

University of King's College
Summary of the January 2023 Update to the Action Plan for a Culture of Consent & Respect:
Response to the Rubin Thomlinson Interim Report

As part of the Independent Review commissioned by the University of King's College in February 2021, currently being conducted by Janice Rubin and Elizabeth Bingham of Rubin Thomlinson LLP, Rubin Thomlinson provided King's with an [Interim Report](#) in May 2022. The Interim Report ("the report") contained 10 recommendations to drive improvements within the spheres of campus culture and policy regarding sexualized violence prevention and response. In August 2022 King's published a response to these recommendations, Action Plan for a Culture of Consent & Respect: Response to the Rubin Thomlinson Interim Report ("the Action Plan"). The Action Plan outlined how King's would implement those 10 recommendations.

This update outlines the progress made on the Action Plan since its original publication in August. As of January 2023, King's has made substantial progress on the recommendations contained in the Rubin Thomlinson Interim Report. A comprehensive description of how each recommendation has been implemented is provided in the [Action Plan](#). The University will continue its focused pursuit of the work described in the recommendations, work that forms the preconditions for a cultural shift that will support lasting change.

Status of Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that King's share this Interim Report with the community.

January 2023 Status: This recommendation is implemented.

Recommendation 2: We further recommend that King's share its response to this Interim Report with the community, including a plan for addressing the recommendations below. We suggest that King's take these steps by July 4, 2022.

January 2023 Status: This recommendation is implemented.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that King's consider how it can put supports in place to allow the community to process our final report on historical allegations.

January 2023 Status: The recommendation to consider how supports can be put in place is implemented to the extent it can be until the University knows more about the Final Report and exactly how it, and action by the University in response to its recommendations, may affect members of the community. We will continue learning and making improvements.

Supports to best address the needs of faculty, staff, alumni, and students are in place. These supports were identified through a process of consultation undertaken by the SHSO, Vice-President, and Dean of Students with leaders from each of these groups. Supports that will be variously available include:

- King's SHSO, Equity Officer, Student Support Advisor, Accessibility Officer, Chapel representatives;
- Student-based supports from South House, the Dalhousie Student Union Survivor Support Centre, and the Dalhousie 2SLGBTQ Advisor;

- Community mental health care professionals, including individuals with expertise in social work and trauma-informed therapy;
- Resources available from the Medavie Blue Cross and from LifeWorks' Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP).

Individual and group support options will be available to students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Information about how to access these supports will be provided when the Final Report and the actions the university will take to act on its conclusions and recommendations is shared with the community.

The University understands that communication about the Final Report may adversely impact members of the community. For this reason, **the University commits to offering the supports described as the need for them arises, including when announcements about the Final Report are made, as the Final Report is shared and as the University takes actions to fully implement its recommendations.**

Recommendation 4: We recommend that King's review its existing training and consider how it can enhance training about the Policy, and about sexualized violence more generally, for students, faculty and staff. We also recommend that King's consider how this training could be made mandatory or incentivized, in order to encourage maximum participation.

January 2023 Status: The recommendation to review existing training on the Policy and on sexualized violence more generally, considering how training can be enhanced and how training could be made mandatory or incentivized, is implemented and will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis. We will continue learning and making improvements.

During the fall term there were over 40 events, workshops, and orientations to promote and develop understanding of the sexualized violence policy, as well as prevention, and response.

- Target groups included orientation week leaders, Residence Life staff, members of the Board of Governors and all new faculty and staff. Multiple "lunch and learn" trainings were offered to current faculty and staff, with good attendance.
- The SHSO attended the first meeting of each academic program at King's during the fall term, to deliver a presentation on the sexualized violence policy, and related prevention and response.
- Students who completed the online Brightspace course on "Consent and Respect at King's" were eligible to win prizes.
- Workshop highlights include participation in [Action Now Atlantic's Consent Week and Healthy Relationship Awareness Week](#), hosting Waves of Change Bystander Intervention and Communities of Accountability training for students, sessions on trauma-informed active listening, as well as peer-led sessions on substance use and consent.
- A Student Educator has been hired for the 2022/23 academic year. The student hosted events and is collaborating with peers in similar roles at post-secondary institutions across the province.
- Further training will continue in the winter term.

Recommendation 5: We suggest that King's enhance its training on the Policy and sexualized violence during orientation week for new students.

January 2023 Status: This recommendation is implemented and will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis. We will continue learning and making improvements.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that King’s consider how training on the Policy and sexualized violence can be incorporated into its onboarding process for new faculty and staff.

January 2023 Status: This recommendation is implemented and will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis. We will continue learning and making improvements.

Recommendation 7: We recommend that King’s provide a forum for its professors to engage in deep reflection on their role as teachers and mentors in the context of a small, close-knit community, as well as on how they can maintain the highest standards of professionalism in their relationships with students. We suggest that the aim of this period of reflection should be a document that addresses appropriate boundaries between professors and students that supplements the Yellow Book, such as a Code of Conduct or a Statement of Principles.

January 2023 Status: Work to implement this recommendation is under way.

- The SHSO conducted an environmental scan on policies across Canada.
- The SHSO drafted a discussion guide for faculty based on this research.
- The SHSO and Vice-President attended a workshop on setting healthy boundaries and the role of post-secondary institutions in student-instructor relationships.
- The Vice-President and program directors reviewed and developed a revised discussion guide, which has circulated through all academic programs for consultation and feedback on appropriate boundaries.
- The Vice-President will synthesize instructor/program feedback and existing policies & approaches into a draft Statement of Principles or Code of Conduct and present it to faculty in the winter term.
- This draft (Statement of Principles or Code of Conduct) will then be formally reviewed by the Sexualized Violence Policy Implementation Advisory Committee, and through a process of community consultation.
- The resulting document will be presented to the President and Board of Governors for approval. Upon approval by the Board, the document will be implemented.

Recommendation 8: We suggest that King’s consider how it can enhance resources in the area of sexualized violence awareness, prevention, and response. In addition to enhanced resources for training as described above, we suggest that King’s specifically consider how it can enhance the resources directed towards the diversity of support available to students in terms of gender, race, and sexuality, access to mental health counselling, and support for respondents to a report of sexualized violence.

January 2023 Status: The recommendation to consider how to enhance resources in the areas of sexualized violence, awareness, prevention, and response is implemented and will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis. The recommendation to consider how to enhance resources directed towards the diversity of supports available to students in the terms described, and support for respondents to a report of sexualized violence is implemented and will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis. We will continue learning and making improvements.

Diversifying Supports:

- King’s established a Mi’kmaw and Indigenous Advisory Council which will advise on all matters regarding supports and resources directed toward Mi’kmaw and Indigenous members of the community.

- In collaboration with Mount Saint Vincent University, King's hired an [Auntie-in-Residence](#) to provide cultural, emotional, and spiritual support to Indigenous students. Through individualized and group programming, she also shares knowledge about Indigenous ceremony and culture.
- King's students have access to a new [2SLGBTQ+ Advisor](#) who supports students through one-on-one advising, group programming, and campus-wide educational events.
- The Equity Officer is working with colleagues at Dalhousie to improve students' access to existing identity-based supports.
- Six outreach tables were hosted by the SHSO to distribute newly created resources and materials. Outreach tables were hosted in partnership with the King's Students' Union (KSU) Student Supports Fair, Residence Life's "Queering the Quad" event, and at South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre.
- The Student Support Advisor hosted a Mental Health Forum in November with the King's Students' Union to get first-hand feedback from students. They are also collecting feedback through a survey to determine the full scope of mental health and wellness services, supports, and activities offered at King's.
- The Dean of Students is consulting with colleagues at post-secondary institutions across the region to explore ways to diversify supports, particularly peer-based support programs.
- King's first full-time Accessibility Officer started work in January of 2023.

Improving Access to Mental Health Counselling:

- The Dean of Students is consulting with colleagues at the IWK to explore ways to improve access to off-campus community supports.
- The Student Support Advisor is working with colleagues in the community to improve referral pathways to off-campus supports and services, including the creation of a directory of diverse clinicians who are accepting new patients.
- Students were hired to create resources about accessing on- and off-campus mental health supports.
- The university continues to offer bursaries to support students' access to private counselling services via referral from support staff.
- The university is collaborating with NS post-secondary institutions to participate in the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey, now scheduled for 2024.

Additional Mental Health Training:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), the world's leading suicide intervention training program, was offered to all Residence Life staff and student leaders in September.
- Students will be invited to participate in the Mental Health Commission of Canada's [The Inquiring Mind Post-Secondary](#) in January, an evidence-based program designed to address and promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness in educational/student settings.

- Faculty and staff were invited to a Mental Health 101: Responding to Students in Distress workshop hosted by Dalhousie in November. The Dean of Students is working with colleagues at Dalhousie to explore a dedicated session for King’s faculty in the winter term.

Enhancing Support for Respondents to a Report of Sexualized Violence:

- King’s is partnering with two other Halifax universities to hire an Education and Policy Consultant (Gender Based Violence/Respondent Advisor), to enhance support for respondents. The expected start date is in the winter term.
- King’s continues to be part of the one-year pilot project for Courage to Act’s toolkit, [Supporting the Whole Campus Community: A Roadmap Tool for Working with People Who Have Caused Harm](#). Roll-out of the pilot is expected in 2023.

Recommendation 9: Crisis management—we suggest that King’s create a “checklist” of steps to take in the immediate aftermath of an incident of sexualized violence, in order to ensure a consistent approach.

January 2023 Status: This recommendation is implemented.

Recommendation 10: We suggest that King’s consider the following areas for clarification and/or enhancement of its Policy in what we understand is its scheduled review at the end of 2022:

- A process to address multiple disclosures about the same person. For instance, after a certain number of disclosures about the same person, those who made the disclosures could be asked to consider making a report.
- Explicitly addressing how records of disclosures, reports, investigations, and outcomes are kept, who has access to them, and how long they are maintained.
- A requirement that members of the Sexualized Violence Hearing Panel be trained in topics related to sexualized violence, such as consent, rape culture, and intersectionality.
- An explicit prohibition on investigators (or others involved in the disclosure and reporting processes) asking survivors/victims irrelevant questions about their past sexual history.
- An explicit timeline for appeals.

January 2023 Status: Work to implement this recommendation is under way.

King’s Sexualized Violence Policy Implementation Advisory Committee met in October to discuss these revisions and agreed to their adoption as part of the next policy review. Given the work to be done to update other university policies, it was agreed to postpone the review to early 2023. The policy will be updated with these revisions in the winter term with the aim of submitting it to the Board of Governors by June 2023.