

**Trinity College External Review
Report and Recommendations**

May 5, 2022

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CONFIDENTIAL

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I. Introduction

- Over a three-month period, from January to March 2022, we completed several group consultations with students, faculty, and staff. We also received anonymous submissions through a google survey and conducted multiple private meetings with current constituents of the Trinity College (Trinity or TC) community.

II. Overview

- With few exceptions, there is a recognition among all constituents that TC has made great strides in improving its culture and its responsiveness to issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment (SVSH). That said, constituents also strongly support enhancing and bolstering the work TC has done over the last decade to provide greater resources and supports in this area.
- Indeed, TC has an opportunity to become a leader in the way in which it supports its students and in the resources it provides to all its students to address and respond to SVSH.
- TC stands both apart from and rooted to the University of Toronto (U of T) as a whole. TC relies on the U of T's policies in this area, its provision of resources and its Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre. Nonetheless, TC's unique structure offers an ability to augment what it offers its constituents in terms of safe spaces, training, and resources.
- While TC has benefited from the stable and transparent leadership of its current Provost, care and attention should be given to planning for Provostial succession and the creation of new pathways to addressing Provostial conduct in the future.
- Although TC has made it a priority to shift the culture away from traditions that were toxic and damaging to its constituents, there remains more work to be done in this area.

III. Summary of Comments and Recommendations

1. What barriers may have existed to prevent individuals from raising their concerns historically?

- Pervasive power dynamics
- Entrenched institutional and gender bias
- Overlap of functions between support staff and academic administration
- No pathway to addressing/reporting/dealing with the behaviour of the “CEO”
- No pathway to anonymously report information particularly in light of potential career risks for staff who either were themselves the subject of SVSH or were otherwise aware of such behaviour
- Living arrangements of the Provost within the institution created boundary issues
- Personal relationships among faculty and staff with the former Provost
- A palpable lack of attention from the senior leadership to concerns raised by staff and students, coupled with an apparent institutional tolerance to leave known inappropriate behaviour on the part of the former Provost unaddressed and unresolved i.e., creating a culture whereby it was understood that the behaviour was tolerated.
- An ingrained culture of excessive drinking as well as a particular and long-standing focus on the availability of alcohol at events among students, staff, and faculty, which in turn resulted in an environment that created significant SVSH risks for students, staff, and faculty.

2. What changes have been made at Trinity College to address issues of / respond to issues raised regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment (SVSH)?

- Substantial increases to the HR/Wellness/Student support administration and staff
- Changes to student culture to de-normalize excessive drinking at institutional events and to reduce the prevalence of alcohol at TC events
- Increased diversity among staff and faculty
- Creation of a suite of applicable policies (although gaps in the policies remain)
- Significant education and training of students, staff and faculty regarding SVSH
- Concerted and significant efforts to eliminate the historical “cult of Episkopon.” Indeed, the Board has identified Episkopon as having promoted racism and homophobia in the TC community
- Changes continue to be made to address related problematic behaviour in the Senior Common Room

3. What additional steps should Trinity College take to ensure best practices regarding issues related to SVSH?

a) RESOURCES

- Increase the Director of Wellness's staff complement to include a dedicated trauma-informed SVSH counsellor who could provide support services to augment the Director of Wellness and her staff's responsibilities in this area.

b) CULTURE

- Create an action plan to address changing the culture at Trinity with respect to SVSH.
- Work to inculcate a culture of listening to survivors and bystanders.
- Establish clearer boundaries prohibiting faculty/student drinking, as well as restricting the serving and availability of alcohol at on-campus events. This would alleviate some of the inherent peril to students, staff and faculty described to the external reviewer that tends to occur in situations where alcohol consumption is encouraged and uncontrolled.
- Similar to the restriction on don/student relationships, recommend a restriction on any relationships between students and faculty at Trinity.
- Release these recommendations for discussion among the broader community to continue the discussion and to begin to repair reputational trauma to the institution.
- Continue to flush out, finally eliminate and condemn any and all association with Episkopon and any current iteration of it or its offshoots. Despite a decade of effort to erase and bar Episkopon, its activities and members from the Trinity College culture, information provided to the external reviewer suggests both an ongoing shadow presence as well the continued participation of alumni and students who were strongly associated with Episkopon in Trinity College life. The external review heard information that directly correlates the continuing "cult of Episkopon" (and particularly its current more underground and secretive incarnation) with the prevalence of a culture that tolerates bullying, misogynistic, racist, and homophobic behaviours within the TC community.

c) TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- Convene a working group of students to refresh existing resources in new and more accessible formats.

- Develop and provide more nuanced, more specific and frequent mandatory training for students, staff, and faculty (i.e., offer bystander training and offer training more often than just before or during the “red zone” of orientation or new faculty onboarding).¹
- Offer specific trauma-informed counselling to key Trinity staff and students who may be recipients of SVSH disclosure. This could include more opportunities during the year to teach student leaders how to support each other if they receive a disclosure of SVSH.
- Develop written material such as a checklist that outlines the pathways for students, staff and faculty who receive a disclosure of SVSH.

d) POLICIES

- Clarify/modify/augment/codify the applicable Trinity College SVSH policy to address online harassment.²

e) PROVOSTIAL OVERSIGHT AND HIRING

- Revise the process for hiring a new Provost when the current’s Provost’s term ends. This should include comprehensive interview questions and more specific reference checks.
- Empower the Executive Committee of the Board to have oversight of Provostial hiring, compensation and adjacent HR related issues as may arise from time to time.

¹ Consider the new training and approaches at Western – see for e.g., <https://news.westernu.ca/2022/01/students-begin-unique-training-to-prevent-sexual-violence/>

² Many suggestions received relate specifically to the U of T SVSH Policy, which is currently undergoing review. Anyone providing suggestions about this policy to the reviewer was directed to participation in the U of T’s consultation. Subsequent to the review of that policy, it is recommended that Trinity College once again review its own adjacent policy to adjust as necessary.