

Sexual Assault Policy Review Committee 2021

Terms of Reference

(March 12, 2021)

Background

Sexual violence is one of the most serious, invasive and consequential crimes that occurs in society. The harms from sexual violence are severe, multi-dimensional, consequential, and can persist through-out one's life. There are also inter-generational risks associated with sexual victimization.

Universities are not immune to sexual violence. In fact, they represent places of significant risk for sexual victimization, owing to the nature of activities occurring on campuses as well as the high prevalence of young people inter-acting in social settings during this phase of their life-course.

University communities have a duty of care to the staff, faculty and students who populate their campuses, but also toward ensuring appropriate policies, practices and preventative resources are in place. This duty of care extends to the need for universities to prevent sexual violence from occurring and ensure effective responses are in place for when incidents do occur.

From within this larger context in 2016, UNB launched its first Sexual Assault Policy and Procedure documents. The policy and procedures documents were informed by and drew upon recommendations from many sources including Sexual Violence New Brunswick, the Ontario Women's Directorate and the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, among others. In 2017, UNB, STU and NBCC launched the tri campus sexual assault strategy and hired Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocates.

Some of the key principles adopted include ensuring,

- that those who experience sexual assault during their campus experience are treated respectfully and provided with support,
- that processes are in place that protect the rights of all individuals and hold individuals who commit a sexual assault accountable,

- that UNB is providing awareness, educational and risk management programs that contribute to a safe environment.

Recognizing that addressing sexual violence is an evolving issue, the policy calls for a regular review of the policy and procedures to ensure we are providing the best support possible to survivors. In December 2020, UNB's President Dr. Paul Mazerolle convened a committee to undertake UNB's first review of the policy and procedures.

Review of the Policy

As stated in the Sexual Assault Policy

(<https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/assets/documents/vp/sexualassaultpolicy.pdf>)

"This Policy shall undergo a full review by a Committee made up of representatives of university administration, employees and students, the Human Rights Officer, and the Associate Vice-President Academic (Learning Environment) or designate who will serve as chair. A full review will take place once every four years or upon request of the UNB Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault."

Role of the Review Committee and Terms of Reference

Reporting to the president, the overall role of this committee is:

1. To review, consult and recommend improvements to UNB's Sexual Assault Policy and Procedures.
2. In support of the Review, the committee will operate under the following terms of reference:
 - a. seek and assess feedback and engage with students, faculty, staff, Sexual Violence New Brunswick, among other groups in relation to the current responses to sexual assault at UNB;
 - b. access, examine and review current practices for responding to sexual assault incidents associated with the activities or business of the university with a view toward identifying best practices;
 - c. review current practices for managing data in cases of sexual assault;
 - d. identify areas whereby the responses to sexual assault at UNB could be improved or reformed;

- e. assess opportunities and areas for improvements in education, awareness raising, and prevention;
 - f. recommend revisions or additions to policy, procedures and/or preventative responses to sexual violence at UNB.
3. In support of the review, the Committee will respect the confidential nature of work underway, and the overall need to maintain confidentiality. This will enable committee members and guests to feel safe to share sensitive information, and to speak freely during meetings with the understanding that information will not be shared outside of the meeting.
 4. The Committee will produce a report with recommendations arising from the review to be submitted to the UNB president by September 1, 2021.

Meetings

The committee will meet at least once per month. Relevant briefing documents, the agenda and minutes will be circulated prior to each meeting.

Term of the Review Committee

The committee will be established for an initial period of eight months, at which time the need for the committee to continue will be reviewed. A preliminary report including recommendations arising from the review will be submitted to the president by September 1, 2021.

Project Manager

The project manager has overall responsibility for managing this project according to the above stated roles of the committee. This includes maintaining documentation for the benefit of the committee.

Decision-Making Process

Any decisions or changes with respect to policy will need to go through the following approval process:

1. Recommended changes to be sent to the president.
2. The president will review and consult as required.
3. The president will bring recommendations to the appropriate committee(s) and also to the UNB Board of Governors for consideration and approval.

Recommended changes to procedures and the adoption of education/awareness programs are to be provided to the president for approval. Possible changes will also require consultation with other units at the university, such as student services, student union and communications among others.

Committee Membership

This committee represents members of UNB's Fredericton and Saint John Campus; along with members of our Fredericton campus community, NBCC and STU.

Members include:

1. Cathy Holtmann, Director of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre (Chair)
2. Petra Bergner, UNB's Associate Vice-President Human Resources & Organizational Development
3. Maggie Forsythe, Fredericton Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocate
4. Brock Richardson, STU's Director of Student Services
5. Mary Ellen Kingston-Ritchie, NBCC's Director of Student Development
6. Sula Levesque, UNB's Human Rights Officer
7. Trish Pendleton, Saint John Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocate
8. Sarah Devarenne, University Secretary
9. Patrick Hickey, Saint John Student Representative Council President
10. Grace Pelkey, Fredericton Student Union
11. Alicia Noreiga-Mundaroy, UNB's Graduate Student Association President
12. Danielle Harrigan, UNB instructor and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner at Saint John Regional Hospital
13. Hilary Swan, Fredericton Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocate
14. Natasha Ashfield- Director of Strategic Projects (Project Manager)