

# WLUF ADVOCATE

Building community through dialogue, discussion, and debate.

## In this issue:

Confronting Gendered Violence	1
Research That Makes a Difference	1, 2
Creating Safe Campuses	2

## Research that Makes a Difference

*Three studies by Laurier faculty and students seek to learn more about gendered violence on our campuses, and what needs to be done to end it.*

### Student Research and Action

*Karly Rath, 2015 Graduate of the Journalism program, Laurier Brantford*

In Fall 2014, six Laurier students – Brittany Bennett, Taylor Berzins, Layla Bozich, Karly Rath, Nadine Saba and Neha Soni – conducted a research project exploring how WLU compares to other Ontario universities in its effort to combat sexual violence. After doing a social media scan and qualitative interviews, they conducted two content analyses that concluded (i): WLU fulfills less than five percent of the recommendations in the Ontario Women’s Directorate’s university guide “[Developing a Response to Sexual Violence](#),” and (ii) words used in reference to the *survivors of sexual assault* appeared approximately five times more often than words referring to the perpetrators or their punishments in an analysis of news articles. These student and alumni researchers have (cont’d on pg 2)

## Confronting Gendered Violence on Campus

*Kari Brozowski, Community Health*

Sexual violence is not about sex; it is about a perpetrator exerting power over someone they perceive to be weaker. We know from studies of gendered violence that those who appear to be more vulnerable are seen as “easy” targets by a perpetrator. Women, people with disabilities, aboriginal women, women of colour, and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people are more likely to experience sexual violence. And, as a 2010 study by Brozowski and Hall establishes, the incidence of sexual violence against elder (65 and older) men and women who appear to be more vulnerable is also higher than the average.

Gendered sexual violence is a longstanding problem on university campuses across Canada—one that has only recently gained media attention. That attention along with campus activism has compelled university administrations to address the issue more effectively. At Laurier, students, staff, faculty and community groups came together last year to form the Gendered Violence Taskforce. The taskforce is working to recommend policies and protocols that provide greater supports and accessibility to all campus community members in order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to feel safe and secure. These policies, says taskforce Chair Lynn Kane, address any type of gender-based violence, includ-

ing sexual assault, sexual harassment and bullying.

Although there are some harassment and discrimination policies in the WLUF collective agreements and the student code of conduct, it is not clear that these policies apply to everyone. As such, the taskforce is advising the university on what policies and protocols need to be implemented to address the gaps that currently exist. Taskforce members will also be meeting with WLUF representatives in November to brainstorm how the Association can better address gendered violence as a workplace issue.

The taskforce’s mandate further includes establishing or formalizing university-wide support services for people who have experienced gendered violence, and ensuring the university complies with relevant federal and provincial legislation and mandates. Its goal is not to help the university better manage incidents of gendered violence, but to eliminate them.

*Laurier Resources:*

[Gendered and Sexual Violence Education, Training and Policies](#)  
[Gendered Violence Support and Services](#)

*Further Reading:*

[Kari Brozowski and David R. Hall, \(2010\). Aging and Risk: Physical and Sexual Abuse of Elders in Canada. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25\(7\), 1183–1199. Please see summaries of other Laurier research on this topic featured on page 2.](#)

## Creating Safe Campuses Means Refusing to Shut Up

*Helen Ramirez, Women and Gender Studies*

As I write this piece, I'm fighting a hopelessness that is seeping into my body after hearing a collection of unsolicited stories from students about their first weeks here on WLU's Waterloo campus. They tell of the pressure to "consent" to sex, offensive postings on social media streams, and the laughter from their male colleagues when they do challenge sexism. They speak of unwanted touching, and the comments from men in passing cars that reduce them to sexual objects as they walk on the streets around our campuses. My week ended with the story of a sexual assault during Homecoming.

I force myself to hold onto hope by remembering that it was students—and their courageous willingness to tell their stories—who launched a process that has seen a commitment from the university administration, faculty and staff to stand with them to create a working and living environment that will not allow any form of gendered and sexual violence to go unaddressed. Refusing to shut up is an important part of this process. But I worry that we will forget that rape is part of a larger social operation that can make the campus unsafe for anyone who identifies as a woman, gay man or transgendered person.

There's much more to the story I'm telling. Whenever a movement to confront oppression gathers steam, a backlash emerges that is meant to scare those who do such work into silence. The online posting "[Kill Feminists](#)" that targeted students and professors in Women's Studies at the University of Toronto just weeks ago—in part—achieved that goal. Many of those

working here at Laurier were, in fact, initially afraid. But no one is shutting up. Many of us remember the Montreal Massacre, and we see what's happening elsewhere in Canada and around the world, where gendered violence plays out daily. We know the risks.

The work feels daunting which is why this is a call for solidarity. We need our colleagues to speak about gendered violence in all its forms. We need you, regardless of what subjects you teach, to speak up and be visible allies.

### Research that Makes a Difference (cont'd from pg 1)

now founded Advocates for a Student Culture of Consent (ASCC), which is now working on a comprehensive consent campaign.

Read more about the research findings [here](#).

#### **The Change Project**

*Ginette Lafrenière, Director, Social Innovation Research Group*

[The Change Project](#) aims to explore the institutional and cultural climate of WLU relative to the issue of gendered violence in order to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve prevention and response efforts. The mixed methods research project which surveyed almost 600 students and interviewed 50 key informants, reported that WLU students experience a range of incidents that fall along the spectrum of gendered violence; however, there is ambiguity around identifying, reporting and responding to these experiences. Among its recommendations are: institutionalization of policies and procedures aimed at supporting students implementation of a pro-social bystander program as well as other strategies to ensure an authentic, consistent and sustainable commitment to addressing gendered vio-

lence at WLU.

Read more about Dr. Lafrenière's research [here](#).

#### **Engaging Students in Research, Policy Making and Support**

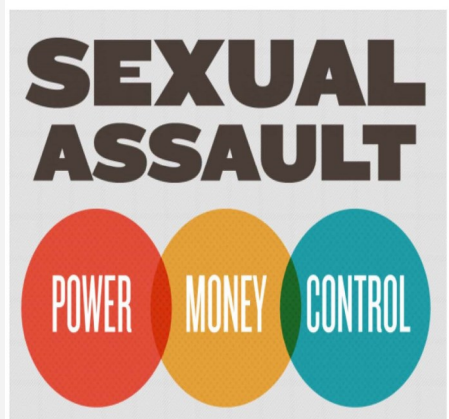
*Drs. Marcia Oliver, Debra Langan, and Rebecca Godderis*

[Confronting Rape Culture and Resistance to Anti-Violence Discourse](#) involved extensive training of graduate and undergraduate student Research Assistants,

preparing them to facilitate student focus groups with 36 young women and men on the Laurier Brantford campus last winter. During the focus groups, students spoke about their understandings and experiences of rape culture and their concerns about safety on campus. Students also provided concrete suggestions to the campus community for addressing rape culture and sexual violence at Laurier Brantford.

The preliminary results from this research, along with six prioritized recommendations, have been published as a report for Laurier's Gendered Violence Taskforce, and presented to senior administration on the Laurier Brantford campus. (Follow the link above to read the report in full.)

For more information, please contact Dr. Marcia Oliver (at [moliver@wlu.ca](mailto:moliver@wlu.ca)).



Source: <http://visual.ly/sexual-assault-power-money-control>