College's current practices prior to the request from the Ministry.**

The policy revisions were also brought to the College Academic Council (CAC) on November 29, 2021. During the review at CAC, it was noted that SA16 Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence policy's definition of "sexual harassment" did not align with the provincial government's definition (found in Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1). A further amendment to the policy reflects this alignment and speaks to the intent of the respondent, ultimately broadening the scope of the definition.

The updated policy was presented and approved at Deans and Directors Council on December 21, 2021, at the Algonquin College Leadership Team on December 16, 2021, at the Algonquin College Executive Team on January 12, 2022 and at Academic and Student Affairs Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Governors) on January 25, 2022, and the Board of Governors on February 28, 2022 without any additional revisions being suggested.

Sexual Violence Working Group

The Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group met three times during this reporting period for the purposes of reviewing and revising the Sexual Violence policy. The Working Group also discussed the efficiency and effectiveness of programs, support services, training delivery and overall awareness with regards to sexual assault and sexual violence prevention. A number of new attendees were added to this Working Group – see Appendix B for the full listing of attendees.

The Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator participated in the Sexual Violence Working Group, the Mental Health Steering Committee, Crime Prevention Ottawa's Gender Based Reference Group, and the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women's Public Education Advisory Committee. The Coordinator also served as Co-Chair of the CACUSS Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Community of Practice, and as the Chair the Ontario Colleges' Network of Sexual Violence Prevention and Response staff.

Sexual Violence Prevention Training

In the Spring of 2019, Algonquin College's Human Resources department developed an online training tool on the topic of the SA16 - Sexual Violence/Sexual Assault policy that was added to the College's professional development web site – learn more at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/pd/>.

Work is currently underway in partnership with Human Resources to update this training module, with a view to all current employees taking the updated training, and all new employees being required to go through the training as part of their induction. It is anticipated that this updated training will be available in the next reporting period.

All front-line student-facing employees were mandated to take the training, and all new employees are instructed to complete the training as part of their induction. As of March 31st, 2022, 517 new employees have completed the online training module, compared to 396 in the previous reporting period. To ensure all new employees are aware of this policy, the following steps have been put in place:

- New employees are directed to take this mandated online training in Algonquin's human resource management system "Workday", and are prompted to indicate in Workday when it is completed
- The onboarding dashboard in Workday has a link to register for this mandated online training as well as a checklist for new employees that includes the training
- New employees attending College orientation are reminded of their obligation to complete this mandatory online training
- Departmental orientations are to include a reminder for all new employees to complete this mandatory online training

Conclusion

The pandemic has continued to define the activities of Project Lighthouse during the reporting period, with two significant impacts. First, all activities were carried out virtually, and the creative and innovative approaches taken have resulted in a massive increase in reach as indicated in the report. Second, the number of students coming forward to both Security Services, Health Services and Counselling Services to report sexual violence was significantly reduced, in line with the experience of health agencies across the Province. It is not known if the incidences of sexual violence are actually lower during the pandemic, or if the reporting alone has reduced.

During this reporting period there has been a continued adjustment to the programming offered to students, with highlights being the new online training for students, the creation of a new peer to peer support program and the significant reach and impact

made possible through the continued utilization of various technologies and social media platforms during the pandemic.

Algonquin College is well positioned to begin the return to campus in the coming months, and Project Lighthouse will be able to utilize the learning that has been gained during the pandemic to great effect. The Sexual Violence and Harm Reduction Coordinator is to be applauded for leading these efforts here at the College.

Mandate of the Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group

To provide Algonquin College with an official forum to discuss, prioritize and address all matters relating to the prevention of sexual violence/sexual assault on campus.

The Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group will be responsible for:

- Assessing the sufficiency of Algonquin College's sexual violence policy;
- Assessing the effectiveness of the current programs, training and services to combat sexual violence on campus;
- Providing recommendation on the additional steps that Algonquin College may take to ensure a safe environment for all;
- Reviewing and providing feedback the draft Annual Sexual Violence Prevention Report*.

Membership:

The working group should represent the diversity of Algonquin College's student population, as well as faculty and administration. The working group will be chaired by the Vice-President of Student Services (or designate), and must have the Director of Student Support Services, and the Sexual Violence and Prevention Coordinator as well as representatives from Security Services.

Frequency of meetings:

The frequency of meetings will be determined based on current College priorities and initiatives in support of sexual violence prevention on campus. Members can expect to meet once per term (at minimum).

***Annual Sexual Violence Report**

As per the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, the annual sexual violence report should include at a minimum:

1. The number of times supports, services and accommodation relating to sexual violence are requested and obtained by students enrolled at the college or university, and information about the supports, services and accommodation.
2. Any initiatives and programs established by the college or university to promote awareness of the supports and services available to students.
3. The number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students, and information about such incidents and complaints.
4. The implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Institutions are required to share their annual sexual violence report with their Board of Governors and post the report on their website by November 1 each year. Additionally, institutions are asked to share a copy of the report, or a link to the report with the Ministry.

Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group Membership

As of March 31, 2021

Area	Title	Employee name
Communications	Manager, Communications	Bruce Hickey
Faculty	Full-Time Professor	Robert Chabassol
Faculty	Full-Time Professor	Heidi Upson Ferris
Human Resources	Labour Relations Specialist	Helen Ens
International Operations	Associate Director, International Operations	Christine Peachey
International Operations	Manager (Acting), International Student Integration	Salma Yarjani
Office of the Ombudsman	Assistant Ombudsman	Barbara Carswell
Office of the Ombudsman	Ombudsman	George Cole
Risk Management	Director of Risk Management	Michael Laviolette
Risk Management	Manager, Risk Management	Vacant
Security Services	Manager, Security Investigations	Jason Condon
Security Services	Sexual Assault & Sexual Violence Investigator	Michel Houle
Students' Association	President of the Students' Association	Emily Ferguson
Students' Association	Director on the Students' Association Board	Jessica Akwaeke
Students' Association	Wellness and Equity Centre Coordinator	Quinn Blue
Student Services	Vice President Student Services (Chair)	Laura Stanbra
Student Services	Director, Student Support Services	Ben Bridgstock
Student Services	Manager, Counselling & Spiritual Centre	Doug Stringer
Student Services	Manager, Mamidosewin Centre	Vacant
Student Services	Sexual Violence Prevention & Harm Reduction Coordinator	Sarah Crawford
Student Services	Mental Health Nurse	Tafhima Ali