

POSITION STATEMENT: Sexual Culture, Gender Based Violence & Sexual Violence Prevention

ISSUE:

Ensuring that students have access to a respectful, safe, survivor-centered, and accountable campus culture that actively participates in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, through inclusive, comprehensive, and campus-wide education and training, and provides meaningful, accessible supports both on and off campus.

Students deserve to live and learn in environments that are safe, respectful, and free from gender-based and sexual violence.

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY:

- Bishop's University
- City of Sherbrooke
- Borough of Lennoxville
- Government of Quebec
- Government of Canada
- Students

DETAILS:

Universities across Canada have been identified as having a heightened risk of sexual violence during the first six weeks of every semester, also known as a "red zone". The Bishop's community operates within this national context and must prioritize sexual and gender-based violence prevention.

Creating a safe campus requires student and community cohesion. Including the acknowledgement of rape culture ¹ within our campus. Historically, student voices advocating for sexual violence prevention reform in our community have lacked support. The Bishop's University Students' Representative Council (BUSRC) strongly supports centering students' voices and survivors within all areas of sexual and gender-based violence prevention. Identified concerns, such as insufficient lighting, lack of safety in off-campus housing, and lack of institutional transparency, are ongoing issues that impact student safety. Addressing these concerns requires both cultural and structural changes that center on student voices.

IMPACT/ANALYSIS:

Sexual and gender-based violence prevention must be proactive and not reactive. Effective action requires strengthened and ongoing initiatives, education, and transparency. Failure to uphold ongoing action compromises sexual culture and student safety within

the Bishop's community. When prevention efforts lack consistency and accountability, it allows for rape culture¹ to persist.

POSITION:

The Students' Representative Council advocates for a respectful and safe student culture that is free from sexual and gender-based violence. We support and advance education, prevention and survivor-centered initiatives that address consent, sexual violence, and healthy relationships. We commit to ensuring that students feel believed, supported, and protected.

The Students' Representative Council supports the following:

Long-Term Goals:

- The prioritization of physical and organizational safety measures, including improved lighting and secure off-campus housing in the student village.
- The full implementation of every recommendation from the 2022 CLISSAR Report, as in the eyes of students, is essential for community safety
- Sustained and ongoing funding for the Sexual Violence Support Centre and additional survivor-centered services.
- Implementation of secure external lock systems in off-campus student buildings.
- Ongoing support and maintenance of the Sexual Culture Committee
- Development of specific sexual violence prevention policies and training within experiential learning experiences
- Continuation of mandatory consent and bystander training for students, staff and faculty

Short-Term

- High-quality consent education, sexual violence prevention and bystander intervention training for all community members
- Clear communication to students about off-campus and on-campus resources
- The creation of additional student voices within campus sexual violence prevention

The Students' Representative Council opposes the following:

- Reductions in funding that decrease the level of support available to students affected by sexual and gender-based violence
- Institutional inaction or non-transparent actions regarding the prevention and accountability of sexual violence

Attachments and Definitions:

¹ Rape Culture: A culture in which dominant ideas, social practices, media images and societal institutions implicitly or explicitly condone sexual assault by normalizing or trivializing sexual violence and by blaming survivors for their own abuse. Rape culture does not necessarily refer to explicit acts of rape or sexual assault, but rather draws attention to the social environments that foster the inequities that result in women, Indigenous peoples, disabled people, non-binary, and trans women experiencing particularly high rates of violence. Rape culture is a pervasive issue on Canadian campuses that facilitates sexual violence within post-secondary communities. (Students for Consent Culture Canada Glossary, 2022). <https://www.sfcccanada.org/glossary>