

British Columbia News

Sexual violence prevention campaign begins on public post-secondary campuses

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/20485>

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Vancouver - Students attending British Columbia's public post-secondary campuses deserve to feel safe and be free from potential sexual violence.

This is the focus of the 2019-20 Sexual Violence Prevention campaign.

The campaign is aimed at students, faculty and staff at public post-secondary institutions and the broader community. It reminds students that sex without consent is rape and that consent must be voluntary – otherwise it's assault.

This provincewide campaign will engage students where they live, getting the word out through social media, various digital platforms including Snapchat and Instagram, as well as popular bars and pubs on and around campuses, and campus media outlets.

"Our government is responding to a call to action from students to ensure that our campuses in British Columbia are safer for everyone, regardless of gender expression, identity or sexual orientation," said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. "Sexual assault and misconduct are serious and non-partisan issues. Our government is committed to building on the efforts of MLAs on all sides of the legislature because working together means safer campuses in British Columbia for everyone."

In June 2019, the Province announced \$760,000 to support plain-language policies and processes regarding sexual violence and misconduct to ensure they are clear and easy to understand. The funding is also being used to co-ordinate resources so post-secondary institutions can learn from each other, share best practices and access training resources.

Since May 2017, all of B.C.'s 25 public post-secondary institutions have been required to have sexual violence and misconduct policies. The Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act also requires institutions to make their policies publicly available. Provincial regulations require private institutions with student residences to have policies.

Quotes:

Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity –

"Violence is never acceptable, and the safety of students and all British Columbians is a priority for our government. Those having lived through the effects of sexual violence can suffer harmful and long-lasting consequences. I'm proud that our government is taking action and launching this campaign during Frosh Week because we know that the majority of sexual assaults on campus occur during the first eight weeks of school. At all times, campuses should be safe for everyone."

Gillian Siddall, president, Emily Carr University of Art and Design –

"It is incredibly important that students feel safe on campus. Our students have a right to study in an

inclusive learning environment that is free from inappropriate sexual conduct. We are pleased to work with the ministry to send a clear message that any form sexual violence or misconduct will not be tolerated.”

Tracey Porteous, executive director, Ending Violence Association BC –

“Every dollar government spends on ending sexual violence is a dollar well spent because it means we’re doing the preventative work that needs to be done to stop sexual violence. It’s not enough to create policies if you don’t commit to reinforcing the message that sexual violence will not be tolerated. We are pleased that this government is continuing the commitment to keep campuses safe.”

Tanysha Klassen, chair, BC Federation of Students –

"As a student, it is important while attending class every day to know the institution you are attending is actively working to end sexual violence. This campaign helps to remind us that sexual violence has no place inside or outside our classrooms.”

Gurvir Gill, chair, Alliance of BC Students –

“This campaign is a good way to remind students of their individual responsibilities as members of the post-secondary community. Sexual violence is not an acceptable in any setting. On behalf of students, I’d like to thank you for helping create the opportunities for our voices to be heard.”

Learn More:

Preventing sexualized violence on B.C. campuses:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safe-campus-bc>

Sexual violence and misconduct policies:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/prevent-sexualized-violence/sexual-violence-misconduct-policies>

Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/16023_01

Ending Violence Association of BC: <http://endingviolence.org/>

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