



**STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY**

NEWSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

EDMONTON, ALBERTA – The students of MacEwan University are deeply concerned with the state of sexual and gender-based violence in Alberta's post-secondary system, following the recent release of the [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Alberta Post-Secondary Education](#) report. The data in the report was collected by surveying nearly 13,000 students in the province's 26 post-secondary institutions, and the picture it paints of student experiences with gender-based violence while in school is alarming and cause for immediate action.

Some key findings from the report:

- Over 50% of respondents indicated that they've experienced some form of sexual or gender based violence
- Students of all backgrounds are susceptible to experiencing gender-based or sexual violence, but we also know that 2SLGBTQIA+ students, women and gender diverse students, and students with disabilities report higher rates of experiencing gender-based or sexual violence
- Students who attend Undergraduate Universities (like MacEwan) experienced higher rates of gender-based or sexual violence than their polytechnic and college counterparts, suggesting a structural gap
- Students demonstrate a significant and sustained interest in "information regarding responding to sexual or gender-based violence including: how to intervene as a bystander, how to respond to a disclosure of sexual or gender-based violence, and how to report sexual and gender-based violence." (Leger)

Further, other research suggests survivors of gender-based and sexual violence are particularly likely to under-report or not report their experiences at all, meaning the number of students harmed may be greater than the survey suggests.

"Safety is a necessary condition for success as a student, and the findings of this report demonstrate that the work is nowhere near finished," said Gabriel Ambutong, President of the Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU). "If students at an institution like MacEwan University, which is regularly called on and recognized for their expertise on sexual violence prevention, are still experiencing violence, it tells us the response needs to be systemic one that leaves no one behind," he added.

With this invaluable information in hand, it's crucial for decision makers to invest in the institutional supports and services students have identified as key. **Along with our colleagues at the Council of Alberta University Students, SAMU is calling on the provincial government and the Advanced Education Minister to:**

1. **Create a ministry-led Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Alberta Post-Secondary Education Working Group**, with representatives from the Council of Alberta University Students, the Alberta Students'

Executive Council, and the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, as well as community-based organizations, such as a representative from the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.

2. **Dedicate funds to existing work both on prevention and support for survivors at Alberta's post-secondaries**, including additional funding for the expansions of on-campus/institutional services, and the development of these services at institutions where they may not already exist.
3. **Sponsor a province-wide campaign around consent education at Alberta's post-secondaries**. Such a campaign would highlight what consent looks like in a variety of different contexts, using easy-to-understand language, and would also highlight the fundamental importance of consent more broadly.

“We hear a lot about students as economic drivers, as the labour force of today and tomorrow, and as changemakers in our communities,” Ambutong said, “and none of that is possible without students themselves. Students deserve a post-secondary experience free of violence and harm, and SAMU is committed to continuing the advocacy work alongside our local and provincial partners to make that a reality.”

About SAMU: The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) is a student-centred organization governed by students, for students. SAMU provides many programs and services that serve the student body, including but not limited to: The Pantry, Peer Support, Breakfast Club, awards, bursaries, events and more. Acting within MacEwan, while maintaining independence from the University, it is an organization serving students, inspired by students.

For more information, visit <https://samu.ca>.

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