

## **Mount Royal student representatives say government must take immediate steps to address gender-based violence on campuses**

Calgary, AB September 1, 2023 — The release of the Alberta Government’s report titled Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Alberta Post-Secondary Education provides much-anticipated insight into the state of gender-based violence on Alberta post-secondary campuses. SAMRU’s Student Representation Executive Council (REC) believes the report simply reinforces what they already knew about the prevalence of gender-based violence on campus.

“We now have data to back up what student representatives have been saying for years,” said Prabhjit Grewal, SAMRU REC Vice-President External, “which is sad to say because it’s a terrible situation.” The report states that since attending their post-secondary institution, half (50%) of all students have reported experiencing some form of sexual- or gender-based violence. Further, less than half (47%) of students believe there are supports available for students who have experienced sexual- or gender-based violence, and of those, only a small portion are accessing these services.

“In short, gender-based violence is a crisis on Alberta post-secondary campuses, and institutions alone do not have the tools to fix the emergency. The Government of Alberta needs to work with post-secondary institutions and students to build a culture of consent so we can reduce the rate of gender-based violence to zero,” said Grewal.

Students want to make sure immediate action is taken so this groundbreaking report is not simply shelved and forgotten. Grewal believes the difficult work begins now to make changes to reduce these numbers. Students are urging the Alberta Government to rapidly take concrete steps to improve the situation, similar to how the Ontario Government did when their gender-based violence on campus survey was released a few years ago.

“The Students’ Association of Mount Royal University stands with all survivors of sexual- or gender-based violence,” says Grewal. “We didn’t need a report to affirm your experiences, but with this data now available, we are better equipped to fight for you and to ensure your voices are heard. All students deserve safe schools, and together, we can create a campus culture that values consent and supports student safety.”