

Western's Gender-Based Violence Board Report

May 2021

Context

In March 2019, the provincial government mandated post-secondary institutions to provide their Board of Governors with an annual report on work underway to address GBSV. This report provides the annual update on the progress made beginning January 2017 through to April 30, 2020, accounting for three cycles of data collection:

- Cycle 1: January 1, 2017 - April 30, 2018
- Cycle 2: May 1, 2018 - April 30, 2019
- Cycle 3: May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020
- Cycle 4: May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021

To outline the preventative programming and responsive care interventions that are provided to Western students, as well as to provide a snapshot of how GBSV efforts will continue to be developed, this report is divided into four sections:

- Section One: Prevention, Education and Training
- Section Two: Responsive Care
- Section Three: Formal Complaints and Investigations
- Section Four: Future Directions

Section 1: Prevention, Education, & Training

Western University continues to engage in several strategic initiatives designed to advance education and prevention of gender-based and sexual violence on campus and increase our capacity to respond to disclosures. This section provides a summary of gender-based violence prevention initiatives undertaken between April 2020 and April 2021, and next steps planned to engage faculty, staff and students in ongoing prevention education.

Program Summary

Throughout this past year we have expanded and diversified the range of education and programming opportunities available to students, faculty and employees. We increased our programming to 18 unique programs offered in 2020, from just 12 in 2019 and four in 2018. This increase is essential as we have reached a more significant number of students with programming contextualized for various audiences, and reflective of diversity in lived experiences.

Western University understands that our students live, study and work within a complex ecosystem and that providing learning opportunities to various parts of their ecosystem is essential to realize our educational objectives. Correspondingly, staff, faculty and other leaders on our campus and in our community must participate in ongoing gender-based violence prevention education.

- From April 2020 to May 2021, the Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Coordinator offered 41 gender-based violence prevention programs that engaged 3,563 Western community members. Programming was delivered to a broad representation of undergraduate and graduate students (90%), staff (8%) and faculty (2%). Table 1 offers a brief description of each program.

Table 1: Program Descriptions

Male Allies on Campus	By participating in this program, male-identifying students develop essential leadership skills in how to stand up against sexual and gender-based violence; acknowledge how their actions, words and behaviours can impact others; and demonstrate what it means to be a male ally.
Educating in the Grey Zone	This session introduces Western's approach to gender-based violence prevention education. Participants explore gender-based violence, the limitations of historical approaches to prevention, and new directions for prevention education.
Disclosure Training	This training is designed to educate faculty, staff and student leaders on their roles and responsibilities for receiving and reporting a disclosure, per Western's Gender-based and Sexual Violence Policy.
Community Connections: Healthy Relationships	First-year students explore different types of relationships, gain the tools to recognize unhealthy relationships, and learn how to take action to transform their relationships.
Upstander Training	By participating in this program, students learn about the impacts of sexual violence on individuals and communities; examine the links between sexually violent behaviour and a cultural of sexual violence; and learn how to safely apply upstander intervention skills to intervene in situations of sexual violence.
'Can I Kiss You?' Orientation Program	Presented as part of Western's Orientation events, Mike Domitrz provides skills for verbal consent, bystander intervention, and supporting survivors. The presentation was facilitated by the Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Coordinator, discussing these themes in a university context.
Pleasure and Consent	This program contributes to a conversation around consent by introducing the skills, language and practices to not only "ask for consent" but ask students to explore desire and centre pleasure for all involved.
Pleasure Packs	This program is intended to normalize talking about pleasure and to broaden students' understanding of pleasure beyond sex. When students have access to diverse sources of pleasure, they have opportunities to understand themselves, what feels good and ultimately what does not.
ReShaping Locker Room Talk	An ongoing, discussion-based program that engages male-identifying student athletes in exploring topics vital to them as they relate to gender-based violence. The discussion opens up space for honest dialogue and planning on how they can reshape locker room talk and its environment to create safer spaces and prevent gender-based violence.
Man Made	A 4-session discussion group designed for male-identifying students to help them find their voice and use it to create change for themselves and their community.
The Neurobiological Consequences of Trauma: A Trauma Informed Approach	Trauma-informed practice involves more than adhering to a set of abstract principles. It requires a thorough understanding of the complex and diverse alterations in the many domains of a traumatized person's development and coping. This training session, delivered by Anova, was offered to members of Western's Mental Health Team.
Safety Training	This training provides participants with practical skills to support domestic violence survivors in planning for safety in a broad range of contexts and situations. This training session, delivered by Anova, was offered to members of Western's Mental Health Team.
Cultivating Thriving Educators: Gender-based Violence on Post-Secondary Campuses and Western's Framework for Prevention	This session introduces the issue of gender-based violence on campus, and Western's Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Framework. The session encourages educators to examine existing programs through a reflective lens and consider two key questions: Who am I [as an educator] in the context of using this framework and the larger campus ecosystem? How does this framework apply to me?
Educational Sanctions	Respondents implicated in gender-based or sexual violence complaints are required to complete education/training sessions to help them understand the implications of their choices and actions.
ReShape Series	The ReShape Series is designed to raise awareness concerning issues of gender-based violence. Programming addresses topics for supporting one another, celebrating our identities and having critical conversations about how, as a community, we are addressing this important issue at Western. Programs offered as part of the ReShape Series in 2020-21 included: Reclaiming Self-Care and Pleasure(workshop + video series); Pleasure is Power(keynote + discussion); Pleasure on a Plate(video series); and Digital Expression and Consent(video series).

Assessment

From April 2020 to May 2021, we assessed the impacts of our programs. Data was collected across a range of evaluation criteria and learning outcomes. Overall, students indicated a generally positive level of agreement that gender-based violence prevention programs met the intended learning outcomes and goals.

We were also able to study one of our programs in particular, the Upstander Program. Assessment data suggests that across samples, there was a consistent shift in student self-report data with:

- 61% believe they have an increased understanding of sexual violence prevention.
- 61% feel better prepared to respond to situations of sexual violence instead of looking away.
- 58% feel better prepared to provide support or offer referrals to someone experiencing sexual violence.
- 38% believe that if someone was at risk of being sexually assaulted or harassed, they would have an increased commitment to something to help.

Providing skills and strategies to participants is an important outcome when developing and creating online programs for students, providing valuable information about students' perceptions of gender-based and sexual violence, their awareness of the resources available, and their capacity to respond. This outcome data will help Western University identify where gender-based violence prevention efforts should be focused, what topics should be targeted for further education, and the design for online/digital spaces used to engage students in the subject matter.

When asked to describe their overall experience across our educational programs, students used words including eye-opening (40%), liberating (20%), empowering (18%), thought-provoking (12%), and inspiring (10%). Concerning program assessment, these findings indicate that students are finding value in, and benefitting from, intentional shifts and new perspectives in gender-based violence prevention education on-campus. Further, these findings affirm that the principles for prevention education, as outlined in **Western's Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Framework**, resonates with a diverse student population, helping to inform future programming

ReShape Micro eLearning Collection: Step 1

Western University recognizes the influence peers have over one another and that to meaningfully address gender-based and sexual violence we must include peer leaders into our prevention efforts in an organized, measurable and collaborative way.

To provide consistent training to Western student leaders, Western University developed and launched ReShape Micro eLearning Collection: Step 1 in August 2020. This e-learning module provides an introduction to gender-based and sexual violence, situates this discussion in the context of combating rape culture, and outlines Western's Gender-based and Sexual Violence Policy and process for responding to disclosures. From August 2020 to February 2021, 778 students completed ReShape, Step 1. 95% of students who completed the module self-identified as a student leader on campus.

Students are provided opportunities to contribute to, view, collective ideas and knowledge, complete online learning activities to explore these ideas further, and complete reflection questions designed to promote practical application of the content

Piloting ReShape Step 1 provided Western University with an understanding of methods and practices for adapting gender-based violence prevention education into asynchronous online learning opportunities for students, faculty and employees. Current efforts are underway to make revisions to Step 1, incorporating campus feedback

Digital Content and Management

In addition to creating interactive online learning experiences for students, social media was leveraged as a tool to deliver gender-based violence prevention education. This shift enabled Western University to reach a greater number of students, faculty and employees with digital content designed to educate the campus community on changes to Western's Gender-based and Sexual Violence Policy, distilling policy content into several key messages for the campus community and raising awareness.

Social media was also used to communicate information about upcoming programming opportunities and educate the campus community about strategic shifts in approaches to gender-based violence prevention education on-campus. For example, ReShaping Pleasure and Consent was a 12-part series, introducing students, faculty and employees to conversations about pleasure as part of campus prevention efforts, reflecting the principles outlined in Western's Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Framework.

Section 2: Responsive Care

Western's revised Gender-based and Sexual Violence Policy (the "Policy") came into effect on May 1, 2020. The updated Policy broadened the focus beyond sexual violence in recognition and response to the variety of experiences Western students encounter. The inclusion of "gender-based violence" under the new Policy expanded supports to students experiencing domestic violence, family violence, bullying, and online harassment. Another notable change under the revised policy was the Notification of Disclosures Protocol. This Protocol requires all Staff, Faculty and Student Leaders (excluding Health Care Professionals) connect students to the Gender-based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager when a disclosure of gender-based violence is received. In addition to centralizing disclosures, this Protocol ensures all survivors consistently receive accurate information on resources, options, and their accommodation rights regardless of who they disclose to on campus.

Informing Staff, Faculty, and Student Leaders of their responsibilities under the Notification of Disclosure Protocol was a significant focus this past academic year. In addition to the training on this Protocol conducted by the Gender-based Violence Prevention Education Coordinator, the GBV Case Manager also provided training to 100 campus community members. In the past academic year, 74 disclosure forms were submitted to the GBV Case Manager. The disclosure form does not require the survivor's name; this is as deidentifying as possible. Therefore, as a result, it is not possible to conclude specifically how many survivors scheduled appointments with the GBV Case Manager as a result of the disclosure form being completed.

Service delivery to student survivors was modified to telephone and video appointments due to COVID-19. The transition to virtual support provided an opportunity for survivors to stay connected to supports over the summer semester, resulting in increased student appointments compared to previous summer months. In contrast, other months of the year, such as January and February, saw decreased numbers of student appointments than in previous academic years. Reduced residence capacity and the Provincial Stay at Home Order in the new year likely contributed to the decline in scheduled appointments

Table 2 Disclosures to the Gender-based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager Notes: Data does not include formal complaints made to the University. Information about student classification, academic year and referral source was not tracked until cycle 3.

Table 2: Disclosures

		Reporting Cycle			
		Cycle 1 May 1, 2017 - April 30, 2018 ¹	Cycle 2 May 1, 2018 - April 30, 2019 ²	Cycle 3 May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020	Cycle 4 May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021
Total New Referrals				139	141
Unique Students Seen ³		90	122	118	76
Student Classification ⁴	Domestic Student	0	114	111	67
	International Student	0	8	7	9
	Undergraduate Student	0	112	101	62
	Graduate Student	0	10	17	14
Academic Year	1st Year Student	0	32	33	19
	2nd Year Student	0	45	23	22
	3rd Year Student	0	19	26	13
	4th Year Student	0	16	19	8
	Graduate Student	0	10	17	14
Registration of Student	Main Campus	0	97	107	68
	Affiliate Campus	0	25	11	8
Referral Source	Campus Partner	0	73	65	47
	Community Partner	0	11	21	11
	Self-Referral	0	38	32	18
Disclosures made to Affiliate Campus Resources	Brescia	0	3	3	18
	King's	4	4	8	4
	Huron	0	4	3	4

1. January 1, 2017 – April 30, 2017 was included in original cycle based on date of implementation for the Sexual Violence Policy. Due to role transition date from January 1, 2018 - April 30, 2018 is not reflected in Cycle 1. During Cycle 1 data was not tracked in the same manner as Cycle 2.

2. May 1, 2018-June 30, 2018 data is not reflected in Cycle 2 due to role transition.

3. In Cycle 2 the total number of referrals received was tracked. In Cycle 3 the number of referrals received, and the number of unique students seen was tracked in anticipation of the Notification of Disclosures policy being implemented in Cycle 4

4. After Cycle one a decision was made to implement more discrete tracking to better understand the specifics of referrals being made.

The data outlined in the chart is collected by the Gender-based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager and classified to determine trends in student populations accessing formal support on campus. In 2020-21 the data illustrates that domestic and undergraduate students accessed the Gender-based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager office at higher rates. While these trends make sense given the sizable domestic and undergraduate populations at Western, the data also validates our belief that increased outreach is necessary for international and graduate students. As such, the office will continue to work closely with partners such as Western International, School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies and the Indigenous Student Centre to expand our GBSV preventative educational and awareness of supports

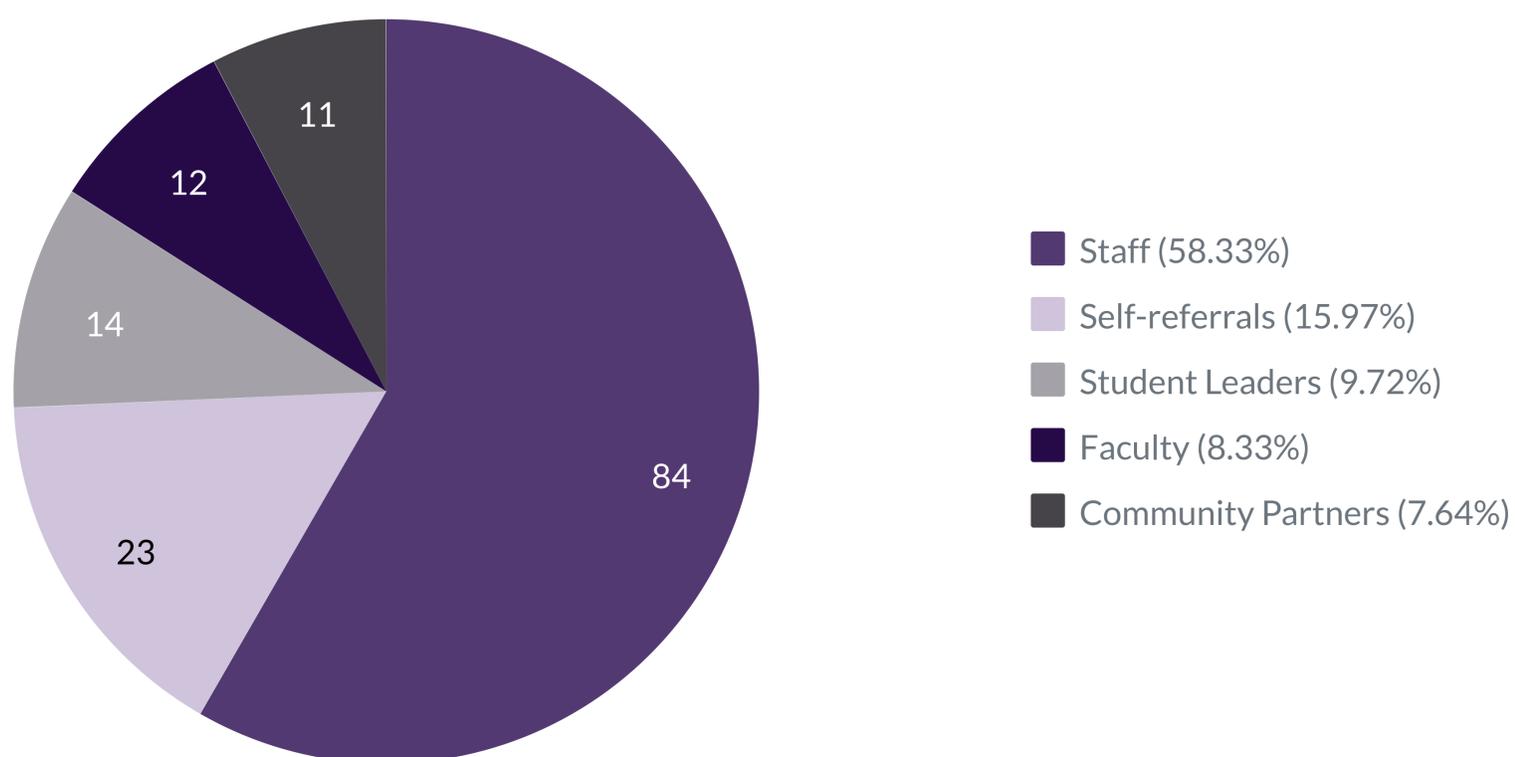
While the number of students seeking support from the GBV Case Manager decreased this academic year, the complexity of cases increased. The GBV Case Manager supported more students experiencing familial and domestic violence than in previous academic years. This is likely a result of the pandemic, which exacerbated risk factors for gender-based violence perpetration, including financial stress, employment instability, mental health issues, and social isolation. Student survivors' wellbeing was also noticeably impacted by COVID-19 including intrusive thoughts of trauma, reduced options for coping strategies, and limited access to support networks.

It is anticipated that the decrease in disclosures observed this academic year will be an anomaly. Anecdotally, it appears that due to COVID restrictions there were fewer social activities among students, such as large parties, attending bars, and other student-led events. Additionally, with many students living at home and learning virtually due to COVID restrictions, and therefore having less privacy, it is possible that some students were less comfortable reporting lower-level incidents this academic year.

Referrals

In 2020-21, the GBV Case Manager received 141 student referrals. Referrals to the GBV Case Manager came from five sources: Staff (84 referrals), Self-referral (23 referrals), Student Leaders (14 referrals), Faculty (12 referrals) and Community Partners (11 referrals). These referrals resulted in 76 student survivors scheduling meetings with the GBV Case Manager. Meetings included students who experienced an incident of GBV within the past year (49 students), students who experienced a historical incident of GBV (16 students), and students who had experienced both recent and historical incidences of GBV (11 students). The GBV Case Manager provided a total of 368 direct support meetings to student survivors this past academic year.

Graph 1: Referral sources 2019/2020



Section 3: Formal Complaints and Investigations

Formal reports of sexual violence have been tracked since Western's Sexual Violence Policy in January 2017. Such reports capture a range of experiences that can include any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality, gender expression or identity. We recognize that formal reports of sexual violence through our office do not reflect the full scope or picture of students' experiences of sexual violence, as students may choose many avenues to seek support or follow-up after experiencing sexual violence.

As outlined in last year's report, the newly implemented Policy (effective May 1, 2020) created a more streamlined complaints process. It also expanded the definition of "sexual violence" to include "gender-based violence." This streamlined process makes more accessible the complaints process, leading to an increased number of complaints compared to the previous academic year. The number of formal complaints of sexual violence received by the University increased slightly from 15 in the 2019-2020 academic year to 18 in the 2020-2021 academic year (see Table 3, below). Of note was a general increase in physical violence/aggression during sexual encounters. Survivors made allegations of such violence in four of the 18 complaints received.

Of the total 18 complaints received, five Survivors decided not to proceed with the complaints process after an initial meeting with the Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.

Table 3: Investigations

Category of Incident	Sanction Type	Reporting Cycle			
		Cycle 1 Jan 1, 2017 - April 30, 2018 ⁵	Cycle 2 May 1, 2018 - April 30, 2019	Cycle 3 May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020	Cycle 4 May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021 ⁶
Total Complaints	Main Campus	40	24	15	18
	Brescia	0	0	0	0
	Huron	0	4	11	2
	King's	0	1	2	0
Sexual Assault	TOTAL	19	21	13	16
	Anonymous Complaints or No action Requested ⁷	7	7	9	5
	Educational Sanctions ⁸	16	15	0	6
	Restrictions on Campus	9	10	3	4
	Suspension	0	1	0	4
	Informal Resolution ⁹	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Sexual Harassment	TOTAL	14	7	11	4
	Anonymous Complaints or No action Requested	3	0	4	1
	Educational Sanctions	8	3	5	0
	Restrictions on Campus	5	2	2	0
	Suspension	1	2	0	0
	Informal Resolution	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Indecent Exposure	TOTAL	1	1	3	1
	Anonymous Complaints or No action Requested	1	1	3	0
	Educational Sanctions	0	0	0	1
	Restrictions on Campus	0	0	0	1
	Suspension	0	0	0	0
	Informal Resolution	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Sexual Exploitation	TOTAL	0	0	2	2
	Anonymous Complaints or No action Requested	0	0	1	1
	Educational Sanctions	0	0	0	1
	Restrictions on Campus	0	0	1	1
	Suspension	0	0	0	1
	Informal Resolution	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Cyber Harassment	TOTAL	1	1	2	0
	Anonymous Complaints or No action Requested	1	0	1	0
	Educational Sanctions	0	0	0	2
	Restrictions on Campus	0	0	1	2
	Suspension	0	0	0	1
	Informal Resolution	N/A	N/A	N/A	0

10, 11

5. Cycle i cases were incorporated into Cycle 1 for ease of reporting

6. Some cases remain in the sanctioning stage as of the date of this report, and may not be reflected in the totals.

7. Anonymous Complaints are those in which the complainant does not want to participate or the respondent was unable to be identified and as such were unable to be actioned, complaints were always connected to resources.

8. Educational Sanctions could include: written apologies, educational seminars, reflection papers and awareness or education programming.

9. Informal resolution often includes some form of agreed-upon sanction, such as education sanctions or restrictions on campus.

10. Complaints may result with multiple sanctions (i.e. Educational and Restrictions)

11. Table includes sanctions on complaints that were received in the 2019-2020 academic year, but which were adjudicated in the 2020-2021 academic year. These complaints were not included in this year's tally.

There is a lack of specific data on the factors contributing to the increase in complaints from 2019-2020; anecdotally, some qualitative conclusions are provided here. For example, in discussion with residence sophs and dons, it appears that students have a better understanding of the new reporting mechanism under the Policy, which could be attributed to the additional education and social media campaigns described below. With the addition of the Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, the SSCM department was better prepared and equipped to respond to the higher volume of complaints during the 2020-2021 academic year. The resumption of at least some in-person classes and activities it may result in increased incidents.

Investigations

The new role of Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, created under the new Policy, was filled in August of 2020 by Ms. Victoria Yang. This role was created as a single point of contact for receiving, managing, and investigating complaints of gender-based and sexual violence received under the Policy. Before joining Western, Ms. Yang practiced employment law with a specialization in workplace investigations. She has implemented trauma-informed investigation techniques, communication tools, and credibility assessment skills into the existing investigative framework under the Policy.

Western's services moved to virtual platforms in response to the pandemic; all meetings with Survivors, Respondents, and witnesses were conducted either through Zoom or via telephone. Notably, this made it possible to interview students out of the province or out of the country.

In consultation with the Associate Vice-President (Student Experience) and the University's legal counsel, some complaints in the 2020-2021 academic year were referred to external investigators. The decision to refer complaints to external investigation depends on various factors, including the complexity of the complaint, whether there are substantive issues of relative power or vulnerability between the parties, and the seriousness of the allegations. Of the 18 complaints received this academic year, eleven complaints proceeded to an investigation. Seven of those eleven investigations were referred externally.

Informal Resolution Pathway

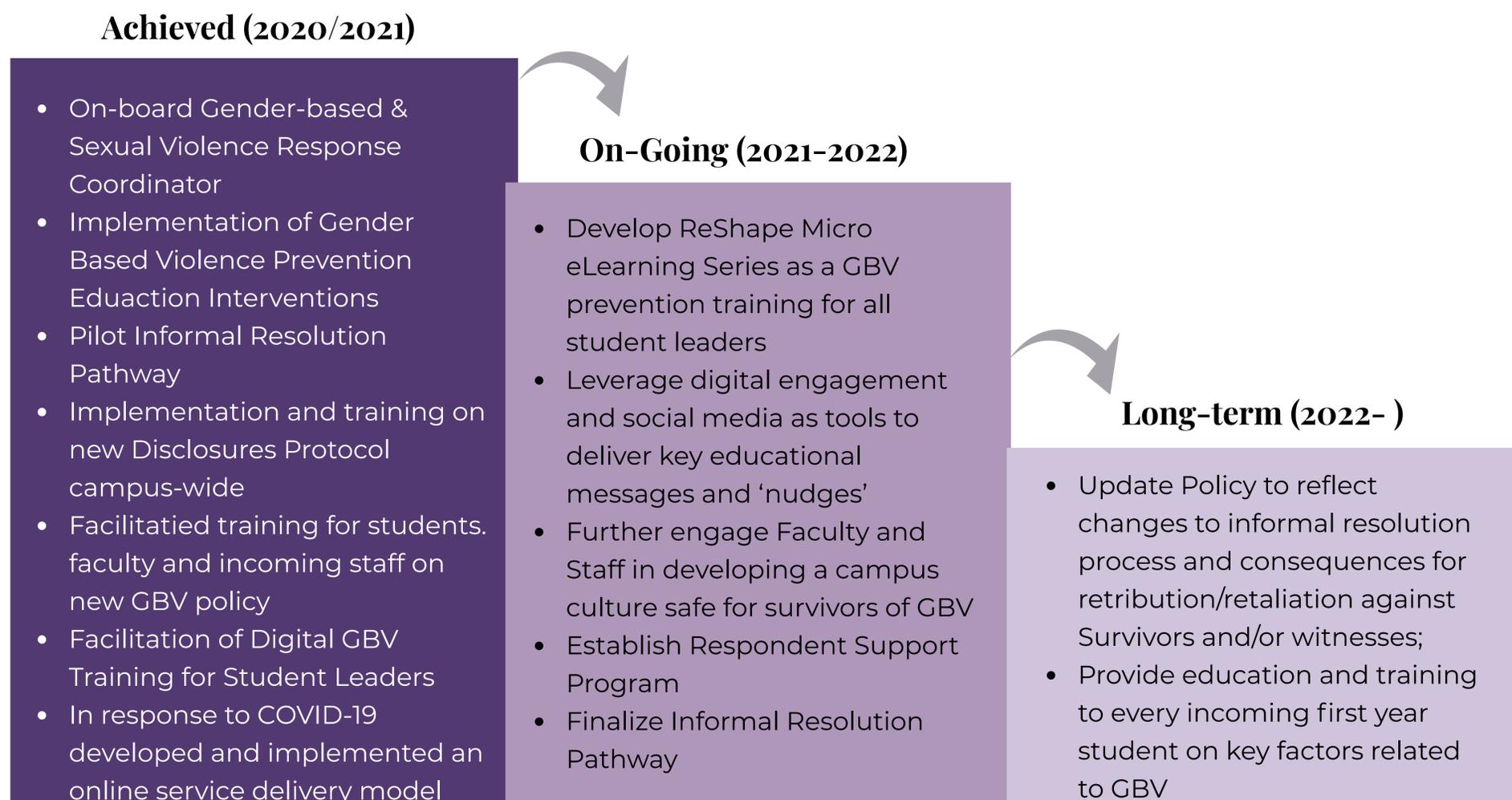
The Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Coordinator was tasked with developing the informal resolution pathway provided for under the Policy. A review of informal resolution processes in place at post-secondary institutions across North America was completed. After this review, lists were compiled, setting out criteria used in assessing whether a complaint is appropriate for informal resolution; possible methods of informal resolution; possible outcomes of informal resolution; and a draft agreement to participate in the informal resolution process. This academic year, the Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, in consultation with the SSCM Manager, successfully resolved two complaints informally, which provided useful information and feedback on the process as it applies to Western. The next step is compiling this information in a comprehensive proposal on an informal resolution process toolkit.

Section 4: Next Steps

During the 2020-21 academic year, Western Student Experience achieved its Gender-based and Sexual Violence goals through a collaborative, cross-departmental effort. The graphic below outlines the achievements within the past year and identifies the areas for future development in the efforts to support the campus ecosystem as follows

1. Consistent educational programming
2. Meaningful policies and procedures, as well as
3. Innovative research and assessment in order to understand what impact our work is having on our campus community and where we need to continue to focus our efforts for the future

Commitments over the next two year are shown below



Looking ahead to our 2021-2022 and long-term goals, gender-based and sexual violence education and prevention efforts, and the cross-campus partnerships will continue to improve the supports, resources and pathways available to students in their journey towards thriving.