



ANNUAL REPORT

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UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Sexual Violence Prevention
and Response Office

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ABOUT THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OFFICE

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) serves as the University of Waterloo's central hub for supporting all campus members affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). SVPRO provides compassionate, confidential support to survivors, bystanders, individuals who have received disclosures, witnesses, and those who have been accused of or self-identify as having caused harm.

SVPRO takes a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to addressing SGBV, encompassing direct response services, prevention-focused education and awareness initiatives, and broader systemic change. This includes building integrated networks of campus support, fostering cross-campus collaboration, mobilizing resources, and informing policy development.

Grounded in a trauma-informed, survivor-centered, intersectional, anti-oppressive, collaborative, and evidence-based framework, SVPRO is committed to creating a safer, more respectful campus environment for all.

SVPRO's ongoing collaboration with campus partners—including Campus Housing, the Office of Indigenous Relations, Athletics, AccessAbility Services, Campus Wellness, the Waterloo Undergraduate Students Association (WUSA), and others—is vital to fostering meaningful cultural change at the University of Waterloo.

Together, we work to cultivate a safe, inclusive, and informed campus environment by enhancing awareness and understanding of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and by building collective capacity to prevent its occurrence and respond effectively when it does.

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is centralized within the Office of Indigenous Relations. Sexual violence was, and continues to be, a tool of colonialism, the impacts of which continue today, as highlighted by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



HIGHLIGHTS

- 275 individual service requests were received - a 33% increase from the previous year - including 175 disclosures of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- 11,108 participants engaged in prevention-focused programming and initiatives, such as training sessions, workshops, guest lectures, campus events, and asynchronous courses through Waterloo LEARN.
- 8 formal complaints were filed under Policy 42 - Prevention of and Responding to Sexual Violence, reflecting both growing trust in reporting pathways and the continued urgency of institutional response.
- 75 members actively participated in the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Influencer Group, representing diverse faculties, departments, and units.
- A pilot program was launched in Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering, where an SVPRO Education Specialist will embed SGBV education directly into the engineering curriculum.
- Survivor-centered support services were expanded to include Trauma-Sensitive Yoga and new workshops addressing technology-facilitated violence and sexual violence on Canadian campuses.

275

Individual service
requests

11,108

participants
reached through
programming
Initiatives

8

Formal complaints
filed under Policy 42

CONTEXTUALIZING THE WORK

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains an ongoing and urgent social issue that disproportionately impacts people and communities across intersectional identities, including women, gender-diverse people, Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, persons with disabilities, and post-secondary youth, among other marginalized groups.

According to Statistics Canada (2020), almost one in seven (15%) women attending a Canadian postsecondary institution were sexually assaulted in the postsecondary setting at least once during their time at school (Burczycka, M. 2020). Research suggests that 20-25% of women of typical post-secondary age (18 to 25), will be sexually assaulted during their time at university (Babcock, R. E., Kortegast, C. A. 2024), where women are more likely than men to experience unwanted sexualized behaviours in post-secondary settings (Burczycka, M. 2020), and Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other women with intersectional marginal identities experience even higher rates of violence.

Statistics Canada (2024) also revealed that of those who are employed, 60% of women and 39% of men aged 25 to 34 years reported ever experiencing harassment or sexual assault in the workplace. They further noted that Indigenous people, people with disabilities, women, and persons who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are consistently overrepresented among people who experience harassment, discrimination and violence in many different areas of life. In another study, Statistics Canada (2021), revealed that women were more likely to experience workplace harassment and discrimination in postsecondary institutions (Hango, D. 2021).

This data underscores that sexual violence is not only a social issue, but a campus issue. Students, staff, and faculty have experienced, or been impacted by SGBV, which adversely impacts individuals, our campus, and the broader community. These instances reveal the urgency of offering trauma-informed support services for survivors, as well as proactive measures necessary to prevent sexualized harm. These interventions, combined with system-level efforts, are essential for creating safer environments for all students, staff, faculty, and community members.

DIRECT RESPONSE SERVICES

SVPRO provides a safe space for disclosures of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), offering compassionate, trauma-informed, non-judgmental direct response services. These services include connecting individuals to on and off campus resources (e.g., counselling services), offering psychoeducation and short-term coping strategies, and assisting with navigation of reporting pathways. SVPRO also offers direct response support to those who received a SGBV disclosure, witnessed SGBV, or were accused or self-identified as causing harm.

SVPRO understands that not all survivors are ready to come forward for direct support, and some are not comfortable with traditional approaches of one-on-one talk-based interventions. As such, SVPRO sought opportunities to expand the direct support offerings for SGBV survivors. For example, this past reporting year, SVPRO collaborated with Athletics and Recreation to offer *Trauma-Sensitive Yoga* to the campus community in both the Fall 2024 and Winter 2025 terms, where 22 sessions were offered over both terms. These sessions were grounded in holistic, survivor-centered, trauma-sensitive approaches that prioritized consent, agency, and accessibility. Sessions were led by certified trauma-informed instructors, where sessions sought to support survivors of trauma and SGBV in a supportive, non-judgmental, and healing environment.

Direct Service: Reach

This reporting year saw an increased demand for direct service support (see Table 1), as well as policy complaint reporting processes, reflecting that more campus community members are reaching out after being impacted by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), directly or indirectly. This increase demonstrates the continued need for, and critical importance of, SVPRO's direct response services, which address the complex and intersecting needs of our campus community.

SVPRO received 275 individual requests for direct response services this reporting year, amounting to a 33% increase in direct service requests from 2023/2024. Of the 275 requests, support was requested by:

- those who experienced SGBV (54%),
- those who received a disclosure of SGBV (8%),
- those who were accused or self-identified as causing SGBV (5%),
- those who witnessed SGBV (2%), and
- those who needed a consultation on a SGBV-related matter (31%).

Of the 275 requests for direct response services, 175 requests (from students and employees) specifically sought support after experiencing SGBV, witnessing SGBV, or receiving a disclosure of SGBV. This marks a 48% increase over last reporting year, which saw 118 service requests of the same types, nearly three times the number of students served in 2020-2021.

Formal complaints, via [Policy 42 – Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence](#), rose to 8 this year, up from 2 in 2023-2024 and 0 in 2022-2023, reflecting both increased reporting and continued efforts to address SGBV on campus through institutional policy. Consultations remained relatively stable, with 86 this reporting period (89 in 2023-2024 and 92 in 2022-2023). These trends, overall, demonstrate consistent growth in engagement and service provision over the past 5 years.

Table 1: Trends in Direct Response Services

Supports and Services	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Number of student service requests/ interactions	157	118	124	97	54
Number of employee service requests/ interactions	18	7	8	1	3
Number of students/employees who 'carried over' from prior year(s) and accessed service (*Implementation of new	11 Reporting year*	26 calendar year	18 calendar year	10 calendar year	20 calendar year

system enabled tracking aligned with reporting year)					
Number of consultations (students/staff)	86	89	92	59	62
Number of formal complaints	8	2	0	6	3

Direct Service: Types of Sexual Violence

Of those who sought direct support for experiencing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), sexual assault accounted for 30.4% of recorded cases, followed by sexual harassment at 19.3%, intimate partner violence (IPV) at 9.2%, and other types of sexual violence at 41.1%, including:

- Coercion (8.2%)
- Unwanted attention (6.8%)
- Technology-facilitated/digital sexual violence and stalking (5.8% each)
- Drug-facilitated sexual violence (5.3%)
- Sexist/misogynistic comments (3.4%)
- Sexual exploitation (2.4%)
- Stealthing (1.9%)
- Indecent exposure (1%)
- Voyeurism (0.5%)

Direct Service: Accommodations & Supports

39 students requested and required academic accommodations to mitigate the impacts of SGBV. The most requested accommodations were classroom and testing accommodations, which were facilitated in partnership with AccessAbility Services. 31 students required a referral to counselling (both on-campus and off-campus) to receive support beyond SVPRO's provision of short-term coping strategy services. 3 referrals were requested and made to other external support services. Students have also requested and received support for navigating complaint pathways, including assistance with preparing [Policy 42](#) complaints, and SVPRO also provided students with support letters for their academic petitions.

PREVENTION-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

SVPRO recognizes the importance of continued and dedicated prevention interventions, and as such, offers a variety of educational programming and awareness-raising initiatives. The office collaborates with campus partners and builds support networks that enable SVPRO to offer prevention-focused programming that meets the evolving needs of our diverse and intersectional campus community. SVPRO's programs and initiatives are designed to deepen understanding of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), build practical prevention skills, and foster a culture of consent and prevention on campus.

Prevention-focused Programming: Education & Awareness Initiatives

SVPRO's prevention-focused programming involves a variety of education and awareness initiatives that build literacy around SGBV, which is central to advancing a campus culture of consent that prevents sexualized harm. SVPRO's programming has expanded over the years, with a steady appetite for, and engagement from, students, staff, faculty, and student-staff. This section highlights the education and awareness initiatives that took place this reporting year.

Trainings

SVPRO's training programs, including *Best Practices for Responding to Disclosures* (response-oriented) and *Active Bystander Intervention* (prevention-focused), provided a safe environment for campus members to learn and practice effective strategies for both responding to disclosures of SGBV and preventing situations of SGBV. In addition, SVPRO and Campus Housing (Residence Life) continued to implement their annual education plan aimed at advancing sexual violence awareness and prevention for Residence Life staff, student staff, and residents. The training curriculum was tailored to the housing context and included content ranging from navigating hypothetical scenarios to encouraging the application of skills learned.

Events

SVPRO held numerous awareness-raising events at various campus locations, including satellite campuses, such as Fall and Winter *Consent Week*, *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence*, *Sexual Violence Awareness Month*, *What were you wearing?* exhibit, as well as participation in boothing events across campus. These events helped create both active and passive opportunities for campus members to engage in dialogue and connect with SGBV prevention-focused content, as well as learn about SVPRO's service offerings.

SVPRO collaborated with the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) to offer two successful SGBV-related campaigns, the *Red Zone*, and *F.R.I.E.S. for FRIES*. The *Red Zone*, which took place during the Fall 2024 term, was a consent literacy campaign aimed to inform students about the 'red zone', which speaks to the weeks between orientation and Halloween where it is most likely for students to experience sexual and gender-based violence. The campaign included a pledge wall (where over 100 pledges were made), boothing (which shared resources on safe sex and consent), social media content, and a spinning wheel used to educate students on the importance of consent. *F.R.I.E.S. for FRIES* was a consent campaign held during the Winter 2025 term, which invited students to engage in fun, consent-based education to receive a free order of poutine – it was one of the most well-attended events of this reporting year.

SVPRO brought to the campus the *What Were You Wearing?* Exhibit again this reporting period in an effort to challenge rape myths and foster survivor-centered dialogue about SGBV. This powerful art installation draws from student-survivor descriptions of what they were wearing at the time of an experience of sexual violence. This arts-based medium aims to raise awareness about the pervasiveness of victim-blaming and its harmful impact on survivors. The exhibit, inspired by Dr. Mary Simmerling's poem, *What I was wearing*, was originally created at the University of Arkansas in 2013, and SVPRO brought it to the University of Waterloo in 2023. Offered during Fall 2024, the exhibit generated 524 interactions from members of our campus community, and was well-received, generating meaningful reflection and discussion about the prevalence of SGBV, particularly among young adults, and on post-secondary campuses.

Targeted Prevention-focused Programming

SVPRO remains responsive to the evolving educational needs of the University of Waterloo community by developing targeted, prevention-focused programming in a variety of accessible formats. These initiatives are designed with an understanding that experiences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are diverse, disproportionate, and shaped by intersecting identities across our campus population.

To address the growing prevalence of technology-facilitated sexual violence, SVPRO hosted a virtual workshop open to students, staff, and faculty. The session deepened understanding of how tech-enabled gender-based violence manifests in contemporary society and offered practical strategies for prevention and support.

SVPRO also launched *Sexual Violence on Campus: A Primer*, a workshop that explored the historical exclusion of women and marginalized groups in post-secondary spaces, the legal and policy frameworks governing sexual violence across Canada, and the lived realities of survivors in university settings.

Additional topic-specific workshops, such as *Talking to Children About Consent* and *Understanding Consent and Healthy Relationships*, continued to be well-attended, reflecting strong campus engagement and a shared commitment to fostering a culture of consent and respect.

Innovative Programming

SVPRO recognizes that engaging with content related to SGBV can be challenging for many community members. In response, the office offers innovative, population-specific programming that invites participation through indirect yet meaningful intersections with SGBV-related topics. These initiatives are designed to be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the campus community.

This year, SVPRO launched the *Menopause Café*, a safe, informal space for individuals navigating perimenopause and menopause to share experiences, build menopause literacy, and access peer support. SVPRO also introduced the *NeuroMinds Collective*, a supportive group for neurodivergent students to explore topics such as relationships, dating, and communication in ways that are neurodivergent-friendly and affirming.

By meeting students and employees where they are, these programs foster engagement with SGBV-related themes in approachable and relevant ways. They also help expand SVPRO's reach to audiences who may not traditionally engage with the office, increasing awareness and strengthening community connections.

Embedded Education

A new initiative that SVPRO is especially proud of is the implementation of a *SGBV Education Specialist* position within the Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering (MME) department, on a three-year term. Initiated through collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering and MME, The Education Specialist will lead the development of innovative and curriculum-integrated approaches to SGBV education within the department's courses. The long-term vision is to use the lessons learned from this pilot to inform and scale similar initiatives across all 15 departments in the Faculty of Engineering.

Co-op Students

This reporting year, SVPRO introduced co-op student positions. The Research Associate role enabled SVPRO to conduct campus sexual violence research and engage in data-driven approaches to better understand SGBV in

Canadian campus settings. The Sexual Violence Prevention Support role directly engaged the campus community, especially students, through booths, events, and outreach initiatives, strengthening engagement and amplifying awareness across campus.

Taken together, SVPRO's prevention efforts raised the visibility of its service offerings and fostered an environment where SGBV is understood and addressed, and where prevention, support, and care are part of everyday campus life.

Prevention-focused Programming: Reach

This reporting period, SVPRO delivered 144 unique educational programs/initiatives (synchronized learning—in-person and virtual) reaching a total of 9,885 participants across campus. These initiatives included a diverse range of formats, including awareness-raising events/initiatives, boothing, trainings, workshops, and guest lectures (Table 2 highlights some of these initiatives/offerings). SVPRO's LEARN courses (*Sexual Violence Foundations* and *Sexual Violence Awareness*) reached 1,223 participants, bringing our overall reach to 11,108 through all programming types.

Table 2: Reach by Prevention Initiatives

SVPRO's Prevention-focused Program	Number of offerings	Number of attendees
Awareness-raising Events and Initiatives: These events were open to all campus members and included: annual <i>Consent Week(s)</i> , <i>16 Days</i> , <i>Menopause Café</i> , <i>Red Zone</i> , <i>What where you wearing?</i> exhibit, and <i>F.R.I.E.S.</i> for <i>FRIES</i> .	7	1350
Boothing: SVPRO booths (tables) were set up across campus (main and satellite) for members to engage with the SVPRO team, learn about SVPRO services, and gather resources.	32	4703
Trainings: SVPRO's <i>Active Bystander Intervention</i> and <i>Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence</i> were offered to male and female athletes, orientation leaders, and residence leaders. Specialized training was offered to all campus members.	45	1719
Workshops: Workshops were open to all campus members and advanced participants' understanding of a variety of SGBV issues, including male allyship, building supportive and positive workplaces, consent, and health relationships.	44	1088
Guest lectures: SVPRO served as a guest lecture in academic courses related to sexual and gender-based topics (e.g., Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies; Gender and Social Justice; Social Development Studies; and Health Sciences).	16	1025
Total	144	9,885

Students were the primary audience for SVPRO's educational programming. Of all the individuals who engaged with SVPRO programming, 38% were students, 7% were student-staff, and only 5% were staff/faculty. 50% of the programming was open to, and attended by, all campus community members (see Table 3 for more information).

Table 3: Reach by Audience-Type

Audience (Target/attended)	Count of program offerings	Sum of Attendees	Percentage (%)
All campus members	33	4941	50%
Students	89	3773	38%
Staff & Faculty	13	471	5%
Student Staff	9	700	7%
Total	144	9,885	100%

Across all programming, the largest number of attendees was during the Fall term at 42%, followed by Winter term at 35%, and Spring term at 23%. These trends resemble those of last year's reporting period (See Table 4 for more information).

Table 4: Reach by Term

Term	Count of SVPRO Offering	Sum of Attendees	Percentage (%)
Fall	66	4178	42%
Spring	35	2232	23%
Winter	43	3475	35%
Total	144	9885	100%

Prevention-focused Programming: Evaluation & Impact

SVPRO evaluated the effectiveness and impact of its programming through pre- and post-session surveys, enabling evidence-informed decision-making and continuous improvement. The growing body of evaluation data helped ensure that programming is responsive to emerging trends, addresses identified gaps and builds on existing strengths.

This section highlights evaluation insights from SVPRO's key educational initiatives, including the joint education plan with Campus Housing, the *Talking to Children About Consent* workshop, and the *Active Bystander Intervention (BSI)* training—delivered separately to students and employees.

Due to low survey response rates during this reporting year, SVPRO was unable to report on outcomes from the *Responding to Disclosures* training. Efforts to improve response rates and data collection methods are ongoing to ensure future evaluations are more comprehensive.

Campus Housing & SVPRO Annual Education Plan

SVPRO and Campus Housing continued their collaboration this year to deliver prevention-focused programming on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to Campus Housing residents, student staff, and professional staff. In total, 708 individuals engaged with this programming. Of these, 600 participants attended formal educational sessions, while 108 residents interacted with SVPRO through boothing and awareness-raising activities. This partnership reflected a shared commitment to fostering safer, more informed residential communities and increasing visibility of SGBV prevention efforts across campus.

SVPRO's student staff programming provided a foundational understanding of SGBV and related concepts, including consent, consent culture, the "red zone," intersectionality, common myths, and available support services at the University of Waterloo. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Pre- and post-session survey data indicated that attendees appreciated both the depth and relevance of the content, as well as the quality of facilitation. Participants described the sessions as "*informative*," "*educational*," "*engaging*," "*eye-opening*," "*valuable*," and "*helpful*."

Key takeaways from the training included:

- A broadened understanding of the prevalence and dynamics of sexual violence, with emphasis on how power imbalances can affect consent. Participants highlighted the importance of recognizing that consent must be freely and enthusiastically given.
- Strong retention of the F.R.I.E.S. model of consent, particularly the concept that consent can be withdrawn at any time—an essential element in ongoing conversations about boundaries and respect.
- The concept of the "red zone" (the period early in the fall term when rates of sexual violence are highest) was frequently cited as eye-opening. This awareness encouraged residence staff to be more vigilant and supportive during this critical time.
- Practical tools for responding to disclosures of SGBV were frequently mentioned. Participants emphasized the importance of using non-judgmental, validating language to support individuals who have experienced harm.

Talking to Children About Consent Workshop

Talking to Children About Consent continued to be a well-attended and positively received workshop this year. Offered every academic term for the past two years, the workshop aimed to foster protective environments by building consent literacy and encouraging early, age-appropriate conversations about consent with children and youth.

Evaluation data showed strong alignment with learning objectives, including increased understanding of consent, greater awareness of what defines a consent culture, practical strategies for modeling consent with children, and

recognition of the importance of early dialogue. Participants also reported improved knowledge of how to connect with SVPRO for support and resources.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive—100% of participants indicated they would recommend the workshop to a peer.

Active Bystander Intervention Training

Evaluation of our employee-based bystander intervention training (staff and faculty) indicated an increased understanding of key SGBV concepts including microaggressions, active bystanders, intersectionality, and sexual violence. Evaluation results demonstrated program effectiveness, with 100% of participants indicating they would recommend the training to another colleague. Participants indicated that the training enabled them to effectively identify the characteristics of an active bystander, and that it taught them to apply the active bystander intervention model to address situations of harm (sexual violence, microaggressions, etc.). Participants noted that the training increased their recognition of the circumstances and barriers that can make it difficult for someone to intervene in a situation of harm (e.g., social location, power dynamics). Most participants were able to correctly characterize each bystander intervention strategy (between 89-100%) and identify part of the 5D Active Bystander model (direct, delay, delegate, distract, and document) by matching each strategy with its description. The most impactful aspect of the training was that the employee participants indicated a positive increase in the likelihood that they would intervene in a situation of harm, if they were to encounter it.

Evaluation of our student-based bystander intervention training indicated an increase in their understandings of key SGBV concepts including sexual citizenship, sexual violence, rape culture, active bystander, consent, and intersectionality. Most respondents were correctly able to characterize each bystander intervention strategy as part of the 5D Active Bystander model by matching each strategy with its coinciding description (between 88% to 100%). The student participants indicated that the training increased their awareness of strategies to intervene in situations of harm, and that it increased their confidence in their ability to intervene in a situation of harm or potential harm on campus. The data revealed that students were more knowledgeable about ways to seek support at the University of Waterloo, if they or a friend experienced harm. The most impactful aspect of the student training was that they indicated a greater likelihood of intervening if they noticed a situation where someone was experiencing harm or potential harm on campus, as they felt they had the appropriate skills to do so.

Systemic Change and Support

SVPRO recognizes that building a campus culture grounded in consent, respect, and safety requires a strategic, collaborative, and multi-dimensional approach. To support this goal, SVPRO actively leads and contributes to institution-wide initiatives that strengthen support networks, foster meaningful cross-campus partnerships, mobilize resources, and advance both the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Through this integrated and proactive engagement, SVPRO drives systemic change that promotes the well-being of all members of the University of Waterloo community and helps create a safer, more inclusive campus environment.

Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Influencer Group

When SVPRO launched its Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy in 2022, it included the creation of the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Influencer Group (referred to as the "Influencer Group")—a community of campus

members committed to advancing SGBV prevention and response within their respective departments, faculties, and offices. Grounded in a public health approach, the Influencer Group plays a vital role in advancing the University of Waterloo's SGBV prevention efforts by building foundational knowledge and fostering a culture of collective responsibility.

This reporting year, the Influencer Group continued to grow, expanding to 75 active members representing a wide range of campus departments, faculties, and units. The group meets bi-monthly to engage in learning and dialogue around SGBV through presentations, events, and skill-building activities facilitated by SVPRO and external experts. Highlights from this year's sessions included:

- Kayla Orr, Executive Director of SHORE Centre, who shared insights into sexual health services and community supports.
- Christine Taylor, Program Manager at the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre of Waterloo Region, who provided information on resources available to those impacted by sexual and domestic violence.
- Rebecca MacAlpine, Faculty Liaison at the Centre for Teaching Excellence, who discussed her doctoral research on violence against women in early modern Europe and its relevance to contemporary SGBV.
- Ravita Surajbali from SVPRO, who presented on the campus sexual violence climate, institutional and legal governance in Canada, and sexual assault law.

The Influencer Group is designed to empower members to build and strengthen internal networks by sharing knowledge, resources, and supports at micro, meso, and macro levels, ultimately enhancing their own work and learning environments. Effectiveness is measured through growth in membership and representation across campus units.

Review of Policy 42 - Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence

During this reporting year, the University of Waterloo continued its review of [Policy 42 - Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence](#), which governs sexual violence prevention and response. SVPRO's Director, Amanda Cook, served as a subject matter expert on the review committee, contributing expertise and guidance throughout the process.

The review has involved extensive campus-wide consultation and ongoing research to ensure the revised policy reflects best practices and meets the evolving needs of the University community. Anecdotally, SVPRO has observed increasing complexity in SGBV cases, and the updated Policy 42 aims to address these challenges with a more responsive and inclusive framework. The consultation and review process will continue into the next reporting year, as the committee works toward strengthening its reporting and response framework.

New Case Management System and Intake Form

SVPRO launched a case management system that enabled the implementation of a [new intake form](#) for campus members to request direct service, consultation, and/or education. This case management system was specifically designed for higher education institutions to effectively manage cases and capture critical data through an integrated, secure, and user-friendly platform. The system offers comprehensive solutions for managing response support, tracking preventative education, and supporting sexual misconduct processes within the post-secondary

setting. The new ‘intake form’ is integrated with the system and can be accessed through the SVPRO institutional website. Collecting essential information upfront enabled a streamlined and expedited intake process. The new system allowed SVPRO to more efficiently and effectively respond to campus community needs, build institutional memory, and create a more seamless and accessible experience for students and employees.

Student Experience Survey

The Student Experience Survey (SES) Fall 2024 was administered by the Statistical Consulting and Survey Research Unit (SCSRU), in collaboration with the University of Waterloo Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP) department, the Associate Vice President, Academic, the Associate Provost, Students and the Associate Provost, Campus Support and Accessibility. As part of efforts to measure campus climate related to sexual violence, SVPRO embedded questions into the survey that provided insights in students’ knowledge of a) institutional supports, services, and reporting pathways, b) incidences of sexual violence on campus, c) bystander interventions, and d) sexual violence-related education offered by SVPRO.

When asked about institutional supports, services, and reporting pathways, nearly half of the student respondents (47%) did not know how to find information about campus supports and services related to sexual violence. Further, 42% of respondents indicated that they understood policy reporting options regarding an incident of sexual violence. This data revealed that it is crucial for the University to continue to promote on-campus supports and services to support SGBV (particularly SVPRO), as well as pathways for institutional reporting of SGBV.

18% of the students surveyed had heard of an incident of SGBV occurring while they were a student, which is aligned with Canadian statistics related to the incidence of SGBV on campus, ranging from 20-25%. Only 3% of student respondents intervened in an incident of harm related to sexual violence on campus (i.e., interrupted the harmful behaviour, reported the incident, took action to stop the incident, or provided support during or after the incident). This demonstrates the value and necessity of active bystander training for our campus community—applicable not just to SGBV, but myriad types of harm that can be mitigated or prevented by intervention. Finally, 15% of students reported that they attended a sexual violence training session, workshop, or event. While this is a promising number given the large university student population, it is also an indicator for more extensive and accessible reach of SGBV-related initiatives on campus.

UW Community Survey

While falling just outside of the reporting period, we feel it is important to note preliminary data from the University of Waterloo’s campus community survey, which was developed during this reporting period and administered to students in Spring 2025. The Institutional Analysis & Planning Department (IAP) and the Statistical Consulting & Survey Research Unit (SCSRU) at the University of Waterloo conducted a survey of undergraduate and graduate students in the Spring 2025 term. Students who were enrolled in the Winter and Spring 2025 terms were eligible to participate. The purpose of the campus community survey was to understand student experiences and perceptions about programming and support from participating units, including SVPRO, AccessAbility Services, Campus Wellness, and the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism.

Overall, results revealed that around 1 in 5 respondents had experienced some form of sexual violence at some point in their lives, with 9% indicating that this occurred while on co-op terms by someone they worked with. Nearly 1 in 4 students revealed, during their time at the University of Waterloo specifically, that they had experienced unwanted touching, kissing, or removal of their clothes without consent. Additionally, depending on the type of behaviour,

between 16% and 52% of students reported experiencing some form of unwanted sexualized behaviour. This data, which aligns with provincial and general statistics about sexual violence in Canada, reveals that sexual violence, in all forms, remains an ongoing and pervasive issue on our campus, and is unfortunately a common experience among students. This reiterates the continued urgency and necessity for continued and expanded SVPRO direct service provision and education programming.

In the absence of federal and provincial mandates to administer sexual violence-related campus climate surveys, the UW community survey allows SVPRO to measure experiences of sexual violence and unwanted sexualized behaviours, consent literacy, bystander intervention, and interest in male allyship programming. This enables SVPRO, and the broader campus, to make evidence-informed decisions on the most effective ways to prevent and respond to SGBV.

Looking Ahead and Concluding Remarks

SVPRO's direct response services and prevention-focused educational programming continued to make a meaningful impact across the University of Waterloo campus this year.

- More campus members understood how and when to connect with SVPRO for support following experiences, disclosures, or observations of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- More individuals felt empowered to act as active bystanders when witnessing incidents of SGBV.
- More community members were equipped to respond appropriately and compassionately when receiving disclosures of SGBV.
- More students, staff, and faculty actively served as allies and influencers in fostering a campus culture rooted in consent and respect.

While this progress is significant, SVPRO acknowledges that more work is needed to prevent SGBV and ensure support reaches all those affected. Given the known prevalence of SGBV on Canadian campuses, it is likely that SVPRO's current reach does not yet extend to every individual impacted by these forms of harm.

To address this gap, SVPRO is committed to exploring innovative strategies to raise awareness about SGBV, available services, reporting options, and approaches to prevention and response. Planned program enhancements for the 2025–2026 reporting year include:

- **Survivor Support Group:** Co-led by SVPRO and Counselling Services, this group will offer a safe(r) space for survivors to receive support, share coping strategies, and build solidarity. Benefits include reduced isolation and enhanced connection among individuals with shared experiences.
- **Legal Pathways for Sexual Assault Survivors Workshop:** This session will explore criminal and civil legal options available to survivors, outlining processes, benefits, and challenges to improve legal literacy and empower informed decision-making.
- **SVPRO Housing Ambassador Program:** In partnership with Campus Housing, this pilot initiative will engage two student ambassadors per term to lead activities and events that raise awareness of SVPRO services and supports among residence communities.

SGBV continues to be a pressing and deeply concerning issue that affects members of the University of Waterloo community. Addressing this challenge demands ongoing investment, meaningful cross-campus collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to cultural transformation. SVPRO, alongside campus partners, remains dedicated to fostering a safer and more inclusive environment through trauma-informed support for survivors and proactive, preventative initiatives. Together, we strive to build a campus culture that not only prevents SGBV but also responds to it with compassion, accountability, and care—ensuring all students, staff, faculty, and community members feel safe, supported, and empowered.

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This annual report was prepared by

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO)

For further information regarding this report, please contact:

Amanda Cook, Director, SVPRO by email at:

amanda.cook@uwaterloo.ca

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
200 UNIVERSITY AVE. W., WATERLOO, ON, CANADA N2L 3G1

uwaterloo.ca