



Annual Report

2021-2022

Human Rights

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A. Student Sexual Violence Supports, Services & Programming

PART I OVERVIEW

The Human Rights Office (HRO) has oversight over the University's Human Rights Program and promotes a consistent and compliant approach to handling human rights issues raised by faculty members, staff, students and visitors.

The HRO promotes a Sticky Campus by supporting and enforcing a culture of respect and inclusivity and administering a seamless dispute resolution program.

The HRO plays a crucial role in promoting institutional capacity for identifying and resolving human rights-related disputes and conflict and is available on a confidential basis to provide advice and direction to any university member who is experiencing, witnessed or has received information about alleged harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, micro-aggressions or other forms of interpersonal conflict/disputes.

The HRO supports: de-escalation, dialogue, facilitated discussions, formal investigations and training/education. Over the course of the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the HRO expanded its mandate to include an increased role in preventing, responding to and reporting on incidents of student sexual violence, as defined under the [Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures](#).

PART II STATUS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

As outlined in the University's [Respectful Campus Policy](#) and [Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures](#), Ontario Tech University is committed to providing an annual report to assist the Board and University Members to understand the state of the University's Human Rights Program and identify progress and trends from year to year. This report represents the University's second Annual Human Rights Report. The Report details progress to-date on the implementation of the University's Human Rights Program and reports data related to human rights-based complaints and consultations, including comparison data from the 2020-2021 Annual Report. It also, for the first time, addresses annual reporting obligations related to the University's student sexual violence program, including a compilation of data and information from internal partners that share responsibility for addressing and responding to student sexual violence.

2. DATA & TRENDS

Aggregate data on the resolution of issues is a key component of this report as it provides an annual snapshot of the Human Rights issues and concerns brought forward by University Members for resolution. The reporting period is the University's fiscal year; April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022.

This year's report provides additional data and information on measures that have been taken related to student sexual violence prevention and support – previously contained in a stand-alone student sexual violence annual report prepared by Student Life.

This year's Report also reflects a significant bump in human rights-related interventions. This increase is directly associated with the University's launch of safety measures consistent with public health guidance in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic to allow students, faculty, staff and visitors to return to campus for the 2021-2022 academic year. This trend is entirely consistent with the experience of our colleagues in the post-secondary sector, particularly in relation to [vaccination requirements](#).

While the University focused on health and safety priorities in the face of a global pandemic that has killed over 6.5 million people, human rights requirements and principles were considered at all stages of planning for the University's return to campus and its Mask and Vaccine Directives. The HRO supported Senior Leadership in planning a safe return to campus and was consulted by various internal departments to resolve human rights-related concerns that accompanied the return to campus.

a. Issue Type

There are five (5) issue types that fall under the HRO's accountability: Discrimination, Duty to Accommodate, Harassment, Student Sexual Violence and issues of a general nature involving Human Rights.¹

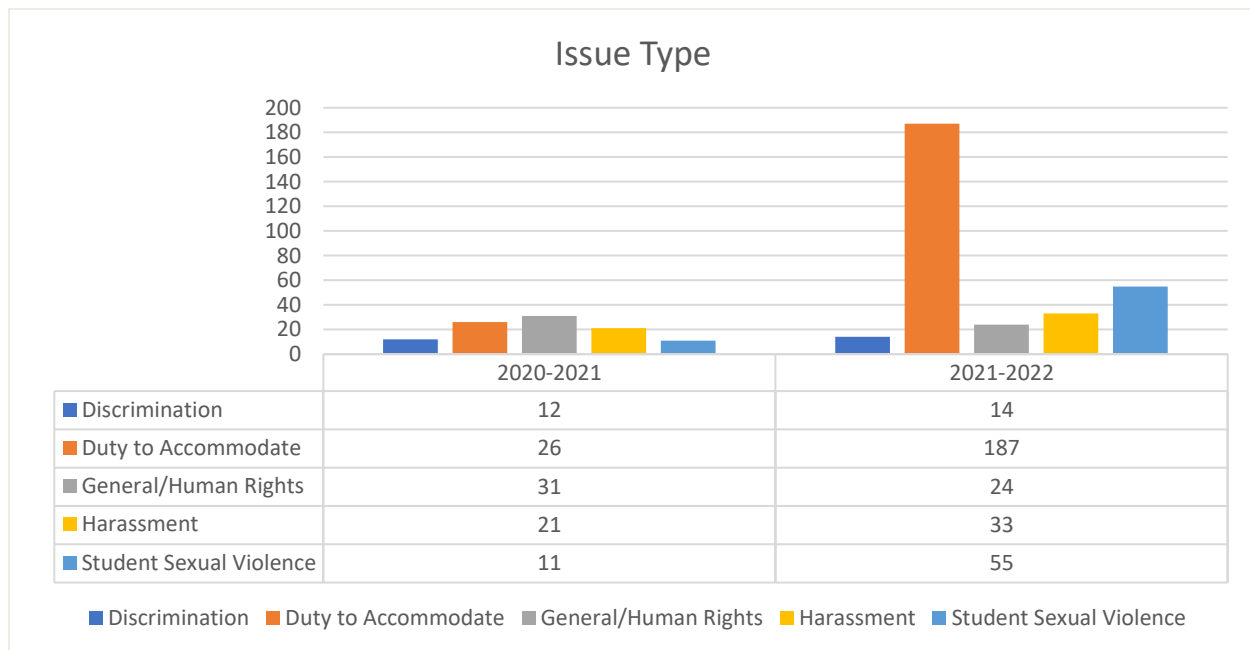


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¹ The "General" category broadly includes consultations regarding human rights principles or inquiries of a programmatic nature, e.g. requests to review policy instruments or training materials to ensure human rights compliance, questions about legislative and policy interpretation, procedural inquiries, etc.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 101 Human Rights issues were brought forward. By comparison, there were 313 Human Rights issues brought forward in 2021-2022, or an 210% increase.

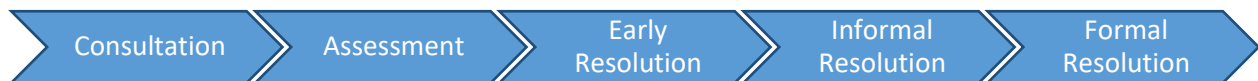
The dramatic increase is largely attributable to a significant spike in consultations and assessments related to the University's [COVID-19 Vaccine Directive](#) (currently paused). The HRO was consulted and assisted in assessments of requests for accommodation related to the Directive.

The increased numbers are also attributed to this year's inclusion of Student Sexual Violence data from across the University (versus that reported directly to the HRO, as reflected in the 2020-2021 HRO annual report). The disclosures and reports² of student sexual violence were received and addressed as follows:

- Mental Health Services in Student Life received 44 disclosures. 17 of these incidents were classified as having occurred in the last 12 months; 27 were classified as historical. 3 incidents occurred on campus; 41 incidents occurred off campus, including two internationally.
- The HRO received 6 disclosures (1 anonymous) and 4 reports of Student Sexual Violence – all 4 of the reports received by the HRO were related to alleged harassment. One of the reports was resolved informally, while the other three reports were investigated.
- The Office of Campus Safety and Security received one disclosure

* additional information about Student Sexual Violence Programming is in 'Appendix A' below

b. Intervention Type



The HRO annual report previously captured five main types of interventions applied to matters received by the office. This year, we have added a sixth intervention type to track disclosures of student sexual violence received by internal partners outside of the HRO:

1. Consultation: the act of reaching out to the HRO for advice or information.
2. Assessment: An HRO analysis of an issue to determine whether the matter triggers human rights obligations and/or requires intervention.
3. Early Resolution: when the HRO works with parties to resolve complaints prior to a formal complaint, or to assist persons of authority address incidents/concerns in a manner compliant with human rights obligations.

² The University's Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures distinguish between a "disclosure" of sexual violence, which is simply the act of telling a trusted individual about an incident of sexual violence and accessing supports or services; and, a "report" of sexual violence, which is a request that the University implement dispute resolution processes to resolve a complaint.

4. Informal Resolution: when the HRO employs a structured process, such as a mediation or restorative justice process, to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the parties in dispute.
5. Formal Resolution: when the HRO ensures an investigation to determine whether a policy violation has occurred.
6. Disclosures: incidents of student sexual violence disclosed to internal partners outside of the HRO (e.g. to obtain supports through Mental Health Services)

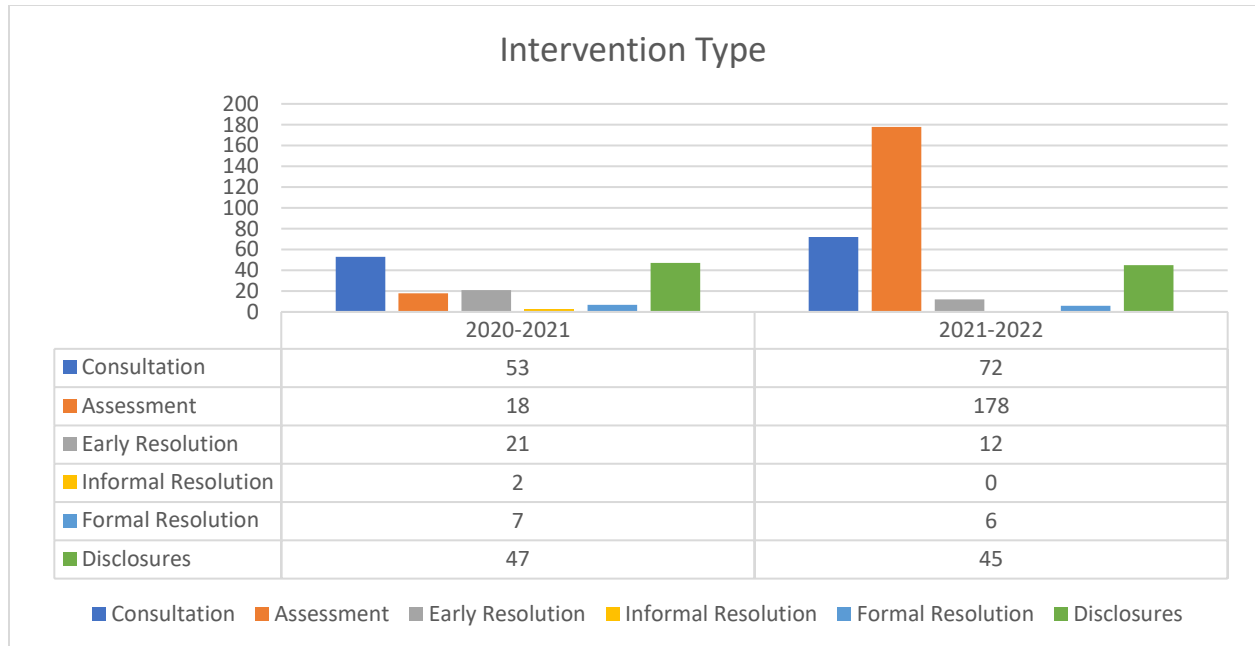


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c. Issue Source

The HRO provides services to all University Members, including Faculty, Staff, Students and Visitors. The following table shows the source of issues that were brought forward.

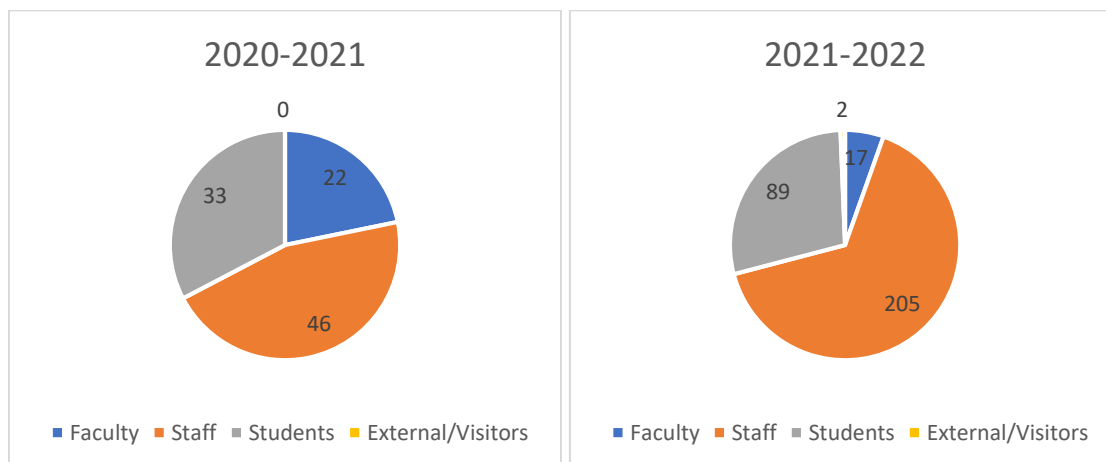


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d. Protected Grounds

Protected Grounds are the grounds contained in the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) under which individuals are protected against discrimination and harassment. Most, but not all, of the complaints and concerns raised to the HRO cite one or more Protected Grounds. Additionally, the HRO intervenes to address incidents and complaints that fall under other legislation, but overlap with the OHRC, i.e., the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Workplace Sexual Harassment) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act (Student Sexual Violence).

A number of consultations completed by the HRO are of a general human rights nature in which no specific protected ground is cited – these are captured in the following table under the “unspecified” column. The HRO is also accountable for addressing incidents of workplace harassment, in which a connection to a protected ground is not required.

The following table reflects a significant increase in the number of cases related to the ground of Creed (or religion), which is attributable to the number of accommodation requests that were submitted in regards to the University’s COVID-19 Vaccine Directive.

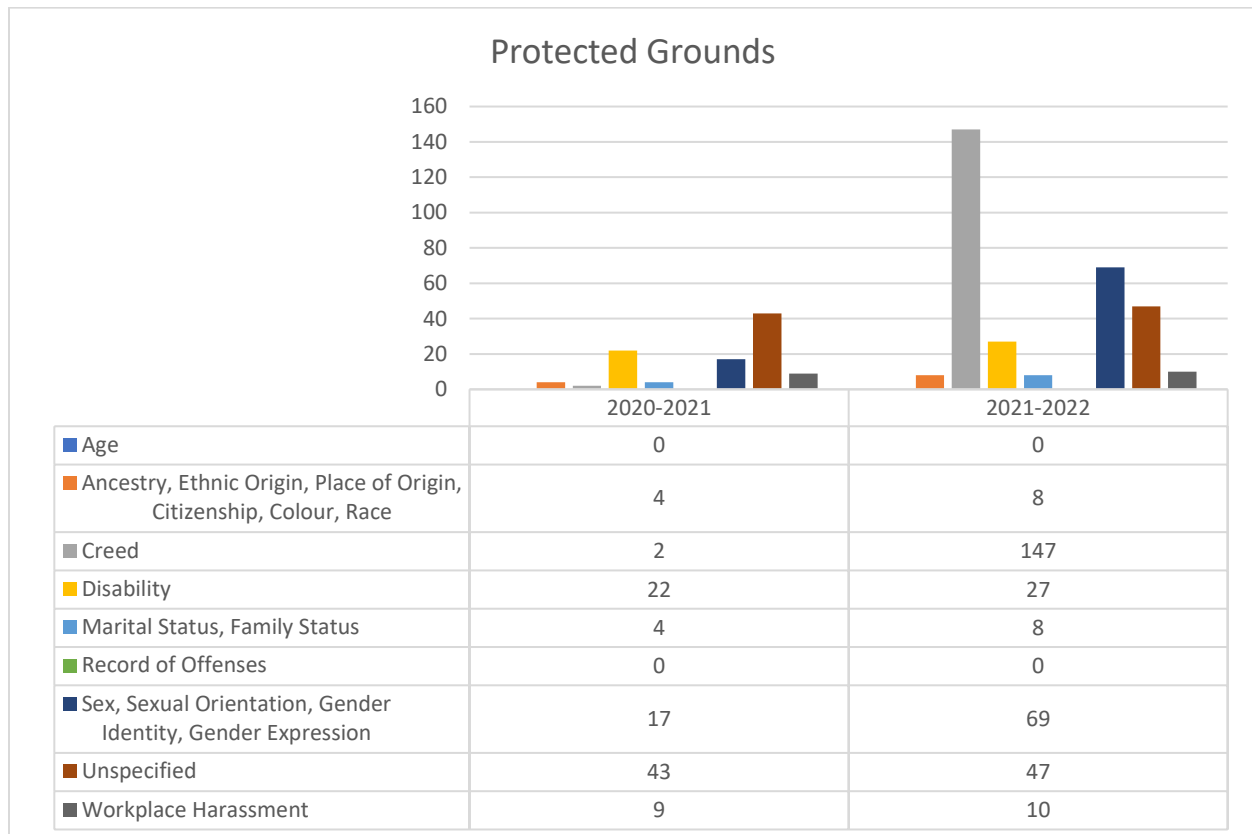


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3. MEASURING PROGRESS

DATE MILESTONES ACHIEVED

- [Respectful Campus Policy](#) and [Employee Procedures](#) - approved April 22, 2021
- [Accommodation Policy](#) – approved April 22, 2021
- [Respectful Campus Procedures for Students](#) – approved March 31, 2022
- Launch of a dedicated HRO webpage – January 2022
- Implemented processes for assessing and responding to non-disability related Accommodation requests (e.g. family status accommodation) from students and employees – January 2022
- Hired a Human Rights Specialist (Gender-based violence) - January 2022

The HRO has made significant progress in a short amount of time by working collaboratively and effectively with key internal stakeholders to promote and champion human rights principles, clarify roles and responsibilities, gain buy-in, and implement a consistent and compliant dispute resolution program applicable for all University members.

The achievements of the HRO are rooted in the groundwork established by the Board and reflective of the University's commitment to human rights and equity, demonstrated through institutional governance documents including the University's overarching Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy; the Respectful Campus Policy, and separate procedural documents for Employees and Students and the Accommodation Policy.

PART III GOING FORWARD

4. 2022 – 2023 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As we reflect on the HRO's progress to-date, we recognize that there is still work required to realize the University's goal of ensuring and enhancing a campus culture of respect and inclusivity. We also know that the HRO cannot achieve this alone, but instead relies on the cooperation and support of the entire University to ensure a respectful campus environment in which the human dignity of each individual is valued, and the diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences of all members of the community are valued.

The HRO will continue to support the community in this endeavor by providing advice; assistance; early and informal approaches to dispute resolution; and if necessary, formal investigation of human rights disputes.

Gender-based Violence:

Over this next fiscal year, we will work to integrate aspects of the Student Sexual Violence Program with the existing Human Rights Program as follows:

In winter 2022, the HRO hired a Human Rights Specialist who is responsible for ensuring compliance in the administration and coordination of legislative requirements related to

student sexual violence, workplace sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. Upon their hire, they completed an environmental scan identifying potential policy, procedural and programmatic enhancements. Based on this scan, the following actions will be taken over the 2022-2023 reporting period:

- The Human Rights Specialist (Gender-based violence) will create a trauma-informed and centralized response and support model through the HRO to assist all University Members who have experienced gender-based violence;
- The Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures will be updated;
- A communications plan detailing programmatic changes will be created and launched;
- A mandatory online training module in Sexual Violence will be completed and launched to the entire campus community.

Human Rights:

The HRO will continue to support and promote a respectful campus by focusing upon the following two (2) priority areas:

1. Communications:
 - a. The HRO will enhance campus communications; and,
 - b. The HRO will develop and post informational resources to assist University Members in understanding their rights, responsibilities and obligations.
2. Training/Education: The HRO is currently working to update and enhance online compliance-based human rights training.

5. CONCLUSION

Over the last fiscal year, the University continued to lead with our values through very difficult times. While the COVID pandemic and accompanying requirements associated with Mask and Vaccine Directives challenged the University to work collaboratively to address any associated human rights issues within compressed time frames, this report demonstrates that the University partnered effectively with the HRO to assess related requests for accommodation.

The commitment of the University community to balancing health and safety obligations with human rights values is indicative of a deep, underlying appreciation for and commitment to the human rights principles of accessibility, inclusivity and respect.

We conclude by encouraging all University Members to play a role in confronting and addressing problematic behaviour on campus and maintaining a campus environment that is inclusive for all. As a community, we can help to prevent conflict escalation by remaining respectful and focusing on addressing conflict in a timely, constructive and cooperative manner. While misunderstandings and conflicts will occur in a complex, demanding and diverse campus environment where collaboration is essential to success, early and informal approaches to resolution should be sought whenever possible and

appropriate. Together, we can ensure a positive and inclusive campus environment; part of the “sticky” campus we all envision.

APPENDIX A – STUDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORTS, SERVICES & PROGRAMMING³

1. **Advisory Committee on Implementation and effectiveness of the Policy & Supports**

The Advisory Committee on Student Sexual Violence Prevention and Support, established in December 2017, is mandated to ensure that the university's Policy, and the support services, programming and training that sustain these policies, are reviewed on a regular basis and continuously improved upon. This year, the Committee was composed of 9 students, 2 representatives from the Ontario Tech Student Union, 7 staff from across the university, 1 community partner and 1 alumnus.

2. **Supports, services and accommodations:**

- Support Workers, through the university's Student Mental Health Services, support students who have experienced sexual violence. All counsellors participate in ongoing training in trauma-informed therapy and have experience working with survivors of sexual assault. In addition, an Outreach Worker in the residence works very closely with the Support Workers in providing onsite support for students living in residence.
- During the 2021-2022 period, the HRO was advised that students accessed the following supports, including the coordination of any or all of the following:
 - Therapeutic support (42 students)
 - Referral for Academic Accommodations (3 students)
 - Other forms of support, such as referrals to community supports, other campus services, or advocacy groups (9 students)

3. **Awareness and programming**

In 2021-22, efforts to raise awareness and educate students about the Policy, supports and services were largely driven by the student members of the Advisory Committee on Student Sexual Violence Prevention and Support in collaboration with the Student Engagement and Equity team in Student Life. Initiatives to raise awareness and educate on sexual violence included:

- **Equity Advocates:** Twenty student ambassadors took on the role of 2SLGBTQ+ Equity Advocates this year working as a team to identify opportunities to expand equity programming on campus. They create their own program goals and outcomes; and develop and facilitate initiatives, campaigns and events that encourage students to act more inclusively. This year, the 2SLGBTQ+ Equity Advocates wrote about their personal lived experience talking about the various identities as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and as an Ally as part of the Ontario Tech Student Life Digital Community.
- **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence:** From November 25, to December 10, 2021, Ontario Tech hosted a campaign for 16 Days of Activism. The campaign helped students, staff and faculty learn more about gender-based violence prevention. The program included an online event and engaging social media content

³ Sections 17 (7) and (7.1) of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act note that universities are to provide their Board of Governors with an annual report including information about their student sexual violence initiatives and programs

where they asked members of the university community to share what they will do to contribute to ending gender-based violence. In total, over 23 people engaged with the campaign.

- **Let's Talk Equity Programming:** Students read "Queer a Graphic History" by Meg John Barker and Julia Scheele. From July 12 to July 26, 2021 8 students participated in three online meetings to discuss the book. Additionally, 7 students participated in Equity Talks discussion groups, where they discuss current events and various equity-related topics such as consent, @SLGBTQ+ and ally ship.
- **#WeGetConsent:** The #WeGetConsent campaign continued this year with several initiatives to educate students on consent and sexual violence prevention. Programming included social media posts, blog posts, and a trivia night event.
- **Residence Consent Tabling:** Student Engagement and Equity set up a Consent Awareness Table set up in Residences: South Village and Simcoe to create awareness about consent and sexual violence prevention. A total of 23 students participated in this initiative.
- **#LetsTalkSex Workshop Series:** A series of sex-positive and sexual health workshops were facilitated by Student Life to help students feel more comfortable having conversations about consent. These workshops were provided through a collaboration with the AIDS Committee of Durham Region and included topics such as consent, sexual health and sexuality. A total of 102 students participated.
- **Disclosure Training: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence:** This training was offered twice to the general student population and a total of 12 students participated. This workshop provides an overview of sexual violence, reviews the on-campus resources available to survivors and helps students develop effective and supportive responses to victims and survivors who disclose having experienced sexual violence.
- **Staff and Faculty Training:** Online training modules are available for faculty members and staff to provide information about the sexual violence policies and procedures, and the supports for employees and students who experience, or witness, sexual violence. During 2022-2023, this training will be updated and it is anticipated that this training will be made mandatory for all students, faculty and staff.
- **RISE: Sexual Violence Prevention:** 171 students participated in the Respect Inclusivity and Support Equity (RISE) program. The RISE program is a series of workshops focusing on the development of by-stander intervention strategies. All students who take on the peer leadership role of Ambassador are required to complete the general RISE session providing them with tools to intervene, prevent and address individual discrimination and harassment. This supplementary workshop focuses specifically on practical issues related to consent, gender-based violence and sexual violence, and preventing and responding to sexual violence in our community. A total of 110 students completed Level 1 training through the ambassador program in 2021-2022.
- **Community Partnerships:** The Student Engagement and Equity team worked with several community partners this year to offer the Ontario Tech community engaging educational programming related to sexual violence prevention and support. The collaborations included a webinar on Workplace Sexual Harassment with the Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange (SHARE), the Man-Made program with the Durham Rape Crisis Center and Durham College, and the #Let'sTalkSex workshop series with the AIDS Committee of Durham Region.