

An Update from the President's Council Action Team

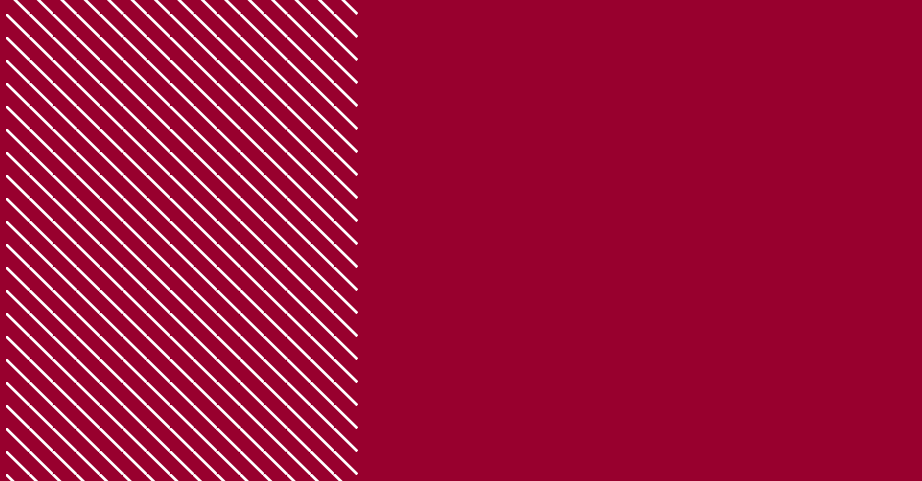
December 2015

INCLUSIVE SAFETY
CONSENT
RESPECT SOCIAL CHANGE EDUCATION
DIVERSITY
BYSTANDER



SAINT MARY'S
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

One University. One World. Yours.



Message from the President

On behalf of Saint Mary's University, I am pleased to provide this update on the implementation of the President's Council Report, *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect, and Consent at Saint Mary's and Beyond*.

Let me begin by recognizing Dr. Colin Dodds, former President and Vice-Chancellor of Saint Mary's University, for showing tremendous leadership in making a commitment to support cultural change through the formation of the President's Council Action Team.

Led by Dr. Esther E. Enns, the Action Team is charged with driving and monitoring the progress of implementing the recommendations of the President's Council Report. This team has shown significant leadership in imagining how the ambitious mandate of the President's Council Report could be realized. Its excellent work has become a catalyst for many important projects being initiated by faculty, staff and students throughout the university. In particular, I am excited to see the various sectors working in collaborative ways and helping to strengthen the community that is Saint Mary's. A great deal has been accomplished in effecting change on our campus through the development of initiatives that will inform future programming here at Saint Mary's University.

I officially became President on July 1, 2015. Prior to, and since that time, I have had conversations with many faculty, staff, and students in an effort to better understand what is important to the University community. The overlap between the four strategic

priorities that I formulated at the outset, and themes that are emerging from consultations during the summer and fall are striking. I also see synergies with the programming being developed through the Action Team. Our approach to supporting students making the transition into university, formerly referred to as *orientation*, has become truly learning-centred and intercultural in scope. I have had the opportunity to speak to many students before and during Welcome Week 2015. Students are eager for traditions and values. They want to contribute to their society both here on campus and in the wider world.

We are proud that Saint Mary's contributes to building civil society. That is in our DNA. There is immense value in educating future leaders with the knowledge of self and society - of making discoveries that transform human health, economies, and cultures.

Saint Mary's has a culture of respect that acknowledges diversity and cultural intersection, and that supports civil dialogue. We will continue to press forward on new initiatives that focus on safety and respect for diversity.

Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray
President and Vice Chancellor,
Saint Mary's University

Introduction

In December of 2013, the President's Council released a report entitled *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect, and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond*. The President's Council Report put forward a series of recommendations to effect cultural change at Saint Mary's University. The Action Team was formed to drive and monitor the progress of the implementation of the recommendations.

Two years later, much has been done relating to the implementation of the recommendations, and the University is in a very different place. Many possibilities for projects and programming have been explored, and a range of initiatives have been launched. We now have experience with many elements of a comprehensive program for promoting safety and respect on campus, and are working toward consolidating these elements into a coherent, coordinated program that is integrated into the regular operations of the many academic and service units of the University.

As the Action Team approaches the final year of its three-year mandate, it is focussing its work on facilitating a process for the University to formalize institutional programming as a collaborative, pan-University venture. It is concentrating on ensuring that all of the recommendations are embedded within existing University units, and that there are systems in place for continuing leadership and accountability.

The Action Team is pleased to provide this six-month update to our University community and the broader community.

Welcome Week and the First-Year Experience

The Action Team continues to focus much of its attention on support for students who are new to Saint Mary's University. Through a working sub-committee, it developed Welcome Week 2015-2016 with a view to creating a road-map to help inform the *Safe at SMU* programming for future years. The goals and content of Welcome Week 2015-2016 were based on the work of 2014-2015. Significant new developments were made in terms of roles, responsibilities and governance of the University's orientation program.





Background Highlights

Because the origin of the President's Council Report was an incident that occurred during Orientation Week 2013, many of the recommendations point to the University's approach to orientation and the first-year experience for new undergraduate students.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, Orientation was planned and managed by an Orientation Steering Committee. Appointed by the Action Team, the Committee's role was to oversee the development and delivery of first-year student orientation at Saint Mary's University, a special focus being the first week of September.

From its inception, the Action Team adopted the view that 'orientation' at Saint Mary's needs to be an ongoing process extending beyond the first week of September to include programming throughout the year that supports the students' transition into the University. This programming would be the joint responsibility of the academic Faculties, student groups, and service units across campus.

Welcome Week focused on a combination of academic and social activities creating wide-ranging opportunities for incoming first-year students.

The Action Team built on the strong foundation established for Welcome Week 2014-2015 as it continued to work on developing the University's approach to *orientation* for 2015-2016.

To support this process, the Action Team created a Welcome Week Advisory Committee that involved three-sector collaboration among

the academic Faculties, Student Services, and Saint Mary's University Student Association (SMUSA); the project was domiciled in the academic sector within the portfolio of the Vice-President, Academic and Research.

Students, Student Services and the academic faculties came together to work on both Welcome Week and the year-long experience.

For more detailed background, go to: <http://smu.ca/webfiles/ActionTeamReportJune2015.pdf#page=3>



Welcome Week 2015-2016 Highlights

Welcome Week 2015-2016 was well received, and the Action Team recognizes that great progress has been made through the collaborative work of the Welcome Week Advisory Committee and members of the University community. Students commented that they appreciated starting off the year on a strong and positive note.

This year, the University placed a strong emphasis on the values of Saint Mary's. Students, faculty and staff embraced the theme of the University's historic Latin motto: *Age Quod Agis*. The broad translation of *Age Quod Agis* is 'Do What You Do' - an invitation to take responsibility and embrace the present moment with focus and purpose. The motto became an overarching theme for the week, and was highlighted on Welcome Week t-shirts, the calendar, banners across campus and during



the Santamarian Ceremony. The motto is part of Saint Mary's rich history and was identified by this year's students as expressing the essence of the Santamarian spirit.

Student leaders attended Pack Leader camp for training. The training camp was jointly led by SMUSA, Student Services, and academic faculty. It was during this training that students learned the significance of the Latin motto, the importance of their role as student leaders, and how they were ambassadors for the University and its values.

Another feature of Welcome Week was the combining of orientation activities for both international and domestic students. The University has been committed to creating an environment that offers rich opportunities to advance intercultural learning for both domestic students and international students. The goal is to help students reach deep understanding of cultural differences among diverse people, and to appreciate values embedded in cultures. The Action Team continues to collaborate with stakeholders throughout the University who can play a supporting role in program development.



Shinerama

Shinerama for Cystic Fibrosis, a SMUSA initiative, was a resounding success. Students from Saint Mary's raised over \$20,000 – an outstanding number and a source of pride for all involved. The enthusiastic student participation in this event is strong testimony to their commitment to community and social responsibility.

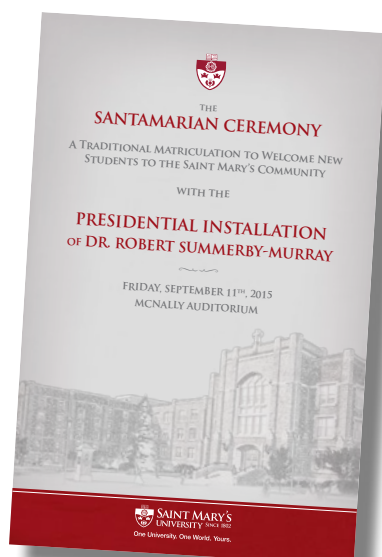
Deans' Sessions

The Deans of Arts, Business and Science hosted dynamic academic sessions to orient students to their home Faculties. These sessions were well attended by new students. Their feedback was extremely positive. Their comments showed that they liked meeting their professors, and that they gained valuable information from the sessions.



As part of Welcome Week, the University held safety seminars for new students. The sessions are part of the *Safe at SMU* programming. Saint Mary's student leaders facilitated these well-attended workshops and led discussions relating to cultural safety and respect. The seminars also focused on developing student awareness around the meaning of sexual consent, drug and alcohol abuse, and safety programs and policies.

The Action Team recognizes that Saint Mary's has a longstanding commitment to respectful behaviour. While expectations in this regard are expressed in the University's Mission and Values statements as well as wide-ranging policy documents, it was evident that students needed a meaningful learning experience to develop deep appreciation of these expectations. To this end, the Santamarian Ceremony was introduced in September of 2014 as an event where University members could share with new



students the core values of academic integrity, pursuit of knowledge, responsiveness to community needs, openness to change, and concerns for a just and civil society. The Santamarian Ceremony, a traditional-style matriculation ceremony to welcome new students to the Saint Mary's community, serves multiple purposes. It is a formal venue for welcoming new students, for inspiring commitment to the end goal – convocation – which involves a similar type of ceremony, and for introducing our core values as an institution.

The University developed a *Declaration of Respect* that affirms our core values and aligns with existing Saint Mary's policies and procedures. The *Declaration of Respect* was first introduced during Welcome Week 2014-2015 as part of the newly designed Santamarian Ceremony, as a concrete way of explaining to students our core values. Incorporating the *Declaration of Respect* into the Santamarian Ceremony gives the document profile, and ensures

that students have a meaningful and memorable introduction to our behavioural expectations of them. They learn that Saint Mary's University is committed to the promotion of a safe and respectful learning environment, and that a safe and respectful learning environment involves more than just physical safety. It means that we are committed to valuing diversity and to encouraging compassion, empathy and respect.

The Santamarian Ceremony for 2015-2016 was especially important as it also included the installation of Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray, the University's new President and Vice-Chancellor. Students were very proud to be inducted into the University alongside our new President. Together they made a commitment to the University and the future.

During the ceremony students received a gift to mark this important day. The gift was a Santamarian bookmark featuring the Latin motto, *Age Quo Agis*. It is intended to serve as a symbol of becoming members of the Saint Mary's community, and a token reminding them of the University's values. The ceremony also had students signing the University register to mark the beginning of their journey as Santamarians.





Next Steps

The Welcome Week Advisory Committee has also created a Winter Welcome for new students joining the University in January. The same principles used for the development of September Welcome Week have been applied, and similar programming will be available to new students joining the University in January.

The Welcome Week Advisory Committee remains committed to a “full-year orientation” approach to supporting students in their transition into Saint Mary’s University. It sees Welcome Week as a launch into a year-long process of learning how to become a successful student, and is striving to have Saint Mary’s create a pan-University process for faculty, staff and students to collaboratively build a comprehensive and coordinated first-year experience.

The Action Team recognizes that Saint Mary’s University has unique experience with learning communities models. The Action Team sees the adoption of a pan-university “learning communities” approach to first-year experience as a unique opportunity to embed the key elements of the President’s Council Report into curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programming. Throughout the winter and spring, the Action Team will work toward helping facilitate formation of working committees with broad university representation to support these efforts.

Welcome Week link: <http://smu.ca/welcomeweek>

Ongoing Safety Programming – Cultural Safety

The core values of Saint Mary’s University include commitment to accessibility, diversity, and the provision of a positive and supportive learning environment. These values are reflected in the concept of *cultural safety*. Cultural safety refers to an environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically safe for people. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and the experience of learning together.

The idea of cultural safety is central to the work of the Centre for the Study of Sport and Health at Saint Mary’s. The Action Team collaborated with the Centre, which assisted in program development related to cultural safety. Cultural safety workshops have been created as part of the *Safe at SMU* initiative to help educate students on all aspects of safety on today’s campus. The goal is to make a safe campus even safer.

The Centre’s research and training supports students in learning to make sound decisions throughout their university career, and to develop awareness about how their decisions can affect others. The Centre has engaged over 200 students to teach each other to be open and mindful of differences and how to make sound decisions. These students as well as other Saint Mary’s University student leaders played an instrumental role in supporting initiatives throughout Welcome Week and will be key to future programming.

The cultural safety seminars present an opportunity for students to learn, discuss and explore safety topics with their peers and student leaders, to help them prepare for University life. Delivering this information at the beginning of the University experience is important to help get students started on the right foot and address any questions or concerns they may have as they enter this new phase in their lives.

The workshops included topics such as: safety and respect, developing awareness around the meaning of sexual consent, alcohol and drug abuse, and safety programs and policies offered and in place at Saint Mary’s University.


Students who attended were positive about the workshops and said that it was very important for new students to have this type of support and training.

The following links give examples of media coverage:

SMU frosh take seminar on consent

 <http://globalnews.ca/news/2211542/students-are-still-unsure-about-smu-frosh-take-seminar-on-consent/>

Saint Mary’s counters rape chants with workshops

 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/saint-mary-s-university-counters-rape-chant-with-workshops-1.3221539>

Maritime universities focus on campus safety

 <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/maritime-universities-focusing-on-campus-safety-1.2555734>

Other University initiatives underway to educate students around consent:

- The University offered educational programs on consent and healthy sexuality as part of Welcome Week and will continue throughout the year;
- Consent is incorporated as a significant component of all bystander training;
- The University, in conjunction with its Student Union, utilized the ‘More than Yes’ campaign developed by Students NS during Welcome Week and throughout the year;
- The Centre for Housing and Residence Life conducts educational sessions during Welcome Week and throughout first year on the topic of consent;
- Varsity athletes take mandatory training;
- There is a training requirement for student leaders.



Address Alcohol and Drug Use

The University has an Alcohol Advisory Committee responsible for recommending policy related to the provision of alcohol services on campus and to promote the health and safety of all members of the University. The Alcohol Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from Student Services, the academic faculties, SMUSA, Security, Residence, Health and Wellness, and Alumni.

The revisions to the alcohol policy have been finalized. Programming efforts continue to promote responsible alcohol use and attempt to minimize some of the risk behaviours associated with the use and overuse of alcohol.

Saint Mary's is part of the Canadian Collaborative led by Acadia University whose primary goal is to reduce harms of excessive drinking on university campuses. The University attended a meeting at Acadia University in November and is now partnering with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. The focus is to look at the Acadia Strang Report and to create strategies for operationalizing the recommendations of the report.

Saint Mary's University, in conjunction with the Student Association, will participate in the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation's *Keep it Social Campaign*. The University and Student Association will collaborate on an Alcohol Awareness Week in early 2016. There has been agreement to expand the focus to include drugs and mental health, and to rename the event *Health and Wellness Week*.

Continued first-year programming also includes:

- Alcohol-free Welcome Week events in both September and January
- Mandatory server intervention programs
- Alcohol free events
- Work with SMUSA to develop creative alcohol-free programs
- Enhanced promotion of alcohol-free beverages in student lounge
- Peer education programs
- Mandatory training for student athletes
- Mental health programming

Empower the Bystanders

The University has placed an important focus on education and awareness programs designed to increase the understanding of consent among all members of the university community, and to focus our efforts on peer-to-peer programs. To this end, Bystander Training has become a key focus in the *Safe at SMU* initiative.

There was significant support for the training: students, faculty, and staff stepped forward to deliver the training across campus, and many members of the University community have conveyed their wish to receive the training. To date, over 400 people have

Full background can be found here: <http://goo.gl/ZhWubX>



Best Practices research led to University of New Hampshire program

Saint Mary's University delegation takes training in July 2014

300+ students took training at SMU in Fall 2014

25 SMU students, faculty and staff took Facilitator Training in March 2015

SMU hosted Facilitator Training for 30 delegates from across NS and PEI in March 2015

Enhancing Student Safety: Empowering the Bystanders

attended 'Bringing in the Bystander' workshops and further workshops are being coordinated for the winter and spring.

Saint Mary's will continue offering the training across University sectors and is developing programming to ensure the sustainability of the Bystander Training program.

Communicate Constantly and Purposefully About Expectations and Risks

A communications plan was developed for Welcome Week and the First Year Experience to ensure that all students understood the importance of the safety training that occurred during Welcome Week and that is continuing throughout the year.

In the fall of 2014, Saint Mary's developed on-line safety training modules. Topics covered included: University policies and procedures, definition of consent and sexual assault, alcohol and drug use, how to be an effective bystander, and understanding response procedures in the event of an incident on or off campus.

Full details can be found at: <http://goo.gl/Rqnsf9>



The modules were introduced on a pilot basis in the 2014-2015 academic year. The University utilized the

modules during safety training sessions throughout Welcome Week 2015-2016, and the modules will be one component of safety training on an ongoing basis. The modules have also been introduced to students as part of the curriculum in selected courses.

The modules can be viewed at <https://goo.gl/ltkv58>



Campus Safety Survey

A research team consisting of faculty from Saint Mary's University Department of Psychology, the Department of Management, Sobey School of Business, and students from the PhD program in Industrial Organizational Psychology responded to the President's Council Report's call for the University to conduct a survey to better understand the climate on campus. The project is the Saint Mary's University *Campus Safety Survey*.

The Action Team will be using the findings for future program development. The survey findings also establish a baseline measure on matters relating to the campus climate, and will be used as a basis of comparison to assess culture change when future studies are carried out. The goal for the next few years is to conduct these surveys on an annual basis, and will be carried out by the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

More details can be found at: <http://goo.gl/t4DUPI>



Build a Foundation for Cultural Change	Completed	Ongoing
Communicate a Commitment to Action	✓	
Identify a University Lead and Create Action Team	✓	
Develop a University -Wide Code of Conduct	✓	
Gather Data and Shed Light on the Problem	✓	
Re-claim and Re-design Orientation Week	✓	
Revise the University's Sexual Assault Policy	✓	
Identify a Sexual Response Team and Improve Access to Resources and Training	✓	
Investigate and Discipline the Perpetrators	✓	
Clarify and Formalize the University's Relationship with Student Associations	✓	
Create the Right Structure, Clarify Roles, and Allocate Appropriate Resources		✓
Encourage and Create the Infrastructure for Teaching and Research Excellence in Areas Related to Sexualized Violence		✓
Drive Cultural Change	Completed	Ongoing
Increase the Understanding of Consent		✓
Address Alcohol and Drug Use		✓
Empower the Bystanders		✓
Communicate Constantly and Purposefully about Expectations and Risks		✓
Promote a Culture of Equity		✓
Improve Safety		✓
Continue to Engage the University and Broader Community		✓
Collaborate with Others		✓
Demonstrate Accountability	Completed	Ongoing
Evaluate Progress and be Accountable		✓

