



Thursday, September 16, 2021

*Content Warning: Mentions of sexual violence, harassment, and rape*

## **Solidarity with Survivors of Sexual Violence at Western University**

As a number of students were welcomed back to campus, numerous cases of sexual and physical assault occurred at Western University during Orientation Week. This has left survivors, students, and the greater post-secondary community feeling unsafe, unheard and violated. When survivors and student leaders pleaded with Western University for support, their demands and calls for help were left unanswered until there was more media coverage. This is unacceptable.

Rape culture is prevalent at all post-secondary institutions. According to a 2018 study, “one in three Western students surveyed indicated they were sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months”<sup>1</sup>. These are not just statistics but lived experiences of many students. It is imperative that University administrations as well as the provincial and federal governments be proactive in supporting survivors through funding for survivor-centric resources and centres, educational campaigns, and policies. These supports must be rooted in equity and acknowledge that certain members of our communities are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence and harassment. It is no longer acceptable to just acknowledge sexual violence - it is crucial for decision-makers to act on this issue.

The University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU) affirms its solidarity and support to the survivors of the assaults at Western University and to all those who have been impacted by rape culture. The UTMSU will continue to work hand in hand with numerous organizations to teach and reinforce consent culture, both on and off our campus.

### Ways to support:

- Wear blue or teal on Friday, September 17 to show support to survivors of sexual violence and tag @UWOSGBVWalkout
- Attend the [Western SGBV](#) Walkout on Friday, September 17 at 12PM
- Tweet at @WesternU calling for the Administration to better support students. Use the hashtags #BelieveSurvivors #MakeCampusSafe #EndGBV #ConsentIsMandatory
- Email your Member of Provincial Parliament and demand greater investments in supports for survivors of sexual violence and harassment
- Get involved in UTMSU's Consent is Mandatory campaign

### Resources:

- [Stella's Place Mental Health Support](#)
- [UTMSU's peer support program](#)
- [UofT Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre](#)

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<sup>1</sup> ['I needed to do something': Western University students plan walkout amid sexual assault allegations | CTV News](#)



University of Toronto Mississauga  
Students' Union  
LOCAL 109 OF THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

1815 Inner Circle Rd., Student Centre Room 100  
Mississauga, ON, L5L 1C6  
T: 905-828-5249 F: 905-569-4714

Learn more about how you can get involved please email [vpequity@utmsu.ca](mailto:vpequity@utmsu.ca).