

Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group

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2022-2023

**Sexual  
Assault/Sexual  
Violence Prevention  
Annual Report**

## 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 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 accommodations relating to sexual violence are requested and obtained by students enrolled at the college or university, and information about the supports, services, and accommodations.
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>

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

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*	2022-23
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	12
Total number of students requesting accommodations	8	6	0	2	0

\*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 9 (75%) of the 12 disclosures to Counselling Services related to off-campus incidents, compared to 12 (60%) last year, and 2 (17%) of the 12 disclosures were from outside this reporting period, compared to 6 (30%) last year.

As students returned to campus post pandemic in the Fall 2023 semester, there was an opportunity for sexual violence programming to continue 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, Security Services, and several 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)

**2. 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 Manager’. 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 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.

**Programming – Online and Face to Face**

	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23
Number of sessions facilitated by Project Lighthouse during the reporting period	104	102	209
Number of events	55	45	130
Number of training sessions	7	20	4
Number of Facebook/Instagram Live events	38	40	11
Number of classroom presentations	2	8	11
Number of groups run	N/A	40	53
Number of students participating in outreach efforts	55,694	12,602	14,141
Advertising campaigns providing sexual violence prevention resources in high-risk areas	N/A	258,332	203,321
Audience members listening to radio appearances on sexual violence prevention initiatives	N/A	20,000 *	10,000*
Number of students accessing peer support through trained peer support students	N/A	14	616

\*These are estimated numbers, based on typical listening numbers for the radio show.

During the reporting period, employees and students returned to the campus in significant numbers, allowing many programming related activities to be delivered face to face which while reducing overall numbers engaged has allowed students to be served in their preferred delivery mode – face to face. One key addition in the reporting period are peer-to-peer student employees that have been trained to support fellow students and run events and programming, extending the services available to students.

# Activities Included

## **Targeted ad campaigns**

Algonquin College participated in a social media campaign called 'Just Got Weird' with students online through geo-fencing at all 4 post-secondary campuses in Ottawa. This allowed the project to reach hundreds of thousands of people that interacted with the messaging. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Harm Reduction Manager appeared in a radio appearance on XM satellite radio talking about Sexual violence prevention and healthy sexuality.

## **Health and Wellness Zone**

Upon returning to campus, Algonquin created a new dedicated space branded as *The Health and Wellness Zone*. This was created as a drop-in space for students to hang out, get information about health and wellness issues, interact with peers, and attend groups and events. This space was utilized throughout the year to facilitate all of the peer support sessions, as well as the majority of groups and activities.

## **Peer-to-Peer Support**

This year, Algonquin's sexual violence awareness initiative, Project Lighthouse, was able to continue peer support through a peer-to-peer drop-in space for students to speak to fellow students who can offer support and connect students with useful resources, branded as "The Beacon". Students can chat with a trained Algonquin College student peer about mental health, sexual health, sexual violence, and substance use. Support is offered in one-on-one or drop-in service, and is non-judgmental, confidential, and is an accessible virtual space.

## **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 The Sexual Violence Prevention Taskforce, and delivering programming in collaboration with these College partners.

## **Participation in Orientation Activities**

Project Lighthouse participated in a series of incoming student orientation activities, including "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" event. Open and honest conversations about sexual health and consent occurred during the weekly "Spill the Tea", a chatting group, "Glitter and Gab" sessions in which participants used crafting materials to facilitate discussions, and "Snack Chat" where we used food to facilitate discussions. We were fortunate enough to return to campus in September to facilitate these groups as well as our larger "Sexual health" and "Everything You Want To Know About Sex" event days to have discussions on healthy sexuality, consent, and support for survivors of sexual violence.

## Residence – Ottawa Campus

During the reporting period, all Project Lighthouse events and programming have been available to all students on each campus and in residence.

Residence-specific events have included “Banging Brunch”, “Hot Drinks and Hot Topics”, “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.

## 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, events, and employee salaries. During this reporting period, Algonquin College received \$155,569 from the provincial Campus Safety Fund. These funds to date have been allocated as follows:

- \$11,713 – for multiple events, promotions, prizes, supplies, and guest speakers.
- \$5,505 – for contract services, for events, group facilitation, etc.
- \$745 - to Security Services for an enhanced security emergency broadcast system, Campus Safety app.
- \$133,554 - in staff salaries for the Sexual Violence Prevention and Harm Reduction Coordinator and the Student peer staff.
- \$4,797 on miscellaneous costs.

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

Data collected between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, by Counselling Services and Security Services at all three Algonquin College campuses indicated the following:

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22*	2022-23
Total number of formal complaints/reports of sexual assault reported	25	34	25	30	45
Incidents of sexual harassment reported within the total number reported	16	17	14	18	19
Incidents of stalking reported within the total number reported	2	2	2	0	1
Incidents of indecent exposure reported within the total number reported	1	1	1	3	2
Incidents of voyeurism reported within the total number reported	1	2	1	0	1
Incidents of sexual exploitation reported within the total number reported	0	1	0	1	0

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

The data for 2022-23 paints a mixed picture, with reports of sexual assault, stalking, and voyeurism higher than in the previous reporting period, and sexual exploitation is lower, while sexual harassment remains the same as during the previous reporting period. The return to campus and residence by students who have been isolated during the pandemic and are not as socially or emotionally prepared for post-secondary life may be a factor in the rise in reported cases in this Report.

The 40% drop in disclosures to Counselling Services reported earlier in this report contrasts with a rise in disclosures to Security Services, where disclosures increased by 18% (from 28 in 2021-22 to 33 in 2022-23). Of the 33 disclosures to Security Services, 11 (33%) disclosures related to off-campus incidents compared to 14 (47%) last year, and 3 (9%) of the 33 disclosures were related to incidents that occurred outside of this reporting period, compared to 6 (20%) last year.

While any rise in sexual violence is always deeply concerning, the fact that students feel comfortable in reporting incidences of sexual violence is positive. It is crucially important that Algonquin’s services are creating an environment where students feel safe disclosing not only current but historical incidents or incidents that are not related to Algonquin – which is a good thing because support can then be offered 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 who 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.

#### **4. *The implementation and effectiveness of the policy***

### Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence Policy

The Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence Policy SA16 was originally approved by the Algonquin College Executive Team (ACET) on April 25, 2015. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee was informed of the (then) 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 were 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 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. Algonquin College reviewed its sexual violence prevention policies and amend them, with approval from the Board of Governors, by March 1, 2022.

In December 2022, Jill Dunlop, the Minister of Colleges and Universities announced the passage of the Strengthening Postsecondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022 which outlined a number of new legislative requirements and recommendations, as follows;

#### Legislative Requirements:

- Strengthen the tools available to institutions to address instances of faculty or staff sexual misconduct toward students. Specifically, sexual misconduct toward a student will be deemed to be just cause for dismissal and an institution will be prevented from rehiring an employee found to have committed sexual misconduct toward a student.
- Prevent the use of non-disclosure agreements in situations where a student brings forward an allegation of sexual misconduct by an employee unless the non-disclosure agreement is requested by the student.
- Require institutions to have employee sexual misconduct policies that, at a minimum, include the institution's rules with respect to sexual behavior involving employees and



students of the institution and examples of disciplinary measures that may be imposed on employees who contravene the policy.

#### Ministry Recommendations:

- Institutions make plans to implement mandatory training for employees on these new legislative provisions and institutional policies to help prevent sexual misconduct.
- Institutions make plans to implement mandatory training for students on these new legislative provisions and institutional policies to help prevent sexual misconduct.
- Develop a mandatory course for all employees around consent education and prevention of sexual misconduct.
- Develop a mandatory course for all students around consent education and the prevention of sexual misconduct.

The Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group is actively working to meet the legislative requirements by the deadline of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and is exploring the feasibility of implementing the Ministry recommendations by the Fall 2023 semester.

## Sexual Violence Working Group

The Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group met three times during this reporting period to review the effectiveness of programs, support services, training delivery, and overall awareness with regard to sexual assault and sexual violence prevention. A sub-group met twice to review the implications of the ministry's December 8, 2022 memo to all post-secondary institutions. A number of new attendees were added to this Working Group – see Appendix B for the full listing of attendees.

The Sexual Violence Prevention Manager 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 Manager also served as Co-Chair of the CACUSS Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Community of Practice and as the Chair of 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 website – learn more at

Work on updating this training was completed in partnership with Human Resources during this 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 31, 2023, 673 new employees have completed the online training module, compared to 517 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

With the return to on-campus activities and a full Residence, there has been a significant jump in disclosures to Security Services and Counselling Services in this reporting period. This may be the result of a return to pre-pandemic levels with the additional factor of student preparedness for social interactions, appropriate relationship-related behaviors, and developmental immaturity and inexperience driving up incidences and disclosures. Many Algonquins students were significantly impacted by online schooling during the pandemic, leaving them unprepared to navigate relationships, academics, and self-regulation. This is consistent with anecdotal feedback around conflicts in the Residence, in classrooms, and Student Conduct submissions.

Project Lighthouse and the Beacon peer-to-peer project are well-positioned to educate students on consent, relationship norms, and healthy sexual relationships. Security Services' recent addition of a new sexual violence/sexual assault lead investigator ensures the College is well-positioned to support survivors moving forward.

**Mandate of the Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group (as of October 21, 2019)**  
(Ministry Mandated Task Force)

As stated during the Ministry's March 19, 2019 announcement, each institution is required to create a task force by September 30, 2019.

The task force will be responsible for:

- Assessing the sufficiency of Algonquin College's sexual violence policy;
- Assessing the effectiveness of the current programs 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.

The task force should represent the diversity of Algonquin College's student population, as well as faculty and administration.

Each task force must submit their independent report to their respective Board of Governors by June 1 of each year.

- Annual Report to the Board – Pursuant to subsection 17 (7.1) of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, Algonquin College is required to provide an annual report to its Board of Governors. For the 2018-19 academic year, the Minister requires that a copy of the report be provided on or before December 31, 2019. Beginning in 2020, the Minister will require Algonquin College to provide a copy of that report on or before June 1st. For transparency purposes, the ministry asks that Algonquin College makes the report to the Board publicly available, and share the report with the ministry.

***The Ministry 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:

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## Annual Report to Board of Governors

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The rights and privacy of individuals is of utmost concern. The task force should not act as an investigative or adjudicative body responsible for receiving or investigating complaints or incidents of sexual violence.

**Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group Membership**

As of March 31, 2023

Area	Title	Employee name
Communications	Manager, Communications	Bruce Hickey
Faculty	Full-Time Professor	Robert Chabassol
Faculty	Full-Time Professor	Heidi Upson Ferris
Human Resources	Manager, COL	Rebecca Volk
International Operations	Manager, International Student Integration	Niamh OShea
Office of the Ombudsman	Assistant Ombudsman	Barbara Carswell
Office of the Ombudsman	Ombudsman	George Cole
Residence Life	Community Standards Coordinator	Dana Deline
Risk Management	Director of Risk Management	Michael Laviolette
Risk Management	Manager, Risk Management	Jason Condon
Security Services	Coordinator, Security Investigations	Michel Houle
Security Services	Sexual Assault & Sexual Violence Investigator	Johanne Marelic
Students' Association	President of the Students' Association	Danielle Larente

Students' Association	Director on the Students' Association Board	Marwa Alibakhiet
Students' Association	Director on the Students' Association Board	Bhavya Taneja
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	Manger, Mamidosewin Centre	Eric Johnston
Student Services	Sexual Violence Prevention & Harm Reduction Coordinator	Sarah Crawford
Student Services	Mental Health Nurse	Fiona Weber