



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
CRIMINAL LAW REFORM
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY



EVA BC
ENDING VIOLENCE ASSOCIATION

Inter-University Conversation on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Summary Report

April 21st, 2015

Jointly hosted by: The International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, UBC Alma Mater Society's Sexual Assault Support Centre, and Ending Violence Association of British Columbia

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Location: Liu Institute for Global Issues



NATIONAL
Victims of Crime
AWARENESS WEEK

As part of the Department of Justice Canada's Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2015 initiative, the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy (ICCLR), the UBC Alma Mater Society's Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC) and Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC) jointly held a one-day conference addressing sexual assault prevention and response on post-secondary campuses across British Columbia.

The event, *an Inter-University Conversation on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response*, brought together over 100 staff and students from 22 post-secondary institutions across British Columbia. Select community partners in the Vancouver area were also in attendance.

The day opened with keynote speaker Elizabeth Sheehy, Professor of Law at the University of Ottawa, who presented on her work with the Sexual Assault Task Force at her university, and the development of a report to create cultural change on campus. She raised a number of issues on how sexual violence is addressed in postsecondary institutions, such as unevenness among university policies, the need for fully autonomous sexual assault centres, and the need to train front line staff for cultural competencies. The keynote was followed by Chris Hackett, Discipline Officer from the University of Alberta and Chair of the University of Alberta Sexual Misconduct Review Committee, who presented on the experiences of their university's Sexual Assault Centre, and emphasized the importance of cross-training and close working relationships between diverse campus stakeholders.

The afternoon portion of the event began with a powerful presentation from two UBC students, who shared the impacts of sexual assault through spoken word poetry and music. They were followed by staff and students from the University of Victoria (UVic), who presented on prevention initiatives aimed at educating perpetrators of sexualized violence. Carol Bilson and Piotr Burek from the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) at UVic, joined by Kirsten McMenamie, Student Policy and Judicial officer, and Greg Atkinson from UVic's Student Society shared the origins of UVic's Men's Circle, in which male-identified members of the UVic community convene regularly to discuss masculinity in a larger context, and learn about consent and meaningful bystander intervention. The Men's Circle came out of the idea that survivor-centered services often fail to address systemic factors, and that there needs to be a move towards educational, "community of care" responses rather than responses that are purely punitive. Educational initiatives at UVic's AVP allow perpetrators to learn about the roots and impacts of their behaviours, and unlearn the systemic teachings that led to these behaviours in the first place.

Finally, Monica Reilly, Senior Researcher and Policy Advisor at Colleges Ontario spoke about the development of the college sector task force to address sexual violence. Her presentation highlighted the development of the task force's sexual assault policy, the implementation of such policies on college campuses, and how the Ontario template may benefit all academic institutions. Issues brought up regarding the creation and implementation of the stand-alone policy include inclusivity, accessibility of language, duties to report, and metrics that should be used to measure progress.

The event concluded with a roundtable discussion exploring challenges around the reporting of sexual assault on campuses. The round table featured Patricia Barkaskas, a lawyer who has worked closely with Indigenous peoples in their encounters with the justice system; Lucia Lorenzi, an activist and doctoral candidate in the department of English at UBC whose research focuses on the relationship of silence to discourses of sexual assault; Kirsten McMenamie, from the University of Victoria's Office of Judicial Affairs and Student Advocacy Initiatives; Constable Wanda Marion, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for 12 years; and Elizabeth Sheehy, Vice Dean Research and Shirley Greenberg Chair for

Women and the Legal Profession at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law. Key points and critiques that were brought up during the discussion included the issue of trust in the reporting process, the need for better guidelines, and sensitivity to the needs of survivors.

Overall, the project was successful in achieving the outcomes envisioned. As the first event of its kind in British Columbia, the day allowed individuals across the province working on similar issues to meet, learn from each other's knowledge and experiences, and establish connections for future collaboration. From policy to practice, it was a jam-packed day of important conversations noting the many areas where improvements need to be made. Through the sharing of experiences and good practices, the event will give participants new tools to raise awareness about sexual assault, consent, and meaningful bystander intervention; to better support the needs of survivors; and to improve the overall prevention of sexualized violence, creating safer campus communities. We are optimistic that the *Inter-University Conversation on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response* will be the first of many collaborative efforts aimed at tackling sexual assault on post-secondary campuses in British Columbia, and hopefully nationwide.

About the Organizers:

AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre is located on unceded Musquem territories at UBC Vancouver. The centre is a support space for survivors of sexualised violence and offers services including emotional support, advocacy and accompaniment to all genders. The centre is also involved in education and outreach and strives to develop community partnerships to work together to prevent sexual assault.

EVA BC is a provincial, not-for-profit umbrella organization that works on behalf of 240 programs across British Columbia which respond to sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse. EVA BC works on a number of structural levels to promote the needs of these organizations and the clients that they represent. EVA BC provides support through training, research, policy and legislative analysis as well as multi-sector community co-ordination initiatives. Currently, EVA BC is running the Western Canada Sexual Assault Initiative, a 2-Year project being undertaken with partners from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It has a focus on improving responses to disclosures of sexual assault in a number of sectors, including higher education in order that they are better informed, more coordinated and have a deeper understanding of the immediate and long-term implications of sexual assault and what constitutes an empowering response.

ICCLR is an independent international institute situated on UBC Campus and formally affiliated with the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. ICCLR's mission is to improve the quality of justice through the reform of criminal law, policy, and practice based on democratic principles, the rule of law and respect for human rights in criminal law and the administration of criminal justice. Violence against women is one of its areas of work and expertise.