

# **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A TASK TEAM TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT RHODES UNIVERSITY**

## **Background**

At a meeting of students, deans, and management on the morning of 19 April 2016, it was agreed that a small committee would meet to put together proposed terms of reference for a task team to address issues and procedures regarding sexual violence at Rhodes University. A committee consisting of students (Naledi Mashishi, Lelona Mxesibe, Thabani Masuku), and staff (Dianna Hornby, Catriona Macleod, Brahma Padayachi) met in the afternoon of 19 April to draft these proposed terms of reference. These proposals were presented at a meeting held at 16h00 in Eden Grove Red on 20 April with approximately 120 staff and students in attendance. At the end of the meeting, the small committee was tasked with incorporating the inputs from those present at the meeting, and presenting a further iteration of the proposed terms of reference to another meeting of all stakeholders and interested parties. A second draft of the proposed terms of reference was presented to staff and students on 22 April (approximately 140 people present) and again on 28 April (approximately 50 people present). A pre-final version of the terms of reference was circulated to all staff and students at Rhodes University for final comment. All comments received were integrated in this final document. On 4 May 2016 a broad invitation to all staff and students was sent to volunteer for the task team.

## **Mandate of the task team**

The task team is tasked with exploring ways in which a counter-culture to rape culture may be addressed at Rhodes University and more broadly. The following major issues, in order of priority listed below, will be considered and, where possible, concrete and actionable recommendations will be made. The task team will:

1. Make recommendations concerning the ways in which the experiences of survivors/victims of sexual violence can be heard in a safe, confidential, supportive space; recommend ways in which current spaces may be enhanced/improved upon and how relevant staff may be trained to provide these kinds of spaces.
2. Review all policies and procedures relating to sexual offences at Rhodes University, gathering input from all stakeholders and interested parties through open invitation. Engage in a reflective process in which the inadequacies of the present situation are highlighted and better ways of dealing with issues of sexual violence instituted. Ensure that the policies and procedures put the

survivor first and create mechanisms whereby survivors are not required to be in the same space as the alleged perpetrator. Recommend ways in which staff (including Grades 1 to 5 staff members, supervisors) and student (including post-graduate students) knowledge of policies and procedures may be improved in an on-going and sustained manner (including creating readable and summary policies and fact sheets and ensuring the all of these are translated into isiXhosa).

3. Recommend ways in which issues related to sexual violence, rape culture, and hetero-patriarchal gendered norms can be embedded in the curriculum and other activities in the university (e.g. Orientation week, staff orientation, CHERTL's work with academic staff and supervisors, residences, work with trade unions) in a sustained manner, and in a way that emphasises the prevention sexual violence and its locatedness within gendered power relations. Situate this endeavour within the on-going process of the de-colonisation of the curriculum and of teaching endeavours. Recommend ways that learning that occurs through activism and social agitation can be capitalised upon.
4. Conduct an audit of systemic issues (e.g. institutional culture; staff-student relations; relations between different grades of staff, residence rituals, drinking culture, oppidan issues, attitudes of management, academics, students, administrative and support staff, wardens/subwardens) that promote or undermine rape/sexual violence culture at Rhodes University. Recommend ways in which systemic issues that promote rape/sexual violence culture may be addressed in ways that recognise the differential impact of rape culture on specific people and the intersectionality of power relations. Recognise the strengths, where they do exist, and recommend ways in which these can be enhanced.
5. Investigate ways in which the university does, and may further, engage locally (with the immediate Grahamstown community and businesses, club etiquette, schools, community engagement) and nationally (e.g. policy, law, research, activism, schools, community engagement) regarding sexual violence.
6. Liaise with Academic Project and Protocol Facilitation committee that is working on the staff-student engagement protocol with specific emphasis on how academic staff may be involved in the agitational anti-rape movement led by students with the aim of solidarity and resistance against rape (and, where necessary, police intervention). Ensure that there are space created in which staff can listen to students.

7. Develop a system of monitoring and evaluating the embedding of the recommendations within general policy and procedures of the university, and the implementation of accepted recommendations.

### Composition of the task team

A steering task team, with a number of sub-task teams will implement this mandate. The steering task team will consist of the two facilitators of the sub-task teams: one staff member and one student from each sub-task team. Each sub-task team will choose the facilitators from amongst their members, and the steering task team will choose two co-ordinators (one staff and one student) from amongst the members.

A general call will went out for people to volunteer for particular task teams. The interim committee was tasked with ensuring that all stakeholders are reasonably represented on the task team and that there is a reasonable spread of men and women. External stakeholders, like the Young woman’s forum of Grahamstown and the Department of Social Development will be asked to participate where appropriate.

STEERING TASK TEAM: TWO MEMBERS FROM EACH OF THE SUB TASK TEAMS – ONE STUDENT AND ONE STAFF MEMBER						
Safe spaces for survivors/victims task team	Policies and procedures task team	Curriculum and activities task team	Systemic issues task team	Local and national issues task team	Academic project and protocol task team	Monitoring and evaluation task team

### Timeline

A staggered timeline is suggested, with more urgent issues having a tighter deadline. Issues that require more work have a longer timeline.

**Report 1: Safe spaces for survivors/victims:** End of June

**Report 2: Policies and procedures:** Middle of July

**Report 3: Curriculum:** End of September;

**Report 4: Systemic issues:** End of September;

**Report 5: Local/National issues:** End of September;

**Report 6: Academic project and protocol:** End of September;

**Report 7: Monitoring and Evaluation:** End of October.

## **Reporting procedures**

The task team will report to students, academics, support staff, and the relevant university structures and the wide university community (parents, alumni).

Large report-back sessions with staff and students, possibly in faculty specific or residence spaces. to encourage on-going debate and dialogue is important.

**To students:** The reports need to be distributed widely via the various structures listed above (SRC, current student movement, Gender project, Activate, OutRhodes, Oppidan Press, Legal Activism); conversations

**To parents and wider stakeholder community:** Through university communications

**To academic and support staff:** Through HoDs, directors and head of sections and units.

**To university:** relevant Senate subcommittees for onward transmission for decision-making and implementation (including Equity and Institutional Culture committee, Gender Action Forum; Teaching and Learning committee, Board of Residences; Students Services Council; HIV and Aids Committee; Health and Safety Committee; Safety and Events Committee; Research Committee; Community Engagement Committee; Faculty Boards, Senate).

## **Resourcing for task team**

To enable the functioning of the task team, resources will need to be made available. A reasonable budget will be prepared by each sub-task team for presentation to the relevant structures within the university.