

a brief history.

Last updated: October 2020

Content warning: This document contains themes of sexual violence.

Transparency, first.

The CUS' goal these many years has been to prioritize students' personal, professional and academic lives. In our efforts to plan events for and prioritize students, we've made mistakes.

We want to transparently recognize this and acquaint you with the various changes and initiatives that have been made in response to the historic connection to sexual and gender-based violence and harm in our past. We recognize that this narrative is incomplete, that there are likely many more stories that have never been told; this document is merely an amalgamation of events that we are currently aware of.

Thank you for walking with us towards restoration.



2013

In September 2013, student Frosh leaders led first-year commerce students in a variation of a cheer condoning the rape of underage girls during the three-day orientation welcome.

RESPONSE

A strategic plan was implemented by Sauder and UBC Centre for Engagement and Careers (now Centre for Student Involvement and Careers) staff with the following goals:

Enhancing responsibility and accountability

- All 81 CUS FROSH leaders, as well as the FROSH Executive Committee, CUS Board of Directors and Executive Council members participated in community service
- Sauder faculty and staff worked with the CUS to implement structural changes (including student and staff training) to ensure student well-being and inclusivity were a part of future CUS events
- In addition, four CUS leaders resigned

Restoring community trust

- The CUS issued a public apology & indicated steps they were taking to create a positive, inclusive environment at UBC
- CUS leaders participated in training around sexual violence and bystander responsibility

Education and culture change

- Faculty partnered with students to provide leadership in promoting safe, inclusive and respectful environments
- The school introduced new broad-based student leadership training (This training is now called Community Building Education. It was co-developed by the Centre for Student Involvement & Careers and the Equity & Inclusion Office is currently mandated for student leaders across campus as a part of Spring Welcome.)
- Sauder Administration made the decision to no longer support CUS FROSH, but to instead work with students to develop what is now the Spark orientation week



2017

On September 17th, 2017, a post was made on UBC reddit describing a student's experience with sexual violence by CUS members.

RESPONSE
While the anonymous form of this allegation made it challenging to address directly, the student affected was reached out to by the CUS president via a comment on the post with resources and an apology on behalf of the CUS. In the following year, the SVPSC (Sexual Violence Prevention Student Coordinator, now Clarify) was inaugurated under the External Portfolio.



2020

Between February 14th and March 11th 2020, several students expressed their frustrations with the CUS and its connection to recent and historical occurrences of sexual violence on the UBC Confessions Facebook page. These stories included accounts of harm inflicted by students affiliated with the CUS and general concerns regarding student safety and wellbeing within the Sauder School of Business.

RESPONSE

In the months following these events, CUS Members maintained ongoing consultation and dialogue with UBC Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO), the Undergraduate Office (UGO), and the UBC Independent Investigations Office (IO). In August 2020, the CUS issued a written and [video](#) statement apologizing for its lack of action in addressing this issue. These statements outlined current and future initiatives that would seek to better confront sexual violence and build a culture of consent at the CUS. Among these initiatives was the creation and implementation of Article 13, the CUS's first policy describing an event safety procedure and a sexual violence mitigation strategy. Parallel to the creation of this policy, additional training in sexual violence prevention was mandated for CUS leaders of clubs and services with higher risks of sexual misconduct.

INITIATIVES:

- Rebranding the Sexual Violence Prevention Student Coordinator Service to 'Clarify' with the goal of mandating transparent leadership in the CUS, implementing student-informed initiatives, and collaborating with leaders in the broader UBC community to better represent the voices of students affected by sexual violence.
- Creating and Implementing of Article 13 in the CUS Code of Procedures to mitigate risk and improve overall safety for individuals attending events hosted by the Society.
- Developing asynchronous and synchronous Consent Culture training programs for student leaders in partnership with SVPRO. The intention is to inspire student leaders to champion Consent Culture and host safe, inclusive events.



moving forward.

As the CUS, we will continue to listen and seek out opportunities to prioritize student voices in our actions and decisions. We apologize for the lack of acknowledgement of these occurrences from our predecessors; today we make it clear to the student body that the CUS hears your concerns, believes your stories, and stands with you in your frustrations.

We are committed to always doing better.

