

October 30, 2015

Dear Colleagues and Students,

Preventing sexual violence on campus

Proposed legislation introduced by the Province on Tuesday will require universities, colleges and employers to establish stand-alone policies and stronger support programs aimed at eradicating sexual violence and harassment. If passed, the [new Act](#) would make safer communities across Ontario that are more responsive to the needs of survivors and complaints about sexual violence and harassment. I applaud the government's initiative and want to highlight steps Western is taking to meet the aims of this important new legislation.

In September 2014, Western was among the first Canadian universities to adopt [a stand-alone policy on sexual violence](#). Our policy is backed by [procedural guidelines](#), resources and programs designed to help students, faculty and staff deal with incidents of sexual violence on campus. Information on those resources are outlined on [our sexual violence website](#), including a new video that provides an animated explanation of the [meaning of consent](#).

Western also has a dedicated Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Committee, which is a working group of the Safe Campus Advisory Partners committee. The committee includes voices from across campus and the greater Western community, including representatives from Campus Community Police Services, Western's Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Communications & Public Affairs, Equity & Human Rights Services, Housing & Ancillary Services, Indigenous Services, School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, Student Development Centre, Student Health Services and Western International, as well as graduate, undergraduate students and community partners.

Earlier this week, Western hosted a forum called "Consent & Compassion: Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence At Western" with keynote speaker Rachel Alicia Griffin, an anti-gender violence advocate and survivor. The event also included a panel discussion featuring on-campus and off-campus support services.

And Western recently learned it will benefit from a \$381,000 public education grant through the Ontario Women's Directorate to support our efforts in raising awareness about and responding to sexual violence. The Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, announced the grant as part of \$2.4 million in funding for eight public education projects across Ontario's education sector. The initiative Western is leading involves a partnership with Guelph, Queen's, Trent, Ryerson, UOIT, York, Fanshawe College, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, and the Middlesex-London Health Unit. The partnership will leverage resources from the existing ['Draw the Line'](#) and ['It starts with you, it stays with him'](#) campaigns, and embed them into existing resources such as ['Upstander Training'](#) and sexual violence education campaigns.

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I wish to thank the many staff, faculty and students across campus who have taken leadership roles in addressing this critical issue — one that demands the attention and involvement of our entire campus community.

Celebrating our newest Killam laureate

I look forward to the afternoon of November 25 when it will be my honour to introduce Western Distinguished University Professor and recent Killam Prize winner David Bentley as the second featured speaker in the President's Lecture Series. Professor Bentley is one of Western's most loved and highly accomplished English professors who will be sharing his unique perspective on the creation of our Canadian identity at the Paul Davenport Theatre located in Talbot College. I am also delighted that Paul Kennedy, host of CBC Radio's "Ideas" program, will be here to moderate a post-lecture conversation with David, followed by a public reception in the lobby outside the theatre. More details on this free public lecture will be available soon and I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Amit Chakma', with a stylized, flowing script.

Amit Chakma
President & Vice-Chancellor