



Board of Governors

| Special Task Committee

Anonymous Complaint Report to the Board

Approved by Board Motion: September 29, 2025

| Purpose

The Special Task Committee (STC) of the NSCC Board of Governors was struck on December 12, 2024 to advise and make recommendations to the Board on matters related to anonymous letters addressed to the Board received on November 22, 2024 and December 6, 2024. The Committee's work is guided by a commitment to transparency, inclusivity, aiming to foster a culture of respect, safety, and accountability within the institution.

Two general allegations were made in the communications: that there was a widespread culture of acceptance of sexual misconduct at NSCC by male employees; and that the response to reported sexual misconduct was inadequate, dismissive of complainants, and thereby enabled perpetrators.

The goals and tasks of the STC were outlined in the special committee terms of reference as approved by the Board and included, in brief:

1. To procure the services and receive a report from a qualified independent external investigator.
2. To clearly define and communicate expectations, timelines, and responsibilities to the external investigator.
3. To ensure the investigator has access to all relevant personnel, policies, documentation, and records within the college.
4. To make recommendations at critical parts of the process as it relates to communication and actions to the President, the College, the Board and others as deemed necessary.
5. To provide updates to the Board and at the conclusion of the committee's mandate, to provide a comprehensive final report to the Board.

This final comprehensive report is defined in the Terms of Reference as including an overview of the committee's activities, a detailed overview of the outcomes relative to the objectives, lessons learned and recommendations, and any unresolved or follow-up actions required.

| Process

The committee was struck on December 12, 2024 and the membership was confirmed including four (4) Governors, supported by the Board Coordinator. Representatives of the senior management team of the college were invited to participate in a designated portion of each meeting to ensure timely access to materials required for review. The first meeting was held on December 16, 2024 where the Terms of Reference were finalized and three possible firms to undertake the investigation were discussed. The preferred firm, Rubin Thomlinson was selected after committee discussion. On December 17, 2024 the Terms of Reference were confirmed and approved by the Board. On December 18, 2024 the Chair and Board Coordinator met with the

investigator from Rubin Thomlinson, Elizabeth Bingham, to discuss the engagement including the expectations and timelines.

The Committee met regularly between January and April focused on development and oversight of the process plan (led by the external investigator), review of college policies and procedures pertinent to the letter (presented by college management) and review and approval of a communications plan. All communications with the Anonymous complainant were directed to the external investigator and/or the Board Chair.

The process proceeded in three phases, with STC review at the end of each phase.

Phase One:

The Board Chair reached out to the anonymous reporter to introduce the External investigator and to invite concerns be raised with the investigator. After initial email contact with the investigator where the process was outlined, the anonymous reporter chose not to provide any further or specific details.

Phase Two:

In the absence of specific allegations, the investigator conducted a review process that included a review of documentation related to investigations undertaken over the last ten years at the college related to campuses and any named individuals in the anonymous email was performed. Additionally, a review of the current and prior versions of the Sexual Violence and related policies was undertaken. During this phase, on February 27, 2025, the anonymous reporter contacted the investigator, the President of the College and the Board Chair via email to register a complaint about the lack of public transparency regarding the process. The investigator responded and again indicated that she would meet with or receive information from anonymous reporter. There was no response to this invitation.

Phase Three:

The final phase of the engagement included interviews with NSCC employees who are or were involved in managing or conducting sexual violence investigations in over the past 10 years. At the conclusion of this phase, the investigator reached out on June 4, 2025 to the anonymous reporter to inform them that the process was coming to a close, and once again invited them to meet or on an anonymous basis to provide more input to the process. The anonymous reporter responded on June 10, 2025 reiterating the concerns with the process, but did not reply to the invitation to meet.

Updates were provided to the Board at the regularly scheduled meetings in February, April and June.

| Findings

The conclusion reached by the investigator at the completion of the review was, “the evidence that we reviewed in this process was generally not consistent with the concerns raised by the anonymous reporter.”

The investigator noted that the review was limited to a review of documentation of reported cases and policy/ procedure and that there was no statistical or survey data from the entire NSCC community available. It remains possible that incidents of sexual misconduct have occurred but were not reported. As a result, it is difficult to comment on the overall prevalence of sexual misconduct at the College. The investigator goes on to state, “If the College would prefer to have firmer conclusion regarding the prevalence of sexual misconduct at the College and/ or nature of potential complainants’ interactions with HR and HREI, we recommend that the College consider the merits of engaging in a process that would gather information and perspectives from the broader College community. This could include a public callout for information, a survey and/or additional interviews.”

In addition, while the investigator did note the many strengths in current policy and procedures, and commended the work underway to further improve, there were “some potential areas for improvement in the College’s efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct” noted, and the following recommendations were given:

| Recommendations

Sexual Violence Policy (SVP) and Sexual Violence Policy (SVP) Procedure

1. Combine the SVP and SVP Procedure into one document to make it easier for those who may need to access the policy and procedure to understand.
2. Enhance the “Purpose” section of the SVP to set out the pervasiveness of sexual violence, its gendered nature and its disproportionate impact on marginalized populations, as well as the College’s commitment to preventing sexual violence and addressing sexual violence in a trauma-informed and intersectional manner. A strong statement at the beginning of the SVP will assist in setting the tone for the College’s approach to sexual violence.
3. Require that the members of the Sexual Violence Response Team be trained in topics related to sexual violence, such as trauma and consent.
4. Enhance the provisions around interim measures to set out what happens if interim measures are violated and to establish a timeline for reviewing interim measures.

5. Revise the 20-day timeline for investigations set out in the SVP Procedure to better reflect the typical length of a sexual violence investigation (for instance, 60 or 90 days) in order to set reasonable expectations from the outset.
6. Clarify what information complainants are entitled to at the conclusion of an investigation. The information the complainant and respondent receive about the investigation report at the conclusion of the investigation process ought to be the same.
7. Develop an appeal process for complainants and respondents with respect to the outcome of an investigation, including the potential grounds for an appeal, timelines for an appeal and authority to whom the parties may appeal.
8. Develop plain language resources to assist those who may need to access the SVP and SVP Procedure to understand it. These could include flow charts or summaries, and they should be easily accessible on the College's website.
9. Create a process to address multiple disclosures about the same person. For instance, after a certain threshold number of disclosures, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Lead could inquire with those who made disclosures about making a report.

Practices (Investigations)

1. Continue the current work underway by the Investigation and Fair Practice Lead in HREI to develop guidelines for fair investigations. These guidelines should include providing allegations to the respondent and conducting reply interviews.
2. Review and consider enhancing the training provided to internal investigators specific to conducting sexual violence investigations. Ideally the training should be interactional and participatory.
3. The College consider implementing a centralized tracking system with respect to investigations to facilitate information sharing (respecting confidentiality) and to identify areas or persons of concern.

Practices (Education)

1. Consider extension of the planned training for managers underway as part of the College review of the SVP to be more generally available for all members of the College Community. This could be undertaken by offering different formats and lengths of training and/or offering training or educational resources accessible from the College website.

| Conclusion and Recommendations to Board

Special Task Committee accepts the findings and supports the recommendations outlined by the investigator to strengthen current activities and to align with best practice. We recommend that to continue due diligence, the progress towards implementation of the recommendations be reported to the Board on an ongoing basis until completed. Further, regular reporting of statistics being tracked with respect to sexual misconduct at the college should be provided to the board.

In addition, the committee recommends that as part of the current review underway of the SVP the College engage in a process that would gather information and perspectives from the broader College community. We believe it is important to undertake this recommendation as part of the college's ongoing SVP improvements currently under review rather than linked to the anonymous complaint. For instance, given that focus groups have already been undertaken, this could include a public callout for information, a survey and/or additional interviews. The Special Task Committee believes this is a diligent follow up and will support the ongoing prioritization of addressing sexual misconduct.

By implementing these recommendations, NSCC can continue to foster a culture of safety, accountability, and trust. The committee would like to thank members of the senior management team for the timely provision of documents and materials which allowed a comprehensive review by the external investigator. Special thanks to the Board Coordinator for the administrative support of the committee's work.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Special Task Committee of the Board