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## **Warning: the following contains discussion of sexual violence**

For immediate release.

### **May 5, 2020: DSU Update on Recent Online Disclosure of Sexual Violence**

The Dalhousie Student Union would like to thank all our members who have reached out to us regarding the recent online disclosure of sexual violence and our initial statement. We understand that this situation is distressing, and that as concerned members you are anxious to see action being taken.

The DSU stands in support with its members and is committed to listening to students and integrating their concerns into the actions we take. We recognize that this discussion has impacted our community, especially those who have experienced sexualized violence.

We feel the heaviness and the hurt among our members right now, and we are moving forward with a mind to the well-being of the entire community.

#### Timeline

On late Wednesday evening, the DSU executive were alerted to the disclosure after seeing it on social media and hearing from DSU members.

After learning of the disclosure, the DSU immediately contacted Dalhousie Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES) to discuss the investigative avenues available. The DSU Executive requested a university investigation, as no one had come forward to file a complaint with the university. At that time, HRES was unable to initiate an investigation.

Following the response from HRES, we contacted the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) about the disclosure. To date, we have not had any response from the HRP about this disclosure.

After an update to the petition was made on Monday, we contacted HRES again and have requested that they contact and provide support to the survivor.

#### Next Steps

As a membership-based organization, the DSU is bound to procedures on Executive suspension, discipline, and investigation which have been democratically approved. While we are aware of the online disclosure and are taking the matter seriously, we must follow specific guidelines for receiving and acting on requests to discipline Executives, as outlined in our Bylaws and Policies.

Council is the oversight body for the Union's Executive. Given the seriousness of these allegations, we have called an extraordinary meeting of Council to be held this Thursday, May 7, 2020. Council will meet to receive updates and determine our next steps.

Two staff people from South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre have agreed to attend this Council meeting to represent and bring forward the perspective of women students, non-binary students, and all students who experience gender-based discrimination and violence. These individuals have expertise in dealing with discussions of sexualized violence.

As per the University's Sexual Violence Policy (the Policy), anyone who comes forward to the Sexualized Violence Advisor to make a disclosure will be treated with dignity, will be provided with resources and options for how they wish to move forward, and may choose to submit a report, prompting either an investigative or non-investigative process.

#### Disclosure Process

We understand that students may have concerns disclosing to institutions and may opt to disclose to their friends or other community organizations. We support survivors' rights to disclose in ways that feel safest for them. However, as per the Policy and the DSU's policies, disclosures made informally to peers or made through online posts are not automatically deemed to be a report, which would initiate an investigation process.

HRES and the DSU's Survivor Support Centre are mandated to support survivors. This means that they are able help survivors navigate their decisions. If you have experienced sexual violence, we urge you to reach out. The Survivor Support Centre is trained to support individuals who have experienced sexual violence. If an individual chooses to disclose, the Survivor Support Manager will provide confidential, non-judgemental support and give the individual options for how they can find further support and proceed with a complaint if they would like to. For more detailed information on HRES, see the [Dalhousie University Sexual Violence Policy](#).

Please reach out to the DSU President Madeleine Stinson, at [dsupres@dal.ca](mailto:dsupres@dal.ca), with any questions or concerns.

Signed,  
Madeleine Stinson  
DSU President



Please see the following resources available to anyone who may be impacted by the ongoing situation:

Survivor Support Centre

Email: [survivorsupport@dal.ca](mailto:survivorsupport@dal.ca)

Phone: (902) 425-1066

South House Halifax

Email: [outreach@southhousehalifax.ca](mailto:outreach@southhousehalifax.ca)

Phone: (902) 494-2432

Dalhousie Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES)

Email: [hres@dal.ca](mailto:hres@dal.ca)

Phone: (902) 494-6672

Dal Student Health & Wellness

Website: [dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness](http://dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness)

Phone: (902) 494-2171

Dal Security

Email: [security@dal.ca](mailto:security@dal.ca)

Phone – Halifax: (902) 494-4109

Phone – Truro: (902) 893- 4190