

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ANNUAL REPORT: 2023/24

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University
of Regina

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Executive Summary

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPR) has expanded, evolved, and flourished since its creation in 2018. It is founded on having a trauma-informed, client-centered approach to supporting individuals and working collaboratively with both on and off campus partners.

In 2023-24, the office had a small decrease in the number of students accessing supports from 103 to 85 students. The students contacting the office had a wide range of needs from emotional supports, counseling, accommodations, advocating, connecting to services, and attending court. The key intervention concerns were sexual assault (60%), intimate partner violence (22%), sexual harassment (11%), stalking (4%), and sexual violence (3%). Intimate partner violence and sexual assault were the leading reasons for service comprising 83% of all interventions. 20% of those utilizing services chose to explore University processes; whereas 80% felt more comfortable using supportive services without reporting their experiences. Many students that utilized services did not suffer gender-based violence at the University rather their traumatic experiences affected their ability to focus on their academic pursuits.

The Step In Step Up (SISU) program offered 579 staff/ faculty/students *Introductory* sessions (1.5 hr) and eight individuals participated in *Advanced* (6hr) trainings. SISU addresses rape culture and myths, consent, bystander intervention styles, how to respond to disclosures, intimate partner violence, and community resources.

SISU and Residence hosted the third annual *SISU:Against Gender-Based Violence Week* which included discussions and activities focused on consent, anime and gender-roles, sexual harassment, and self-care. While in the winter semester, URInternational and SISU collaborated on activities that focused on dating in Canada, consent, setting boundaries, and gender-based violence.

SISU is currently in the process of developing a healthy relationship curriculum for students which will include healthy/unhealthy relationships, communication, values, and boundaries. The Status of Women Office of Saskatchewan provided a grant that was used to hire a university student, purchase promotional materials, and marketing.

The office also offered unique programs based on the specific needs of the University, including a group for survivors, conversational sessions for URInternational, URPriority, and faculty specific lectures.

SVPR office has also created opportunities for students by supervising two Bachelor of Social Work practicum students and two Master in Social Work Candidates. Having students in the office has enriched both our programming and services offered.

U of R Sexual Violence Awareness Survey was offered to students in Sept/Oct. 2022 with 337 students completed the survey and a report including data and recommendations was finalized in 2023. In essence, a majority of students feel safe at the University but are looking for more programming and information on gender-based violence and University policy and processes. The next step for the survey will be to have the information from the survey inform future programming.

Highlights:

- **85 STUDENTS**

75 victim/survivors of violence utilized SVPR services.

- **SISU STUDENTS**

offered *Introductory Training* to 454 students and 5 students participated in *Advanced Training*.

- **COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS**

2 BSW students, 2 MSW Candidates, and one student employee worked with the SVPR Office.

- **SISU:UR AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: RESIDENCE LIFE**

SISU offered a week of activities including consent and cookies, trivia night, what is sexual harassment, and Anime challenging gender roles.

- **783 STAFF/FACULTY/STUDENTS**

attended educational sessions facilitated by SVPR.

- **SISU STAFF/FACULTY**

offered *Introductory Training* to 125 staff/faculty and 3 staff participated in *Advanced Training*.

- **DEVELOPMENT OF SISU: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Status Of Women of Saskatchewan provided a grant to create *SISU: Healthy Relationships*.

- **SISU:UR AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: URINTERNATIONAL**

SISU offered a week of activities for students focusing on consent, dating, and healthy relationships.

Definitions:

(Found in University of Regina Sexual Violence/Misconduct Policy)

Prohibited relationship: Sexual or intimate relationships between individuals where there is a supervisory role or where an individual has influence over another's current or future academic activities, working conditions, or career or academic advancement. This includes relationships between: i) faculty, or teaching staff members, or emeriti and students; ii) staff and students; iii) coaching or athletics staff members and student athletes; iv) supervisors and subordinates. Excepted from this prohibition are cases in which the relationships have been previously addressed and permitted pursuant to the Conflict of Interest policy and procedure.

Sexual violence/misconduct: is 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 but not limited to sexual assault; sexual stealing; sexual harassment: indecent or sexualized exposure; public masturbation; voyeurism; and knowingly publishing, distributing, , transmitting, selling, making available or advertising an intimate image of a person without their consent.

Sexual assault: is intentional sexual contact or touching of another person with any object or body part without consent, or by force. It can include unwanted kissing, fondling, oral, anal sexual intercourse, or any other unwanted act of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment: is conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that is offensive, unsolicited, or unwelcome act of a sexual nature.

Prevention:

This activity summary depicts the number of awareness programs and *Step In Step Up: UR Action Against Gender-Based Violence Training (SISU)* sessions offered by the office from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

In 2023-2024 there were 48 training opportunities offered by the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response office (SVPR), with 783 student/ staff/ faculty participating in a wide range of educational opportunities. The information sessions/webinars offered focused on healthy relationships, consent, how to be a positive bystander, and understanding sexual/intimate partner violence. SVPR also collaborated on projects with URInternational, Residence Life, ESL, and Nursing.

SISU is a collaboration between SVPR and the Non-Academic Conduct (Conduct) offices with a curriculum that provides participants with information and skills needed to create a community free from gender-based violence. Informed by current research and promising violence prevention practices, SISU addresses rape culture and myths, consent, bystander intervention styles, how to respond to disclosures, and community resources.

SISU offered *Introductory Training* (1 hr) to 452 students and 125 staff/faculty; *Advanced Training* (6hr) to five students and three staff. SISU also developed an on-line version of the program using Rise360 with plans to launch the program in the upcoming year.

SISU is currently in the process of developing a healthy relationship curriculum for students. The Status of Women Office of Saskatchewan provided a grant used hire a university student to help build the curriculum, promotional materials, and marketing. The pilot sessions will be facilitated in May and the program offered to students in the fall.

SISU also facilitated the third annual *SISU Week: Casual Conversations about Gender-based Violence* hosted by Residence Life focusing on gender-based violence and consent. This year we also included a conversation around Anime and changing gender roles which was a big hit. All events were well attended and comprised interesting conversations in a fun manner. The office also offered Residence a session in the winter semester on sexual harassment and assertive communication. SVPR has a longstanding partnership with URInternational. In 2023-24 this partnership included 3 sessions per semester on dating, healthy relationships, and consent and the *SISU Week: URInternational Casual Conversations about Gender-Based Violence*.

Many of the events and social media communications offered by the SVPR office would not have been possible without the energy and enthusiasm of social work students. This year the SVPR office was fortunate enough to include two Bachelor of Social Work practicum students and two Master of Social Work candidates in the office which enriched the program with their ideas and creativity.



SISU: Sexual Violence Awareness Survey Results

SVPR and the Conduct office consider it important to substantiate the effectiveness of programming and respond to the needs and/or concerns of students. Therefore, it was determined that a climate survey would be completed before SISU was widely available to students and then again on regular intervals after. The intent of the survey is to provide actionable data that will inform future programming. The *Step In Step Up: UR Action Against Gender-Based Violence Survey* was distributed and data collected between September and October 2022. A Master of Social Work candidate then analyzed and interpreted the survey results.

327 students volunteered to complete the survey and the key findings included:

- a majority of students (73.3%) feel safe at the U of R. Male identifying individuals report feeling the most safe while people within 2SLGBTQ+ communities feel the least.
- only 22.6% of students know where to make a report of sexual violence/misconduct.
- a majority of respondents are unaware of either the SVPR, Respect, or Student Conduct Offices.
- majority students are interested in quality education about gender-based violence.
- 90% of students indicated they understand consent and most indicated that the questions concerning bystander interventions was either not applicable or they would not intervene.

The recommendations in the report include offering more information on the SVPR and Conduct offices, Sexual Violence/Misconduct Policies and Processes, and how to access supports. Students also indicated that they want more collaborations between the offices and campus departments and groups. A number of respondents also mentioned increasing social media presence as a means of communicating with the campus community. This is a brief synopsis of the report, the entire report can be found at uregina.ca/sexual-violence.

Response:

In 2023-2024, SVPR office continued to utilize Zoom for Healthcare which is a safe and confidential means of connecting with those that have experienced violence as well as offering support groups, webinars, and trainings.

An unexpected positive outcome to the on-line platform is that some individuals appreciated the ease, simplicity, and privacy of participating in either educational or supportive services through zoom.

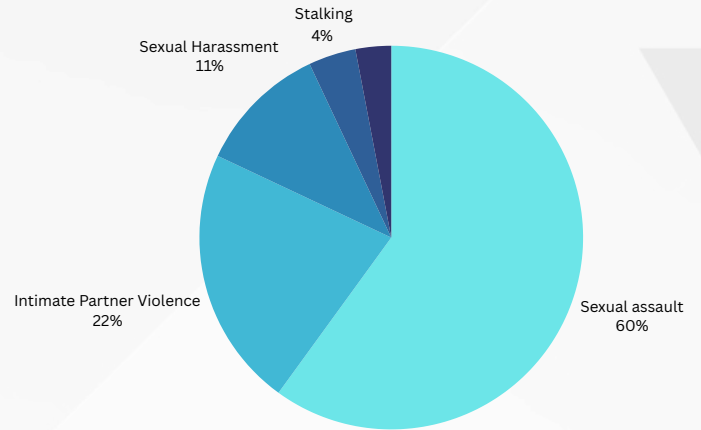
The activity summary table indicates the number of individuals that have directly utilized the services of the SVPR: 82 individuals' utilized services (a decrease of 23%) from last year, 75 survivors/ victims of violence and seven others that were either supporting someone or students involved in alternative resolutions. The key intervention concerns for survivors/ victims were sexual assault (60%), intimate partner violence (ipv) (22%), sexual harassment (11%), stalking (4%) and sexual violence and other (3%). IPV/sexual assault was the leading reasons for service comprising 82% of all interventions with 80% of those individuals opting to disclose their experiences without reporting. There has been an increase in the number of students participating in either the Regina Police Services or university processes. In those situations the role of the office is to advocate, educate, and/or attend legal/university processes.

Survivors of ipv/sexual assault disclosed either historic and/or recent violence and were requiring emotional supports, active listening, and resources. Nine survivors/victims needed accommodation letters and five asked for support as they went through legal processes and court.

SVPR also offered supports to students in residence through the UR Priority program and UR International students through drop in opportunities. The office also offered a group each semester called *Healing from Trauma* for students focusing on recovering from their experiences.

Intervention Concern	Students
Sexual assault	44
Intimate partner violence	16
Sexual harassment	8
Stalking	3
Sexual violence and other	2

Reasons for service



Nature of Intervention – Report or Disclosure:

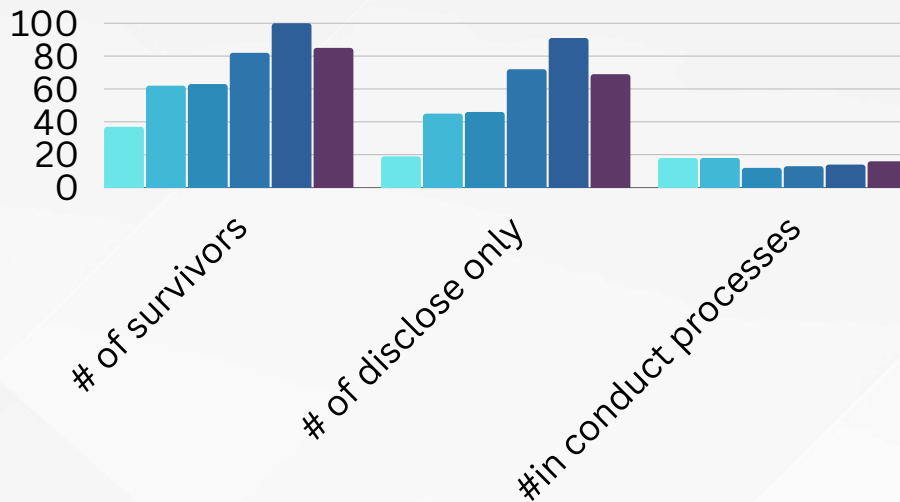
There are four options for individuals that would like support after experiencing gender-based violence; disclose only to the SVPR office, or participate in a consultation, a informal process, and/or a formal investigation with the Conduct Office.

Survivors/victims have the choice as to whether to disclose or report gender-based violence. No matter which option the survivor chooses the role of SVPR office is to support and advocate for them in a trauma-informed and client-centered approach.

Many individuals who experience gender-based violence choose not to participate in the reporting processes. This is largely due to the nature of gender-based violence, societal pressures to stay silent, distrust of systems or processes, and desire to “move past” their violence. Changing attitudes and beliefs around gender- based violence and increased awareness of reporting options may translate into an increase in reporting

Students can participate in a consultation with the Conduct coordinator as a means of deciding whether to report the incident. The office coordinator can explain the processes and options available to the student and offer informal problem-solving. Secondly, the Conduct office can facilitate informal processes with alternative resolution outcomes in cases where the complainant and respondent agree upon a solution, this typically does not occur in cases of sexual assault. Finally, the Conduct coordinator and an Investigative team can complete a formal investigation with outcomes commonly determined by the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and depending on the incident possibly an Adjudication Panel.

Nature of Intervention



During this reporting year, Conduct Office received 16 sexual violence reports: 12 were sexual harassment, three were stalking, and one was sexual assault. The sexual assault allegation is currently in the legal system and therefore the formal investigation has been paused at this time. The Conduct office completed six consultations, eight informal resolutions, two formal investigations that were completed and one paused formal investigation.

Issues:

The focus for 2023-2024 has been on supporting students/staff/ faculty as they return back to campus and building, promoting, and implementing SISU programing. There are a number of issues that will need to be considered moving forward.


There was staffing changes over this year which could have contributed to decrease in number utilizing the office. However, if the number of individuals supported continue to rise and/or prevention activities increase the University should consider adding resources to the office. The position has two different functions with distinctive competencies and expertise. As the office expands having two staff that reflect the nature of the office may be beneficial; one staff focusing on prevention and communication and the other for support and counseling.

Communicating and promoting SISU and activities continues to be a struggle due to both the size of the University and time constrictions. SVPR will continue to explore different ways of communicating with students in regards to both services and prevention messaging.

SVPR has struggled to maintain some collaborations due to increase demand for supports. It will be important to continue the practice of community building in order to meet the needs of staff/faculty/ students.

Future:

The SVPR office has witnessed significant growth and change. It is important to continue building programing and services that best meet the needs of the university and reflecting promising practices.

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- *The University of Regina Sexual Violence Awareness Survey* recommendations should be executed taking into account practical considerations such as time restraints and budget. It would also be beneficial for the office to complete the survey every few years as a means of insuring quality programing that meet the needs of students.
 - SVPR should continue to build and maintain collaborative relationships with faculties, departments, and offices. Collaborations and consultations are an important means of creating and maintaining trauma-informed processes that are easy to access and open to all.