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University of Lethbridge Board of Governors approves Sexual Violence Policy, comprehensive website launched

The University of Lethbridge took a major step forward in its goal to address the issue of sexual violence on campus with the approval of a new Sexual Violence Policy by the U of L's Board of Governors on Thursday.

Approved in conjunction with the launch of a new website (www.uleth.ca/sexual-violence-information), intended to be a virtual one-stop shop of University resources, the policy better identifies supports available to the University community, promotes an 'only with consent' campus culture and demonstrates the University's commitment to addressing issues of sexual violence on campus.

"We appreciate that the policy and the website may evolve as we continue to collect and interact with feedback, however it was important for the University to communicate its position on this issue and confirm our commitment to increasing education and awareness about sexual violence and the resources and supports available to those affected by sexual violence," says Mark Slomp, U of L Counselling and Career Services manager. "We also recognize that this process isn't over. Feedback on the policy and the website will be actively collected as we move forward. Feedback on the website will be incorporated, where appropriate and feasible, on an ongoing basis. We will also be returning to the policy in a year, reviewing its effectiveness and addressing any concerns that may be brought forward by our community over that time."

Contained within the policy are directives to enhance and expand awareness and education as it relates to sexual violence; a commitment to promote principles related to consent and to provide accessible information on available resources and supports; a description of reporting options; recognition of the importance of confidentiality; and the continued commitment to maintain and publish sexual violence statistics.

"This is a very big step forward," says Slomp. "It's important to have a separate policy in place and for us, as an institution, to socialize this policy so that survivors of sexual assault and those supporting survivors are able to access the resources they need."

The University's new comprehensive Sexual Violence Information website is located here: www.uleth.ca/sexual-violence-information. The new Sexual Violence Policy is located here: www.uleth.ca/policy/sexual-violence-policy. Members of the University community are encouraged to continue providing feedback on the policy through this web page. Feedback on the sexual violence website will be collected through a link on the website's home page.

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