

**“More traumatic and humiliating than
assault itself”: Exploring students’ perceptions of
Dalhousie University’s management of sexual assault issues**

by

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ABSTRACT *Sexual assault on university campuses remains a pervasive issue, with Dalhousie University being no exception. It has been argued that universities regularly fail their victims of sexual assault as they do not adequately manage sexual assault issues on their campuses. Few studies, however, identify the perceptions of students on these university campuses. A qualitative methodology of nine semi-structured interviews was employed to explore the perceptions of Dalhousie undergraduate students regarding Dalhousie's management of sexual assault issues. This study shows that Dalhousie University, in the eyes of its students, does not adequately manage sexual assault issues on campus. Students speak to the persisting rape culture on campus, the lack of resources on campus and the multiple barriers to these resources that exist. This research sheds light on the consistent rates of poor management of sexual assault issues on university campuses nationwide, from the perspective of the students, some of whom are victims of these sexual assaults.*

Keywords: rape culture, resources, barriers, Dalhousie, university, students, victims.

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INTRODUCTION: THE PERPETUATION OF POOR MANAGEMENT

There is a nationwide epidemic of sexual assault occurring on university campuses (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006, p. 483). Sexual assault refers to forced or pressured non-consensual sexual acts that occur between individuals (Follette, Polunsky, Bechtle, & Naugle, 1996, p. 28), with these sexual acts being either physical or non-physical.

Physical sexual acts constitute the touching of one individual by another individual in a non-consensual sexual manner, whereas non-physical sexual assault consists of non-consensual verbal, written or visual sexual acts directed towards another individual (Follette et al., 1996, p. 28). This research focuses on the prevention and management of cases of sexual assault. The research is situated at the intersection of feminist sociology, criminology, and the sociology of our legal system.

Through qualitative analysis, this research explores how universities deal with sexual assault issues on campus, through the perspective of their students. My thesis will answer the following question: *how do Dalhousie students perceive Dalhousie University's management of sexual assault issues on campus?*

I explore this question through the following sub-questions: what resources are students aware of that are available to victims and their allies? How does Dalhousie inform students of these resources? And are there any barriers for victims and their allies? I answer these questions by conducting a qualitative analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews with nine current students at Dalhousie University, some who have been the victim of sexual assault.

There is a consensus in the literature that universities do not adequately manage issues of sexual assault. However, this literature stems less so from students who are the actual victims of sexual assault. By exploring the perceptions of students and their views of Dalhousie's

management of sexual assault issues, it becomes evident that the results of this research fit with patterns in the existing literature. The results of this research indicate that the prevalence of rape culture on campus, the lack of adequate resources to address sexual assault matters and the barriers in place to these resources all reflect poor management on the part of the university.

This research contributes to literature on rape culture, resources for sexual assault victims and their allies and the barriers that sexual assault victims and their allies face in utilizing these resources. It builds upon existing literature by exploring how sexual assault issues are dealt with on university campuses by the management of a university, with the aim of management obtaining a better understanding of sexual assault issues in order to meet the current needs of victims and their allies and to prevent assaults in the future.

Conducting research on this topic is crucial to the ultimate goal of bettering the management of cases for past, current and future individuals who will, or had to, unfortunately, deal with the issues that come with being a victim of sexual assault. Ultimately, my research will aid in raising awareness about the management of campus sexual assault by universities. There is more research required to add to the discussion surrounding campus sexual assault in order to educate individuals, as well as university officials, as to where they can make improvements to better meet the needs of victims.

The following pages give a discussion of the research framework for this study, touching on the concepts of rape culture, resources, and barriers and the topics of the Dalhousie Dentistry scandal and the Dalhousie 'Jungle'.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: RAPE CULTURE, RESOURCES, AND BARRIERS

There is a consensus within the existing literature suggesting that universities do not deal adequately with sexual assault victims and their allies. There are three main problems at hand, reflecting in poor management: rape culture, the adequacy of and ability to access resources, and the barriers to victim support. This research will draw from the concept of rape culture which is “a complex set of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Wunker, 2016, p. 55).

This study ties in with literature on the existing availability and accessibility of victim resources, from campus initiatives to student activism (Zugazaga, Werner, Clifford, Weaver, & Ware, 2016, p. 34; Hayes-Smith & Hayes-Smith, 2009, p. 109; Mendoza, 2014, p.14). This research also focuses on the barriers to these resources that victims and their allies of sexual assault face, from institutional sexism to victim blaming (Korn, 1994. p. 89; Herman, 1984, p. 47; Lott, Reilly, & Howard, 1982, p. 297).

This exploratory research works towards filling a gap in the current literature, as existing data originates from statistics; whereas the data in this study originates from qualitative interviews with students.

Students are particularly relevant to this research as university students are at more of a risk for sexual assault than the general population (Lane, Gover, & Dahod, 2009, p. 172). There are three concepts at hand, which dictate the poor management of sexual assault issues on university campuses: rape culture, the adequacy of resources for victims and their allies, and the barriers that exist while trying to access these resources.

RAPE CULTURE

Rape culture is a theoretical analysis that explains sexualized violence in a culture (Rentschler, 2014, p. 936). The “cultural” aspect about the term is important to understand as there is a “system of cultural oppression that makes it [rape culture] possible” (Wunker, 2016, p. 55). Rape culture does not necessarily have a single cause and it may be influenced by other aspects of culture. Rape culture points towards the normalization of rape due to societal and cultural attitudes toward gender and sexuality (Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996, p. 161). Rape culture has been identified by feminists as an ambiance that “condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm” (Wunker, 2016, p. 54). Rape culture not only serves as a concept, but it works as a tool for campaigners who utilize it as a new method for defining and tackling the issue of sexual assault as everyone’s problem, not just the problem of victims and their allies.

In the past, the term “date rape” was a prevalent phrase used to label sexual assaults. Date rape refers to “nonaggravated sexual assault, non-consensual sex that does not involve physical injury” (Pineau, 1989, p. 217). The term date rape arose to dispel the myth that rape is only committed by strangers (Herman, 1984, p. 48). The term has shifted from date rape to that of rape culture. Rape culture identifies a problem that extends beyond individual cases of assault and perpetrators’ actions. The widespread adoption of the term rape culture is quite recent and the term has been embedded into campus discourse and serves as an understanding of why sexual assault on and off campus occurs.

Exploring whether and how rape culture shapes the perspective of Dalhousie students of the university’s management of campus sexual assault issues will help to answer my research question. A long-standing issue with rape culture is the concept of consent, and whether or not

universities are fostering a consent culture. Consent refers to “the unequivocal affirmative communication of voluntary agreement” to a sexual act (Vandervort, 1986, p. 233).

Understanding whether or not students believe that Dalhousie advertises enough about consent to their students and enforces a consent culture on campus will help answer my research question.

RESOURCES

I will now turn to the issue of the adequacy and the ability to access resources on campus. Understanding how victims and their allies access and utilize available resources aimed at sexual assault matters. As Hayes-Smith and Levett state, “even if sexual assault resources are available at a university, it does not mean students are receiving, using, or learning from them” (2010, p. 350).

Research conducted with a stratified random sample of students at the University of South Florida indicates that undergraduate students know about the prevalence of sexual assault as “nearly two-thirds (64.5%) reported that they know one or more women who were a victim of sexual assault and over half (52.4%) reported that they know one or more men who perpetrated one of the eight types of sexual assault” (Sorenson, Joshi, & Sivitz, 2014, p. 394). However, most literature does not note how students are able to access resources, whether the resources are adequate and whether they find them helpful.

The resources that students are requesting from their universities relate to “a variety of programs or services such as Rape Aggression Defense classes, improved outdoor lighting, limited access to facilities/buildings at night and on weekends, student escort services, etc” (Zugazaga et al., 2016, p. 34). In their website content analysis of women’s resources and sexual assault literature on college campuses, Hayes-Smith and Hayes-Smith note that not enough

institutions have reacted adequately to promote preventative, educational, and mental health resources (2009, p. 110).

However, having these resources in place is essential as an interviewee notes: “out of all the campus priorities you might have, including information technology, your educational programs, your research, it doesn't much matter if people don't feel safe and are not safe on your campus” (Mendoza, 2014, p. 14). Prevention is also essential when looking at the concept of rape culture as the best way to dismantle rape culture is by educating men and women before any sexual assault takes place. Ultimately, creating a culture of consent is fundamental.

Dalhousie University has resources for students on campus that have been introduced by the Human Rights & Equity Services office. These resources include counseling, harassment prevention strategies, sexual assault response guidelines, consent information and PEGaSUS, which is a psycho-educational group for survivors of sexual assault. These resources are mostly available online and are accessible to all students.

Ottens and Hotelling note further resources that universities may implement, including “installing security systems in buildings and on grounds, sponsoring campus-wide prevention workshops, instituting tougher policies and sanctions, targeting programs toward “high risk” student groups, and disseminating information about rape and helping resources” (2001, p. ix). However, most literature does not note if students would be able to access these resources or if they would find them to be of use. Researching how Dalhousie students view campus resources, how/if they access them, and whether they find them to be helpful will aid in establishing new knowledge regarding Dalhousie student’s perspectives on their university’s management of sexual assault issues.

BARRIERS

Lastly, I will discuss existing barriers to accessing resources that victims and their allies face. There are several types of overarching barriers, including institutional sexism and victim blaming. Institutional sexism refers to “those acts or institutional procedures that help create or perpetuate sets of advantages or privileges for the majority group and exclusions or deprivations of minority groups” (Korn, 1994, p. 90). The “institutional” part of institutional sexism is essential to understand, as “it is so deeply ingrained within the institution that it appears to be a part of the institution” (Korn, 1994, p. 91). The institution being referred to in this case is that of a university.

Often, perpetrators are protected, while victims and their allies are blamed for the sexual assaults. This is furthered as “violence against women by men is responded to generally in a manner that either blames women for the violence done to them or focuses on prevention strategies that identify how women can better protect themselves” (Wooten & Mitchell, 2016, p. 3), rather than teaching men that rape is unacceptable.

Evident across the literature, perpetrators justify rape through the following reasons, “(1) women as seductresses; (2) women mean “yes” when they say “no”; (3) most women eventually relax and enjoy it; (4) nice girls don't get raped; and (5) guilty of a minor wrongdoing” (Scully & Marolla, 1984, p. 534). Campuses condone victim blaming by “overemphasizing the victim’s responsibility to avoid sexual assault without balancing messages stressing the perpetrator’s responsibility for committing a crime and strategies bystanders can use to intervene” (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2005, p. 9). Rape culture plays a large role in sexual assault cases as it is commonly found by scholars in qualitative research as a reason for why some universities do not adequately deal with sexual assault issues.

According to a case study from the University of Saskatchewan's response to two high-profile sexual assaults, Quinlan, Clarke and Horsley note "despite the alarming rates of sexual violence on Canadian campuses, universities are often unprepared and unwilling to take appropriate preventative action or provide a supportive response when sexual assault does occur" (1984, p. 46). Commonly, university officials are found to be unapproachable, creating an environment - through careless, victim-blaming words and actions - that makes it impossible for victims and their allies to seek the help they require (Wooten & Mitchell, 2016, p. 65).

Universities are commonly reluctant to help victims and their allies as it causes the university more harm than good to help the students because "as crime on campus increases, so does the liability of colleges and universities" (Adams & Abarbanel, 1988, p. 547). Similarly, Fisher and Cullen note how universities are commonly unwilling to help victims and their allies as victims damage a university's educational goals (2013, p. 367), because "cases exposed in the national media may bring scandal to the institution and its leaders, create distrust toward the administration among parents and alumni and erode fundraising efforts as well as legislative and philanthropic support" (2013, p. 367).

This lack of support from the university directly relates to institutional sexism and the cycle of sexual assault cases reoccurring on campus as the perpetrators are not adequately dealt with. The literature reiterates how campus sexual assault policies need to indicate a zero-tolerance response in regard to sexual assault against their student population (McMahon, 2008, p. 362) in order to be effective, however, this is usually not the case.

At the University of Venda in South Africa, Hilda and Pilot note although sexual assault is occurring, it is often underreported and universities refrain from talking about the issue (2015, p. 96). As a result of universities' failure to provide the necessary help to victims and their allies,

“campus sexual assault is prevalent, institutional responses have not been effective, and campus cultures are fraught with dangerous social norms related to sexual violence” (Germain, 2016, p. 2).

Quigley, Hammer, Clingan and Stern note that “university administrators failing to report rape or sexual assault, and contributing to victim-blaming” (2013, p. 5) displays that the health and safety of their students is not a priority. This relates to my research because exploring students’ perceptions of the barriers that are evident on Dalhousie’s campus, which hinder victims and their allies from receiving the help and information they need, will help in answering my research question.

NOTORIOUS EVENTS

Additionally, there is recent evidence of sexual assault on Dalhousie University (Hunter, Maxwell, & Brunger, 2015, p. 1), which makes this research timely. Specifically, in December of 2014, a Facebook group titled the “Class of DDS 2015 Gentlemen” was created (Hunter et al., 2015, p. 1) by thirteen male students from the Dentistry program at Dalhousie University, with the original intention to use it as a resource for discussions relating to schoolwork.

However, the use of the group took a sharp turn when posts began to appear that “included the thirteen men “joking” about chloroforming and raping their female classmates, taking a poll about which woman in the class they wanted to have “hate sex” with, and making generally sexist comments” (Hunter et al., 2015, p. 1). The story quickly made public news and a call for justice for the victims and their allies of these posts became a country-wide request.

Dalhousie University responded to the issue by committing to a restorative justice program, where the perpetrators and victims participated in “meetings that allow harmed parties to describe how they have been impacted” (Karp & Frank, 2016, p. 145). However, the university

received a great deal of criticism from the public with the chosen method of restorative justice by Dalhousie officials as they believed that it was not justice enough for the actions of these men.

A similar case at Dalhousie was made public in 2015 and was known as “The Dal Jungle” (Vaughan, 2015, para. 2). The Dal Jungle was an Instagram account made by certain men in the Dalhousie residence of Howe Hall. A woman reported the group to Dalhousie officials after she found out that there was explicit sexual content, including photos of students performing sexual acts, being posted in the group (Vaughan, 2015, para. 3).

Dalhousie took differing actions towards the men depending on their involvement in the group, ranging from removing them from residence to changing them to a different residence and banning the men from drinking alcohol (Vaughan, 2015, para. 11). Dalhousie received the same criticism as with the Dalhousie Dentistry scandal, people were not satisfied with the management of the issue by university officials. Certain individuals believed the men involved were not adequately punished and as a result, justice was not properly served.

Aside from Dalhousie, there are other sexual assault issues evident at other universities. At Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, an issue arose in 2013 during frosh week when student leaders created a rape chant. The chant condoned sexual assault on campus, speaking to non-consensual sex with underage girls (Fairclough, 2013). The public was outraged by this chant and the event stood as a reminder to society that sexual assault affects all university campuses. The above research framework allows for an understanding of persistent issues surrounding sexual assault management on university campuses. The following pages discuss the methodologies utilized in the research process.

RESEARCH METHODS: NINE SEMI-STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

My research was conducted at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I used the method of qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with nine Dalhousie students to collect the data. I chose to use the method of semi-structured interviews because “this kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational”(Harrell & Bradley, 2009, p. 27) allowing for important information to be brought up by participants. Harrell and Bradley note how “semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided” (2009, p. 27), which is required by the topic of my research project as it is a very sensitive issue.

My research population is current Dalhousie University students, specifically undergraduate or graduate students, at the time of the interview, of all genders. There were no further inclusion criteria outside of this as I aimed to ensure that I was reaching participants of various genders, classes, ethnicities, etc. I was not focusing only on women solely as men experience sexual assault on campus, and although actual rates of assault of men are low, their voices are just as important when conducting this research. Aside from this, men are crucial to this study as they need to be part of the solution to better managing sexual assault issues on university campuses.

I used mixed methods of recruitment and the sampling process was purposive in order to reach a variety of students at Dalhousie. I created and placed posters throughout the Dalhousie University campus (see Appendix A). I also utilized my personal Facebook account, as well as the accounts of various Dalhousie committees and organizations by posting an announcement on their social media pages (see Appendix B), and lastly used word of mouth. I described the research and what it entails to potential participants as they contacted me. I was successful in

recruiting participants, however, it was challenging to find participants as this is not a very appealing subject to speak about.

Of the nine participants, two disclosed as victims, eight were women and one was a man. All participants were between the ages of 19 to 28. I was successful in recruiting participants from across the range of years of study (first-year to those nearing graduation). One participant was in first-year, one was in second-year, two were in third-year, three were in fourth-year, one was in their sixth-year of study and one was a master's student. In terms of their faculties, all participants were in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In terms of the participant's majors, one was majoring in Social Work, one was majoring in Women's Studies, one was majoring in Political Science, two were majoring in Sociology and four were majoring in International Development.

The students in my sample vary in terms of their motivations for participating in the research. One participant was a friend of a victim and wanted to speak to their friends' experience. Two students participated because they were victims and wished to speak to their experiences. Two participants were involved in the Dalhousie Student Union and were activists who have been involved in campaigning on gender violence issues. Four participants were regular students who felt strongly about the subject and participated to have their voices heard.

The interviews lasted for approximately one hour and occurred at Dalhousie University in the Wallace McCain Learning Commons private rooms. Four individuals who were unable to meet in person for a variety of reasons were interviewed by phone. I also had an individual from the Senior Administration at Dalhousie express an interest in participating, however, when she saw the interview guide I had prepared in advance of the scheduled meeting, she decided not to participate.

I designed my interview questions to explicate participants' perceptions of Dalhousie University's management of sexual assault issues (see Appendix C). I did not mention the three specified concepts (rape culture, resources, and barriers) at first to see if the concepts were mentioned by the participants without any prompting from the questions. The interview asked questions of the participants relating to how they think Dalhousie responds to sexual assault issues. I waited to see if the interviewees brought up the three concepts spontaneously before I probed them with direct questions.

The data collected and analyzed consisted of transcribed interviews and interview notes. The interviews were transcribed from recordings and interview notes prepared immediately after conducting the interview. The data analysis occurred once all the interviews were completed, all data had been obtained from the participants and all interviews had been transcribed. Through the data analysis, I looked for recurring patterns and coded according to these evident patterns, including the three concepts of my research (rape culture, resources, and barriers), and new codes were generated as a result of new themes and patterns that emerged from the data. I was receptive to new findings that did not fit with the concepts I had initially associated with this topic, as my research is qualitative.

The data collected was audio-recorded on a password-protected iPhone and did not include participants' names as each participant was identified through codes: P1 through P9. The data stored was anonymized and, as a result, the data was kept without compromising the participants' privacy rights. Prior to beginning the in-depth interviews, all participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix D), which stated that they were free to withdraw from the interview or entirely withdraw their data from the research with no negative consequences. All participants were informed that no identifying information would be included

in the report. All participants were also required to consent to being audio-recorded, as a condition of participation.

The risks and discomforts experienced by participating in my research were not expected to surpass those that would occur in the participant's everyday life if they were to have a conversation about this topic. Strong feelings may have been aroused if the students felt passionate about the topic, or if they or someone they know was sexually assaulted. These risks were mitigated by creating a safe private space for the students where they would not be judged. I also had on hand a list of formal sources of support for sexual assault (e.g. Dalhousie Counselling contact number, etc.).

Participants were also given the option to choose to skip questions, take a break or stop the interview at any time. A direct benefit of participation in my research included the opportunity for individuals to express their perspectives regarding a relevant and timely topic that is directly related to their university. An indirect benefit included their contribution to new knowledge on the topic. The following pages discuss the findings of the research.

FINDINGS: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, SUPPORT AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: VICTIMS AND NOTORIOUS EVENTS

Through my research of sexual assault at Dalhousie University, I was interested in learning how the participants' personal experiences, if any, with sexual assault on campus shaped their perceptions of Dalhousie's management of sexual assault issues. When conducting interviews, it was evident that two participants had direct experience with assault on campus as they acknowledged they were victims of sexual assaults that occurred at Dalhousie and spoke to those personal experiences. Moreover, in general, at Dalhousie University, there have been two notorious sexual assault events that stand out, the Dalhousie Dentistry Scandal and the Dalhousie Jungle. These two events were spoken about in great length during each interview and the majority of participants were aware of both of the scandals

VICTIMS

To begin, I will discuss the personal experiences of individuals who came forward as victims. Two participants chose to identify themselves as victims and speak to their personal experiences. In both victim cases, the participants noted that Dalhousie University officials had failed them in the management of their sexual assault cases and that nothing had come of the cases they brought before Dalhousie. In particular, one victim shared her personal experience as she read an email she sent to the university, speaking to her experience. The email is as follows,

I remember that back in August [the university] invited me to discuss my experiences in reporting so that I could provide some insight as to the barriers I faced [cries]. Um, this invitation meant a lot [sniffs] as I found it very difficult to express and [cries] politicize events in a safe space where I could feel like my voice was being heard. I hope that this opportunity [cries] is still on the table [sniffs] as I hope to outline the difficulties I have faced in this email [cries]. I feel as if I need to disclose these struggles even if it is via email so that there is an insight in improvements, even small steps [sniffs] can be made in the Dalhousie community by anyone who wishes

to help [cries]... Throughout the last few months, I've learned many things. Most eye-opening lesson I have learned is that the reporting process [sniffs] along with the difficulties [cries] in poor service delivery on the university's part... are far more traumatic and humiliating than assault or harassment itself [cries]. To exemplify this in personal terms, I am now struggling with the effects of [sniffs] post-traumatic stress disorder [cries]... Unable to continue [cries] my studies, while my assailant is still walking the Dalhousie campus. This thought alone is very frustrating and is true for many other survivors. After doing some research I have learned that Dalhousie as an institution is not alone in this. Many institutions across North America have failed their students when it comes to reporting sexual assault [cries]. The failures in reporting only contribute to rape culture and counteracts the consent culture we preach about [...] my decision to transfer schools was one that was made so that I can heal at home with the greatest supports in my life while continuing on with my education. Um, I hope to get involved with the sexual assault support center of [university name] region and the University of [university name] women's center. I hope that I can act as a drop in the bucket to dismantle rape culture and ally with survivors. Thank you again for the opportunity to return and more importantly I thank you for your time to read this. Best of luck with your future endeavors, P1 [sniffs]

(Participant 1, 2017)

The email above was sent to a Senior Administrator working for Dalhousie and three months later, the participant has still received no response whatsoever. The participant expressed her dismay with the university officials ignoring her case and refusing to help her achieve justice.

It was obvious through the victims' stories that they believed the university was not doing enough for them. The victims made it evident that they thought that the university officials to whom they reached out, failed them by not addressing their cases and properly punishing their assailants.

When the victim who provided the statement above was later asked what the university could have done to better manage her individual case, she said,

Looking back, looking back what I would have wanted the most and what I did want and still want is just to be heard and to be believed and to be taken seriously. I just felt that I was a complete joke and by the end of it all I was so embarrassed and so humiliated, like, its like I said in the email earlier, the whole reporting process was so much more embarrassing and humiliating than the actual assault themselves.

(Participant 1, 2017)

The victims wanted to be acknowledged and believed by university officials. They wanted action to be taken as a result of their assault. They recognized that the university did a disservice to them by not hearing their story and taking the appropriate action against their assailant.

This participant demonstrated the case of a victim of sexual assault believing that the university did a poor job of managing a sexual assault matter. Likewise, another victim who came forward noted that they too were looking for more directed resources to ultimately gain the support they required. The participant stated, *“um, I was looking into more resources actually for Dalhousie, um, uh, I was sexually assaulted, [...] I guess I was just looking for more, more support”* (Participant 4, 2017).

In this instance, the participant further noted that they had trouble accessing timely sources of support as they were unable to make an appointment with counseling services or to seek any other alternative support. The participant shared with me the frustration and resentment they held towards Dalhousie for not properly managing their case.

The victims unanimously agreed that they wanted to be heard by university officials and they ultimately wanted to be given the support and justice that was required after their assaults occurred, yet in all cases, the victims felt the university failed them as they poorly managed, and in one case, did not manage the sexual assault issues before them at all. This was also the case for the two notorious events of sexual assault known on Dalhousie campuses.

NOTORIOUS EVENTS

The Dalhousie Dentistry Scandal and the Dalhousie Jungle were two publicized cases of sexual assault on Dalhousie campuses that the majority of the participants were aware of. In

terms of the Dalhousie Dentistry Scandal, when asked the question, *do you know of any cases of sexual assault on Dalhousie campus?* all nine participants brought up the Dalhousie Dentistry Scandal. When asked to explain what they knew about it, one participant stated,

Um, so I know that a group of male fourth year Dentistry students, I think there were 13 but I'm not quite sure the exact number, ah, started a Facebook group among themselves that rated their fellow female classmates, that made super misogynistic and sexist and basically horrible remarks, um, that involved, um, sexual assault and possibly perpetrating that.

(Participant 2, 2017)

The majority of the participants also knew about the Dalhousie Jungle. One participant stated,

Okay, so, um, what I know about the Dalhousie Jungle was that it was an Instagram, I believe it was a private Instagram, um, made by a few residents who were residing in Howe Hall at the time and it was supposed to be a page where they could post, um, like, stupid things like drinking and sex and all this other stuff. And so when it came down to it some of the posts had included videos and photos of um, these guys, um, having sex with girl and um, the people who were involved in the videos didn't know they were being recorded, and um, there's a problem there, there's no consent, and then number two was then that some of these individuals were under age.

(Participant 1, 2017)

This case was less publicized and smaller in scale than the Dalhousie Dentistry Scandal, which may be why certain participants were unaware of this matter.

All participants believed that Dalhousie did not manage either of these issues adequately and that more needed to be done in both instances, to provide justice to the victims who were at the center of the suffering in both of these cases and to serve justice to the perpetrators of the sexual assaults. When asked, *how could Dalhousie have better managed the Dalhousie Dentistry scandal?* one participant noted,

Personally, I think they shouldn't have been able to get their Dentistry, any of them. I'll say this because they weren't like history or bio majors, they were dentistry majors that had, now have access to drugs that will basically... put... someone incapacitated and the idea that if I went to a dentist who had made sexual, like, rape jokes and like, trivialized sexual assault and, like even, kind of hinted that they would

do it...like that would be so, terrifying and I would never go to them again if I learned that. And also, that whole grade now I think is like, like oh you were part of that graduating year. And some of them had no idea or were the people that were commented on, and now they're lives are connected... and so yeah, they went through dentistry school, they paid a lot of money, but, I don't, like, its just... [sighs] I don't necessarily think that, maybe, some people have changed and if that is, that's great but I don't necessarily think that they deserve to be dentists with that type of power.

(Participant 2, 2017)

The nine participants held corresponding views that the method of restorative justice employed in managing this case was not adequate and the majority of participants agreed that the men involved in the scandal should not have been allowed to graduate and become dentists.

They expressed their dismay with the choice of restorative justice as,

Restorative justice... I don't think this is the right time to use it, um, because they were, there weren't 18-year-olds, they were um, very much adults in a professional program and if they were going out in the world and um weren't punished for the harassment they did [...]restorative justice, I think, um, just didn't quite meet it.

(Participant 3, 2017)

The majority of participants believed that the men should have been expelled and not have been given the chance to graduate the dentistry program.

In the case of the Dalhousie Jungle, when asked how Dalhousie could have better managed the issue, one participant noted, “a lot of people think that Dal, like many universities –I don't think I've heard of a university that has a perfect reporting [system for] sexual assault... that it doesn't have all the right infrastructure in place” (Participant 2, 2017). The participants consistently agreed that the Jungle was not adequately managed either. A participant noted,

I don't think that was enough because I don't think it ever resolves the situation and the offenders, I really don't think they learned what the issue was. They were kicked out of res, or moved to a different one, they were still in classrooms. Like, I've heard from a couple people 'cause they were in commerce...Um, they still go to Dal [laughs] and um, they're still in classes with the girls that they assaulted.

(Participant 3, 2017)

The participants agreed that the Dalhousie Jungle was not adequately managed as the men were still allowed to attend Dalhousie.

As discussed in the research framework of this paper, there is a widespread consensus that universities do not adequately manage issues of sexual assault. This consensus was also evident across all nine interviews that I conducted. When asked the question *do you think Dalhousie adequately deals with sexual assault issues?* the answer from all nine participants was no. It was evident that their answers stemmed from their difficulties with their personal experiences as well as the perceptions students held about the two scandals that occurred at Dalhousie.

When asked to expand on their answers, one participant stated, *“I don’t know, to me, I believe that it’s more about image than, in my, uh, like opinion it’s more about image than the safety of students”* (Participant 6, 2017). Several of the participants mentioned that they believe that Dalhousie put more effort into PR than they did in eradicating the situations and providing justice for the victims.

SUPPORT: LACK OF RESOURCES, EXISTING BARRIERS, RAPE CULTURE and CONSENT CULTURE

LACK OF RESOURCES

As the interviews progressed and the participants were asked to discuss available and accessible resources to address sexual assault, all nine participants held strong opinions about this specific topic. When asked about the resources that the participants were aware of on campus, one participant noted,

Um, yeah. So, [sighs], I know, um, part of the health professions, um, the health promotion something or other, they’re trying to introduce um like, group, um, support groups. Um and that’s I think then with social workers, so they’re peer support groups. So if um, if you’re a survivor um, and I think they’re weekly and

they're drop ins, I think that's one resource... I don't remember what they're called. They are advertised at the Dal clinic, that's how I saw them. Um, and I think they're held Tuesdays and Thursdays, different focuses for different groups. Um, there's an Equity and Accessibility Office in the DSU, that um, is somewhere I might go. Or the DSAS, which is the Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service so if I needed help interpreting a policy or finding out where I need to go to make a complaint or work through that, I would probably go there. Um and obviously, the counseling unit and my physician probably.

(Participant 3, 2017).

The majority of participants spoke to almost all the resources that were available on campus. However, one participant highlighted a common theme that was evident in all participant's answers, noting *"yeah, I mean what I remember is that the South House dealt with like, with far more cases than Dal, like it was really obvious that people felt more comfortable going to this body that wasn't so closely associated with Dal* (Participant 7, 2017).

A participant highlighted that most students utilized the resources run by students, rather than the university, such as the South House. South House is a volunteer-driven sexual and gender resource center run by Dalhousie University and University of King's College students. The participants explained that the students felt more comfortable utilizing student-run resources as they were more beneficial in managing sexual assault cases, in terms of response rates and compassion shown for victims.

As the interviews continued, the majority of participants who were knowledgeable about these resources also knew that the Dalhousie Sexual Assault Phone Line had recently been defunded and when asked about that, one participant stated,

Yeah, um... I, I, so, I sit on the DSU council and the reasoning that um, the DSU didn't want to keep trying to fund it through like increments of money is because they wanted consistency for the people that used the phone line. Um, so not to have it on one month and off the next. It was, they wanted uh, like a flow of money...And so, they were depending on the university to match half of what the cost is. Which I think is only \$30,000. That's like chump change for the university. Um, and I think the

phone line, you can't look at as how many people you get per month calling in, or how many people per week you help because that's not particularly the point of it. You're not trying to say like yes I want more, [laughs] sexual harassment survivors calling.

(Participant 3, 2017).

The participants who spoke to the phone line expressed their frustration with its removal.

The above participant provided an explanation as to why the phone line was defunded, due to the lack of use. However, all participants believed that that was not sufficient to measure the usefulness of the phone line.

Another participant expressed her anger as she stated,

so the sexual assault helpline I knew um, a person that was really involved and uh, their report was that they had gotten like, over the last year, that they were running like, like they got many more um, reportings of sexual assault. Um, than the Dal Security. Um, so... When, when a resource uh like, when a program is getting more responses um, or more reports of sexual assault than the Dalhousie Security team, you know that, that resource is filling a void. Um...that the Dalhousie Security team is not. And the fact that Dalhousie was presented with those numbers and then basically rejected the fact that they were filling a void with this hotline and said that those people don't matter is like an absolutely ridiculous thing. It just goes to show like how little Dalhousie actually gives a cr& about their students... And gives a s*&^ about the people that have gone through sexual assault. It's absolutely brutal, I was appalled [laughs]*

(Participant 9, 2017)

It was evident that participants were angry because not only are there are not enough adequate resources on campus, but because a resource that was available and being used had been defunded, making the process of reporting and seeking help that much more difficult for victims and their allies. They argued that the phone line was an essential resource on campus that should not have been defunded. They expressed that the phone line needs to be reinstated to ensure that victims and their allies have the peace of mind that there is a resource available to them if they feel the need to use it.

Next, when asked if they thought the resources were useful, a participant mentioned

how although these resources are in place, their usefulness “*will more come down to how they actually work once you’re in the system, or, actually needing the resources*”

(Participant 8, 2017). Another participant spoke to this and noted, “*actually I’m going to go ahead, in terms of sexual assault, I’m going to go ahead and say I know people who have sought out resources, um, but I know in terms of like, maybe the 3 or 4 resources that I know of on campus, those being the Human Rights Equity and Harassment Prevention Office, Dalhousie Security, Dal Health Services and the sexual assault and harassment phone line, so of these, so probably like 2 or 3 of them weren’t helpful whatsoever*”

(Participant 1, 2017). These numbers display the poor management of sexual assault issues by university officials who fail their victims by the lack of, or non-existing support.

Hayes-Smith and Levett (2010) allude to the biggest issue with resources, which was also identified by the participants. That is, despite resources being available on campus, students and victims are truly not receiving, using or learning from these resources (2010, p. 350) ultimately contributing to the poor management of sexual assault matters.

EXISTING BARRIERS

When asked what hinders people from accessing these resources, a participant noted

I think, um, making the information about what their rights are as a student, making that accessible to the average student. I think is the first step. Or not the first step, but definitely like a point that needs to be concentrated on. Um, I think, um, creating uh, a more cohesive and um, inclusive policy. Um, about um, sexual assault or harassment or violence on campus needs to be done and that can be done through the ombudsman person office, the um, Human Rights and Human Resources, through the administration, and I think for that information to be accessible and for the university to have an accurate picture, it needs to not just include top-down, it needs to also look at what’s already available on campus. And be able to like bring them together, because I feel like this university has a lot of initiatives and I feel like they may not be working because people don’t know they exist, or, it’s not working for the people that we have on campus.

(Participant 3, 2017)

All participants provided similar answers in relation to the barriers to these resources. Another participant noted, *“having it, actually advertised a lot. Um, make people know that there are resources, but also make them accessible. I mean if you have counseling but it’s the wait is so long that it’s completely useless, then... you don’t really have counseling in my opinion”* (Participant 5, 2017).

This participant expanded upon the issue that there is a lack of advertising on campus, contributing to the lack of knowledge and use of resources. One participant stated the lack of advertising was due to the fact that *“I think it’s more about image and so by talking about sexual assault their bringing up that you know, it could happen on campus and that kind of stuff”* (Participant 6, 2017). The participant stated that Dalhousie cares more about maintaining their image than they do about speaking about sexual assault in order to help their victims of sexual assault. This represents a barrier as victims are hindered by Dalhousie from seeking the help they need.

Moreover, accessing these resources and the usefulness of them can be partly attributed to the barriers that are in place that hinder students from accessing or learning from them. Students and victims, along with allies, are unable to access these resources as there were long waitlists, rendering individuals unable to make appointments. The counselling centre takes months to get into and as a result of this students and victims are unable to see a psychologist and discuss their issue to contribute to better management.

Wooten and Mitchell, in their research, highlight a significant barrier (2016, p. 65) to be the lack of support and belief from university officials. Wooten & Mitchell note that officials are often unapproachable in terms of sexual assault matters as they victim blame and do not provide support to victims (2016, p. 65). Participants held corresponding views with Wooten &

Mitchell's argument. One participant noted,

I feel like people in those positions [university officials], I mean, and I even know them, like you have compassion for them and know that they're human and do care deep down, but I feel like people in those roles, they're playing the roles more than being human, like they're accountable to a certain um, like they're accountable to making money So, it's really, I feel like it's always going to be um, a push and pull against them like trying to cover up things and trying to make Dal look good and trying to erase any kind of shadow on campus.

(Participant 7, 2017)

The lack of belief and support from officials inhibits the reporting of sexual assault and consequent treatment of the matter from the victim's perspective, as well as the delivery of justice to the perpetrator. Ultimately this fosters the perception of the poor management of sexual assault issues on campus. Two further barriers that were identified by all nine participants, were those of rape culture and consent culture, which will be discussed below.

RAPE CULTURE

In the discussion surrounding barriers, the concept of rape culture was also mentioned.

When the participants were asked if they knew what the term rape culture meant, all nine participants were aware of it. One participant defined it as,

The kind of mythology that our society undertakes, normalizing sexual assault and um, sexism, and sexual, like uh, over, sexuality. How we take it as like, almost, a commodity and uh, instead of a privilege or right, so, there's a lot of well, I deserve to have sex with someone because we, like I, we talked or we dance or she, we had sex this one time, so that means she must want to have sex with me, or he, must want to have sex with me again. Or I took her to dinner, this idea that sex is like something that you can like, earn, or take, um. And that it's no big deal to talk about somebody or go after them sexually without their permission. Uh, joke around about it, rape jokes or sexual assault being normalized and trivialized I guess.

(Participant 2, 2017)

Students were aware of rape culture and all nine participants were able to adequately relay the definition to me, indicating the same definition identified in the literature review by Rentschler, that of rape culture being sexualized violence (2014, p. 936). When asked if rape culture existed

at Dalhousie, all nine participants said yes. One participant stated,

*Um, I think it's like, any other university campus where it's just cohorts of young people experiencing freedom from home for the first time and there's just this misogynistic attitude and normalization of assault. Um, it's just what happens at parties, or, it's, it's just something that.... Happens, it seems. And, I don't really know how to quantify it but it's, just like a pervasive mentality that it's okay and this sh** just happens and that's fine.*

(Participant 5, 2017)

Another participant noted, “*um, well. I think that the Dalhousie administration's lack of responses or lack of adequate responses is the perfect example of rape culture on campus*”

(Participant 9, 2017). Participants noted that Dalhousie did not educate their students about rape culture and it was not something that was commonly discussed on campus, similar to the lack of discussion surrounding consent culture.

CONSENT CULTURE

The concept of rape culture tied in with participant's views on consent and all nine individuals agreed that Dalhousie does not do an adequate job of fostering a consent culture. All nine participants were aware of what consent meant and identified consent similar to the definition provided by Vandervort in the literature review, that of the confirmation of voluntary agreement (1986, p. 233).

One participant stated that they “*couldn't really pinpoint any explicit ways that they support consent culture*” (Participant 8, 2017). When asked if Dalhousie enforces a consent culture, a participant noted “*no. I don't think they do. Um, because it's not really a thing, it's not, it should be, but I don't think it's really something that is actively being encouraged or nurtured amongst young university students*” (Participant 5, 2017). Students also noted that there were no specific resources directed at explaining or focusing on consent. Another participant noted,

But, um, yeah, consent like I don't know if I've seen or heard or ever anything on the Dal campus about consent. Um, which is important [laughs] because that should be

like plastered on every wall in res [laughs]. And... Talking about it and normalizing... I wish consent was as normalized as rape was. Like... Consent needs to be; we need a consent culture [laughs].

(Participant 5, 2017).

When asked if participants knew of any resources relating to consent, all nine stated they didn't know of any on campus that were tailored to educating students about consent.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS: CONSENT EDUCATION, REINSTATING HOTLINE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER

CONSENT EDUCATION

When asked the question, what are other services that Dalhousie could offer to students? one participant offered, *“information on consent is a great idea. I think probably the idea of consent is a little hard for a lot of kids to grasp, especially when you're coming to a new school, you're already kind of out of your comfort zone, you're freaking out a little bit all the time about everything”* (Participant 8, 2017). This participant noted how consent education is a crucial element in managing sexual assault issues on campus in the hopes of attempting to prevent sexual assaults from occurring.

REINSTATING HOTLINE

Another participant suggested reinstating the hotline, which was supported by all nine participants. The participant noted,

I think that having like reinstating the sexual assault helpline, um, would be amazing for Dalhousie. Um, just that not only is it helping people that are giving the victims in the future, but its giving other people piece of mind that.... They can go somewhere and report sexual assault without being fear, fear of being, um, like basically fear of going to the police.

(Participant 9, 2017)

When asked about their thoughts on the removal of it, one participant shared *“I thought it was brutal. Um, just garbage”* (Participant 9, 2017). As a result, the majority of participants agreed

that reinstating the sexual assault hotline would be a great way to improve the management of sexual assault issues on campus.

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER

Another common suggestion was the creation of a sexual assault center for victims and allies. Another suggestion was,

I think the, I think if Dalhousie wanted to make this campus, um, a safer place, with um, resources, trying to decrease the amount of harassment and violence as well as um, decrease rape culture and increase consent, I think there needs to be a centralized body that has this, so that can include um, an equity officer, that can, it can include a social worker, a psychologist, group workshops. But those need to be together.

(Participant 3, 2017)

All nine participants unanimously agreed that a center on campus was a great initiative for the university to take on. On March 16, 2017, voters passed a levy initiated by the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) to create a Survivor Support Center on campus. The DSU noted that the levy will allow “*the DSU to establish a robust in-house support program dedicated to service delivery, education and advocacy for survivors of sexual assault, violence, and harassment*” (DSU, 2017). This levy was necessary as the DSU provides support for students currently with the sexual assault phone line, however, without funding from the university, these resources are unsustainable (DSU, 2017).

The DSU notes that they “*recognize that dedicated, long-term support for survivors must be accompanied by education and advocacy to ensure safer and more supportive campuses for all members of the Dalhousie community*” (DSU, 2017). While this is wonderful news, and a major advancement for victims and their allies, the levy was not a result of the effort of university officials. Rather, it was initiated by the DSU, which is student-led and run. It is now time for university officials to begin to recognize the efforts of students and match those efforts

to create better management on campus. As the DSU made evident, the student unions are only capable of doing so much, they require support and funding from the university to make the changes that need to be made at this point.

In terms of future considerations, Zugazaga et al. touch on the most popular response from the participants, that of enhanced services on campus for students and victims, ranging from Rape Aggression Defense classes to a sexual assault center on campus (Zugazaga et al., 2016, p. 34). The following pages will discuss the conclusions of the research.

CONCLUSION: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS INFER DEFICIENT MANAGEMENT

This research explored the question of *how do Dalhousie students perceive Dalhousie University's management of sexual assault issues on campus?* I would argue that my research is being completed at a particularly important time in Halifax, given the recent publicity of sexual assault matters at Dalhousie University, and will contribute to the existing literature on the topic of sexual assault on university campuses. I would like for my research to stand as a reminder that victims and their allies are not alone in the fight against sexual assault: they are heard, believed and taken seriously by individuals such as myself. Despite the disservice that has been done to the victims of sexual assault by university officials, their fight is valid and worth pursuing.

The research concluded that the perception of the participants is that Dalhousie does not adequately manage issues of sexual assault and this in turn leads to greater issues for victims. The conclusion drawn stems from the personal experiences of victims, and the participants' perceptions of how the Dalhousie Dentistry and Dalhousie Jungle scandals were managed by the university. One participant shared,

"I barely even think about the assaults now, I think about... what they said to me and what they were doing and what they were thinking and all that other stuff and how, you know, now my assaulter is studying and is like, you know, almost done his degree and will probably be done his degree before this whole process is you know, finished."

(Participant 1, 2017)

It was concluded that university officials are doing a disservice to their students through their poor management, or lack of management, of sexual assault issues on their campuses.

In terms of personal experience, from victim stories to the notorious events, it is evident that students do become victims of sexual assault on campus and they feel as if Dalhousie did not manage their sexual assault cases adequately. Likewise, all participants agreed that Dalhousie

officials did not adequately manage the two public scandals as they failed to provide the adequate justice for the victims at the center of each case.

In terms of support, there is a lack of adequate and available resources on campus for victims and their allies to utilize. Despite a few resources being available, students are not truly receiving, using or learning from them, in turn leading to the perception of poor management of sexual assault issues by Dalhousie University officials. Likewise, there are barriers to accessing these resources, making the reporting process and the support process difficult for victims and their allies, including the existing rape culture and lack of consent culture on campus. The lack of support and belief from university officials in sexual assault cases contributes to poor management of sexual assault issues on campus.

In terms of future considerations, certain steps could be taken to improve the management of sexual assault issues on Dalhousie campuses. These steps include enhanced services needed on campus for students and victims from consent education, to the reinstatement of the sexual assault phone line to the creation of a sexual assault center.

By exploring the concept of rape culture, accessible resources for victims and their allies and the evident barriers victims and their allies may experience, I am able to contribute to the future considerations that universities may take when addressing their management of sexual assault issues on their campuses. Further, I may provide a condensed version of this research, the conclusions drawn and the future considerations suggested, to university officials to allow them to understand how students perceive their management of sexual assault issues and where improvements can be made to better meet the needs of victims of sexual assault.

It is important to bear in mind that this study is exploratory, with a small sample and therefore is not representative of the whole Dalhousie population. Therefore, the conclusions

being made can not be generalized to Dalhousie as an institution. With that being said, I believe the findings are indicative of the wider student population as I believe poor sexual assault management by universities is a pervasive issue that affects all students and victims in some way, at all universities.

If this study were to be replicated, but done so to be representative of the population, the sample size would need to be larger in order to be representative of Dalhousie as an institution. A representative study may be conducted through the use of anonymous surveys, as this is a less invasive and personal approach and individuals may be more inclined to participate anonymously. This kind of study would be beneficial in reaching a larger sample and drawing more representative and generalizable conclusions than this study was able to draw from a small sample.

However, it is important to still consider the benefits of conducting exploratory small-scale research through interviews and rendering a small sample study. The advantages of exploratory small-scale research allowed for more personal information to surface through a small sample size. The other advantage was the ability to read the participants body language and make inferences from it. In addition, small-scale exploratory studies using in-depth interviews can be helpful tools for formulating questions in larger-scale surveys as the interviews may render pertinent themes for further questioning in a survey.

Small-scale exploratory studies are useful when researchers are attempting to obtain personal, detailed stories from the participants. Other studies that may benefit from small-scale exploratory studies with a small sample size may include the topics of abortion and same-sex rights with participants who have experienced strife with these issues, through personal experience or general opinion.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT POSTER

Exploring students' perceptions of Dalhousie University's management of sexual assault issues

Participate in a sociology honours study exploring how Dalhousie students perceive Dalhousie university's management of sexual assault issues on campus. Participation consists of an interview lasting up to one hour, and all the information you provide will be anonymous and all data that you provide will be kept secure and confidential. For more information, or to participate, please contact me by email (taylor.mackenzie@dal.ca) or phone (902-441-6552). Your input on this research would be greatly appreciated!



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APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Information sent by email to Dalhousie undergraduate students will be as follows.

Dear Dalhousie undergraduate students,

I am a sociology honours student from Dalhousie and I am conducting a study exploring how Dalhousie students perceive Dalhousie university's management of sexual assault issues on campus. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and hear your views on this topic! Participation consists of an interview lasting up to one hour, and all the information you provide will be anonymous and all data that you provide will be kept secure and confidential.

For more information, or to participate, please contact me by email (taylor.mackenzie@dal.ca) or phone (902-441-6552). Your input on this research would be greatly appreciated!

*Sincerely,
Taylor MacKenzie*

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviews with Dalhousie undergraduate students will be in-depth, semi-structured, and take about one hour of participants' time. Questions are as follows.

1. What year of your undergraduate are you in? Why did you choose to attend Dalhousie?
2. How would you define campus sexual assault?
3. Do you know of any cases of sexual assault on Dalhousie campus?
 - a. Are you aware of the Dalhousie Dentistry scandal?
 - b. Are you aware of the Dalhousie Jungle?
4. Do you hear conversations about sexual assault among your friends, strangers, etc?
5. What were the reactions of university officials to these sexual assault issues?
 - a. Do you know how academic officials dealt with the Dentistry scandal?
 - i. What are your thoughts on restorative justice?
6. Do you know what the concept of rape culture means?
 - a. Do you think rape culture exists on Dalhousie campus?
7. Do you know of any resources available on campus?
 - a. Are you aware of the PEGaSUS program?
 - b. Were you given resources from your residence (if you stayed in residence first year)?
8. Do you find these resources to be useful?
 - a. Do you know anyone who used the resources?
9. Do you see any barriers to these resources?
 - a. Do you know of the sexual assault hotline?
 - i. What are your thoughts on the removal of it?
10. Do you think Dalhousie adequately deals with sexual assault issues on campus?
 - a. How could they have better dealt with the Dentistry scandal?
 - b. What are other services that Dalhousie could offer to students?

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM



*Faculty of Arts and
Social Sciences*

CONSENT FORM

“More traumatic and humiliating than assault itself”: Exploring students’ perceptions of Dalhousie University’s management of sexual assault

You are invited to take part in research being conducted by me, Taylor MacKenzie, an undergraduate student in Sociology, as part of my honours degree at Dalhousie University. The purpose of this research is to interview Dalhousie students to explore their perceptions of how Dalhousie university manages sexual assault issues on campus. I will write up the results of this research in a paper for my class, called the honours thesis.

As a participant in the research you will be asked to answer a number of interview questions about your perceptions of Dalhousie’s management of sexual assault issues on campus. The interview should take about an hour and will be conducted in a quiet location of your choice. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded. If I quote any part of it in my honours thesis, I will use a pseudonym, not your real name, and I will remove any other details that could identify you from the quote.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer, and you are welcome to stop the interview at any time if you no longer want to participate. If you decide to stop participating after the interview is over, you can do so until March 1. I will not be able to remove the information you provided after that date, because I will have completed my analysis, but the information will not be used in any other research.

Information that you provide to me will be kept private and will be anonymized, which means any identifying details such as your name will be removed from it and exchanged with a code to refer to the individual. Only the honours class supervisor and I will have access to the unprocessed information you offer. I will describe and share general findings in a presentation to the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department and in my honours thesis. Nothing that could identify you will be included in the presentation or the thesis. I will keep anonymized information so that I can learn more from it as I continue with my studies.

The risks associated with this study are minimal but include potential discomfort associated with talking about an emotional topic. You are welcome to skip questions, take a break, or stop the interview at any time with absolutely no consequences.

There will be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research and you will not receive compensation. The research, however, will contribute to new knowledge on how students

perceive Dalhousie's management of sexual assault issues on campus. If you would like to see how your information is used, please feel free to contact me and I will send you a copy of my honours thesis after April 30.

If you have questions or concerns about the research please feel free to contact me or the honours class supervisor. My contact information is taylor.mackenzie@dal.ca or 902-441-6552. You can contact the honours class supervisor, Dr Martha Radice, at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University on (902) 494-6747, or email martha.radice@dal.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email ethics@dal.ca.

Participant's consent:

I have read the above information and I agree to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

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APPENDIX E: REB FINAL REPORT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



March 28, 2017

Taylor MacKenzie
Arts & Social Sciences\Sociology & Anthropology
Dalhousie University

Dear Taylor,

REB #: 2016-4046
Project Title: Exploring students' perceptions of Dalhousie University's management of sexual assault issues

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the final report for this research project. The research ethics file for this project is now closed. Dalhousie University stores this file for 5 years, after which all records associated with the file may be destroyed.

I would like to remind you of your continuing responsibility to ensure that you maintain any records and data associated with this research consistent with your approved research plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Connors".

Catherine Connors | **Director Research Ethics** | Dalhousie University | Room 231, 6299 South Street, PO Box 15000, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R2 | phone: 902.494.1462