

Action Committee on Gender-Based & Sexual Violence Terms of Reference

Background:

In September 2021, online allegations of sexual violence in residence prompted an investigation by London Police Services, an independent investigation initiated by university administration, and the implementation of a [multifaceted action plan on sexual violence and student safety](#) led by the University.

Among the plan's key initiatives was the creation of a task force (i.e., committee) consisting of students, staff, faculty, and community partners, to study safety concerns specific to gender-based & sexual violence, and activities and programming related to students' introduction, and transition to university life.

Purpose:

The Action Committee on Gender-Based & Sexual Violence (AC-GBSV) has been established to address the issue by making recommendations aimed at changing the campus culture at Western. The terms 'gender-based violence' or 'sexual violence' may be referred separately, together, or interchangeably to refer to all forms of violence discussed at the AC-GBSV.

Specifically, the Committee will focus its attention on **four** activities:

1. **listening** to a diverse range of student and community perspectives, including members of campus and of the broader London community, on Western's approach to *prevention, education, and response* to gender-based and sexual violence—particularly as it relates to key times of harmful activity (e.g., the first eight weeks of the academic year), but with attention to the entire student experience;
2. **identifying gaps and opportunities** in Western's policies, curricula, on-campus activities, and programming to address gender-based and sexual violence;
3. **collecting ideas**, including taking into consideration previous consultations, on best practices in addressing gender-based and sexual violence on campus;
4. **recommending initiatives** that will lead to meaningful, immediate, and visible change in Western's campus culture—one that prioritizes the prevention of sexual violence and the safety of all community members.

Guiding principles

- Recognizing the ongoing impacts of intersecting forms of structural, historical, and interpersonal violence experienced by people and communities, an equity-oriented, anti-racist, decolonial and anti-oppressive lens guides our work. The Committee should aim to address and confront the link between GBSV and colonialism. Specifically, the Committee takes a trauma- and violence-informed approach to all processes and recommended actions,

prioritizing emotional and cultural safety for all involved, including in how the committee works (e.g. use of Chatham House Rule¹), and in all communications, action plans, etc.

- The Committee’s work is grounded in specific strategies and pathways to enhance (as needed) and implement the procedures outlined in “[PROCEDURE FOR POLICY 1.52 – Policy on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#)”; a priority is to emphasize: **Accountability; Transparency; and Action**
- The focus of recommended actions is on the student experience at Western, starting when (undergraduate and graduate) students are transitioning to Western and London, and continuing throughout their time at Western. The key goal is how to prevent sexual violence and respond to structural factors that normalize, enable, and reify violence (e.g., harmful cultural norms and beliefs operating on campus). As appropriate, the Committee will consider the role for ongoing GBSV education for the entire campus community.

Methodology:

As noted by external experts, Western has a very strong policy regarding Gender-Based and Sexual Violence², and a comprehensive set of procedures to implement the policy³. The Committee will consult with community stakeholders (broadly defined) concerning sexual violence and campus safety, and, grounded in these foundational documents, review Western’s current implementation programs and activities, and related best practices that may be gathered from other venues, to develop a Western-specific set of strategies to ensure full implementation of the policy and procedures. The Committee utilizes culturally safe, trauma and violence-informed approaches in its commitment to safety, transparency, action and accountability in all activities.

The Committee will initiate an open call(s) to members of the Western & London community to submit relevant research, data, publications etc. to assist the committee in its work.

Committee Membership:

- *Co-chairs:*
 - **Terry McQuaid**, Director, Wellness & Well-being (Student Experience), Designate, Associate Vice President Student Experience (Gender-Based & Sexual Violence)
 - **Nadine Wathen**, Professor & Canada Research Chair in Mobilizing Knowledge on Gender-Based Violence (Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing)
- *Appointees:*
 - USC President, **Zamir Fakirani**
 - SOGS President, **kirstyn seanor**
 - Associate Director, Residence Conduct & Conflict Resolution, **Lisa Highgate**

¹ “The Chatham House Rule helps create a trusted environment to understand and resolve complex problems. Its guiding spirit is: share the information you receive, but do not reveal the identity of who said it. The Rule reads as follows: *When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.*” <https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>

² https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp152.pdf

³ https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp152_procedure.pdf

- Academic Director of the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, **Katreena Scott**
- Executive Director of Anova, **Jessie Rodger**
- Western Special Constable Service, **Kim Reynolds**
- *Open Seats (identified by Co-chairs and President through one-page letters of interest):*
 - Undergraduate student representative, **Kitt Kong**
 - Graduate student representative, **Cassandra DeMelo**
 - Faculty member representative, **Kaitlynn Mendes**
 - Staff member representative, **Shazad Chaudhary**
 - Parent representative, **Dave Walton**

Organization:

- Twice monthly meetings commence following confirmation of membership
- Committee will be supported by dedicated administrative support staff/writer/editor
- Committee establishes guiding principles for its work, and organize its key tasks in a work plan to ensure timely progress toward fulfilling its mandate
- Committee activity should focus on developing actionable recommendations and specific strategies to improve Western's approach to *prevention, education, and response* to sexual and gender-based violence on campus
- Inputs may include existing policies (e.g., [MAPP 1.52](#)), external resources, findings of the independent external review*, and data gathered through consultations (e.g., students, student government, administration, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, content experts, members of the London community, etc.)

Deliverables:

The committee will deliver its findings and recommendations in a written report submitted to the President in early spring of 2022. Implementation of the recommendations emerging from the AC-GBSV report will become the responsibility of a separately constituted committee.

All recommendations will include strategies for monitoring the success of actions to address GBSV prevention and response. For example, quantitative metrics and qualitative ways of knowing will be proposed, such as Indigenous methodologies that can provide opportunities to increase how we can qualitatively evaluate the implementation of recommended actions. Developing such metrics in advance will inform the Committee's recommendations to ensure that actions are accompanied by strategies for defining, supporting and assessing their ultimate impact.

Note: In addition to the work of the AC-GBSV, an independent review will also be examining the surrounding events of September 10-12. The allegations that prompted the investigation are part of an ongoing investigation by the London Police Service, and will **not be examined by the review or the AC-GBSV.*