



Annual Report

2024-2025

Human Rights

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PART I OVERVIEW

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 the Board of Governors on certain information and statistics regarding the implementation of the University's human rights program and data related to human rights-based complaints and consultations, as well as data concerning 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 sexual violence at the University. In addition, this year the report includes specific reporting regarding the University's Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate program. This is done to assist the Board of Governors and other University members to understand the state of the University's human rights and student sexual violence programs and identify progress and trends from year to year, and to meet the University's legislative reporting obligations.

This annual report covers the period between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. The report will be posted to the University's website and submitted to the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security.

PART II STATUS UPDATE

1. ROLE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE

Ontario Tech University's Human Rights Office (HRO) serves as the cornerstone for overseeing the University's human rights and student sexual violence programs. Through its oversight, it ensures a consistent and equitable approach to addressing human rights issues raised by all members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors and plays a pivotal role in upholding and fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity across the campus.

In alignment with the University's commitment to a "Sticky Campus" the HRO administers a comprehensive and accessible dispute resolution program that is designed to effectively address concerns related to harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, micro-aggressions, and other forms of conflict or misconduct.

The HRO plays a crucial role in prompting institutional capacity to identify, address, and resolve human rights-related disputes and conflict. It provides confidential advice and guidance to any university member who is experiencing, witnessed or has received information about alleged harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, micro-aggressions and related conflict/disputes.

The services offered by the HRO range from de-escalation and facilitated dialogues to investigations and tailored training/education programs. This wide array of services is designed to respond to the unique needs of individuals and the University community, fostering an environment where human rights are upheld and respected. Through its work, the HRO promotes a culture of understanding, accountability, and mutual respect, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious campus atmosphere.

2. INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the 2024-2025 period, the HRO continued to place a strong emphasis on expanding the reach and impact of its services across the University community. With an overarching focus on enhancing awareness, the HRO implemented several key initiatives aimed at educating and empowering students, faculty, and staff on critical human rights and sexual violence issues. These initiatives not only sought to raise visibility for the HRO's services but also addressed the evolving needs of the University community through new training, awareness campaigns, and policy development, designed to foster a deeper understanding of equity, inclusion, and respect on campus.

One of the most prominent achievements was the launch of an ongoing campus-wide social media, digital signage and poster campaign to highlight and promote the role of the HRO in addressing discrimination, harassment and student sexual violence on campus. The posters, launched across multiple platforms, contain a QR code for easy access to the HRO's website, and the online forms to request a consultation meeting or report a concern.

This campaign significantly enhanced visibility and accessibility, particularly for students and staff who may be uncertain about where to turn for support. By integrating messaging into the daily campus environment, both physical and digital, the initiative helped normalize conversations about human rights and sexual violence prevention, reducing stigma and encouraging individuals to seek assistance early.

For faculty and staff, the campaign reinforces the University's commitment to a respectful and inclusive workplace, while equipping them with the knowledge and pathways needed to respond appropriately when issues arise. By making the HRO's services more visible and accessible, the campaign supports a culture of shared responsibility, one in which all members of the University community play a role in maintaining a safe, equitable, and respectful environment.

In keeping with this approach, the HRO also increased its presence during student orientation activities, including with the creation and distribution of branded swag items. Collaborative partnerships with student organizations, academic departments, and administrative units further strengthened the HRO's ability to provide tailored education and responsive support. The HRO further enhanced its direct outreach to students by increasing its promotion of the university's gender-based violence training modules,

including the introduction of a gift card draw incentive for students completing the training during the beginning of term. Together, these initiatives served to double student sexual violence training completion rates.

For students, the campaign and the training serve as an important reminder that help is readily available, fostering a greater sense of safety and belonging on campus. It empowers them to recognize and address inappropriate or harmful behaviours, and to engage with resources that support their well-being and academic success.

Throughout the 2024-2025 period, the HRO also focused heavily on its long-standing commitment to continuous improvement. The HRO finalized updates to the Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures after prolonged and in-depth consultations with the entire campus community. Within the reporting period, the HRO also developed and launched a new guideline to complement the Respectful Campus Policy to provide guidance surrounding racism and hate incidents.

Finally, in an effort to increase efficiency, transparency, and data collection and reporting capability, the HRO initiated a project to procure and implement a comprehensive complaint management system. Once launched, this system will streamline intake and case management processes, strengthen recordkeeping and tracking, and improve the HRO's ability to monitor trends and report on outcomes. Together, these initiatives underscore the HRO's proactive approach to ensuring that its policies, procedures, and systems remain responsive, effective, and reflective of the University's commitment to human rights and respect across all areas of campus life.

The combined efforts from the 2024-2025 period illustrate the HRO's proactive approach to fostering an inclusive, informed, and supportive environment at Ontario Tech University and continued commitment to cultivating a campus environment where every individual is treated with dignity and where human rights principles are embedded in the fabric of University life. Through strategic education, communication, and resource development, the HRO continues to play a critical role in promoting human rights and addressing sexual violence within the campus community.

PART III DATA & TRENDS

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 Rights¹ that are reported on in this report.

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.

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, 2024 – March 31, 2025.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

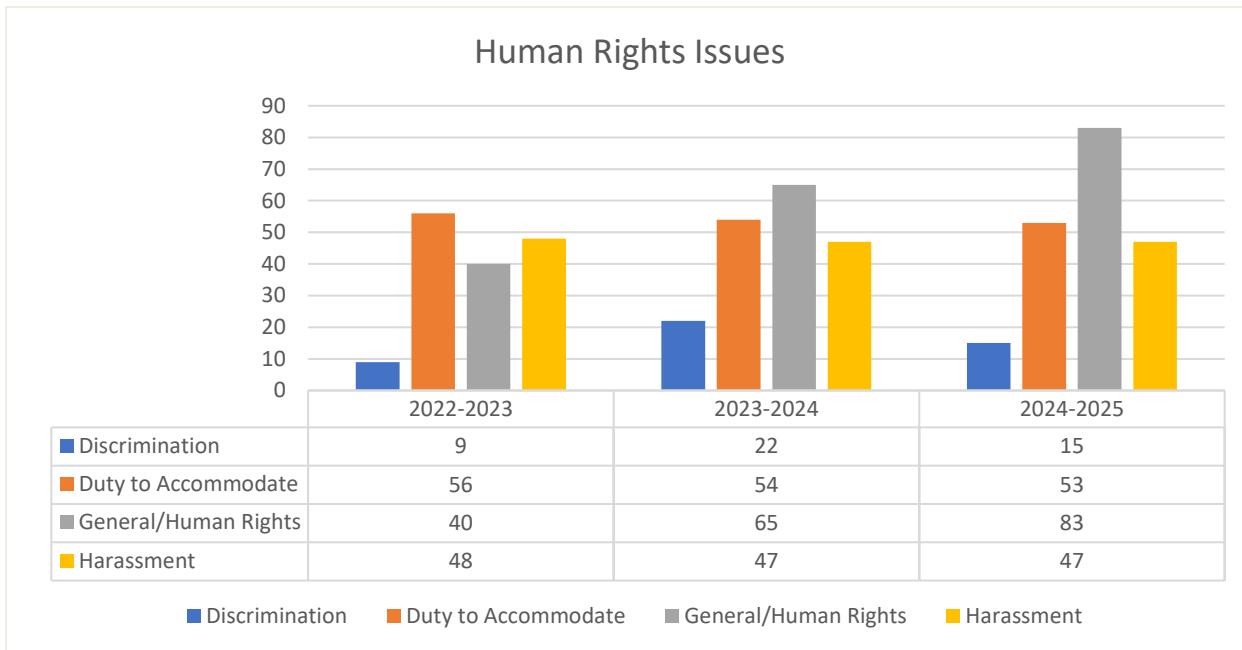


Table: 1

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, there were 250 human rights issues brought forward. This represents a slight upward trend from last year, which saw 240 matters brought forward. However, this remains 20% above the volume in 2022-2023.

Notably, there were year over year increases in general human rights inquiries (increased from 65 to 83), while discrimination issues declined from 22 to 15. This shift suggests that more members of the University community are seeking early advice, consultation, and informal resolution rather than waiting until situations escalate to formal complaints. The trend aligns with the HRO's efforts to enhance education, accessibility, and early intervention, supported by expanded outreach, updated training, and the launch of new guidelines under the Respectful Campus Policy addressing racism and hate incidents. As a result of these initiatives more members of the community may now be recognizing and reporting concerns that might previously have gone unaddressed.

2. STUDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ISSUES

The University tracks disclosures and reports of student sexual violence across the institution.

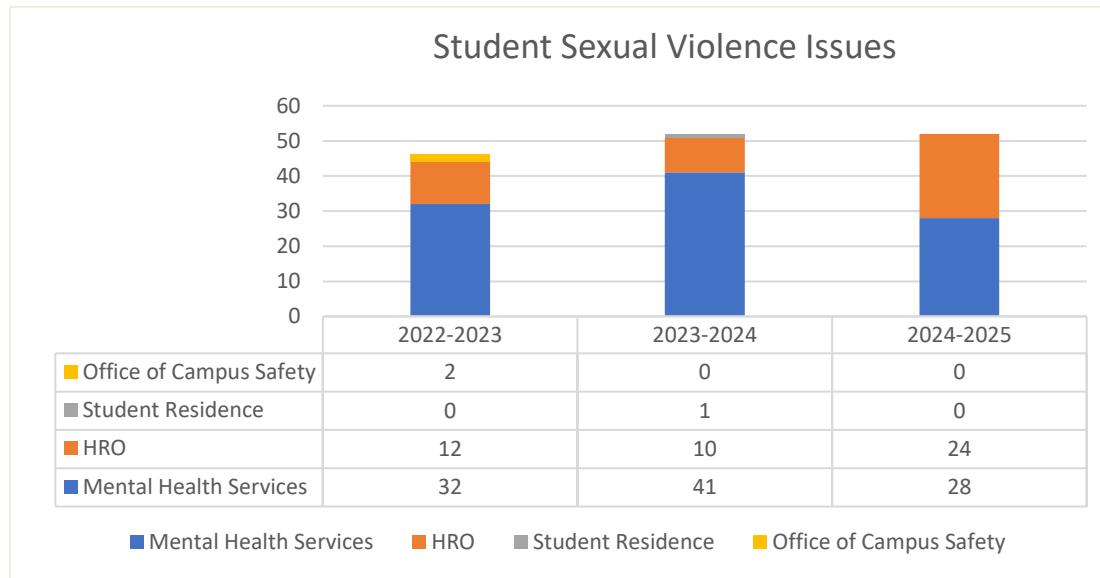


Table: 2

There were 52 disclosures and reports of student sexual violence in 2024-2025, consistent with the previous year, and a marginal increase from the 2022-2023 reporting period. This continued stability suggests that while the prevalence of incidents remains relatively steady, the environment for disclosure has become increasingly supportive. The finalized updates to the Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures, coupled with renewed outreach to students and service providers, likely contributed to maintaining awareness and confidence in the University's reporting and support mechanisms. Overall, these patterns indicate that the University's prevention, education, and policy initiatives are helping to foster a culture in which individuals feel more informed, supported, and empowered to come forward.

The disclosures and reports² were received and addressed as follows:

- Mental Health Services received 28 disclosures for counselling supports. 1 of these incidents was classified as occurring in the last 12 months; 27 were classified as historical. All 28 occurred off campus.
- The HRO received 17 disclosures (5 anonymous) and 7 reports of student sexual violence.

² The University's Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures distinguish between a "disclosure," which is telling a trusted individual about an incident of sexual violence to access support services; and a "report," which is a request that the University intervene to resolve a complaint.

- When in receipt of a disclosure, the HRO facilitates an individual's access to internal supports and resources, such as safety planning, mental health services and accommodations, as well as external resources available within the community.
- 4 reports were investigated by the HRO; 3 investigations into allegations of sexual harassment found a breach of policy.

3. INTERVENTION TYPE



The HRO records six main types of interventions applied to matters received by the office:

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 consistent with human rights obligations.
4. Voluntary 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. Investigation: when the HRO ensures an investigation to determine whether a policy violation has occurred.
6. Disclosures: incidents of student sexual violence disclosed to obtain supports and resources.

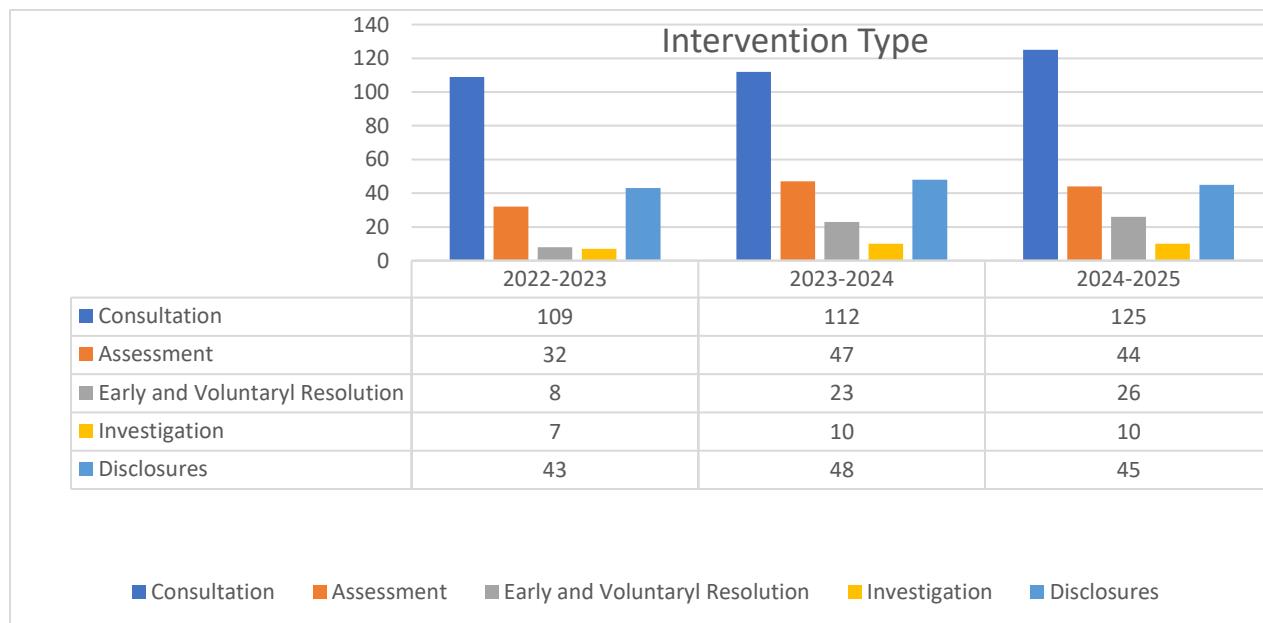


Table: 3

The number of consultations undertaken by the HRO remained consistently high as a percentage of total interventions, indicating the important role the HRO plays in providing support to the university community. This is also reflected in the continued high volume of Early and Voluntary Resolutions. Combined, these trends are reflective of the HRO's focus on efforts to prevent and resolve issues prior to dispute escalation.

4. ISSUE SOURCE

The HRO provides services to all members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students and visitors. The following table shows the source of issues that were brought forward in the reporting year. There was a notable increase in issues brought forward by individuals external to the university (we are seeing a trend of external concerns related to social media use by university members) and at the faculty level.

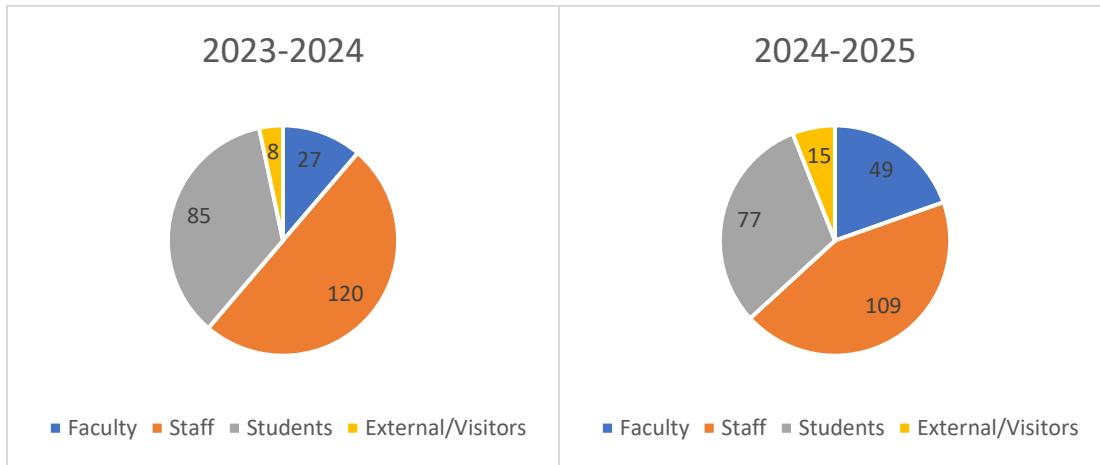


Table: 4

5. 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, including 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.

It should be noted that the number of protected grounds cited may not correspond directly to the number of cases received. This is because multiple protected grounds may be cited by individuals who come forward in respect of a case.

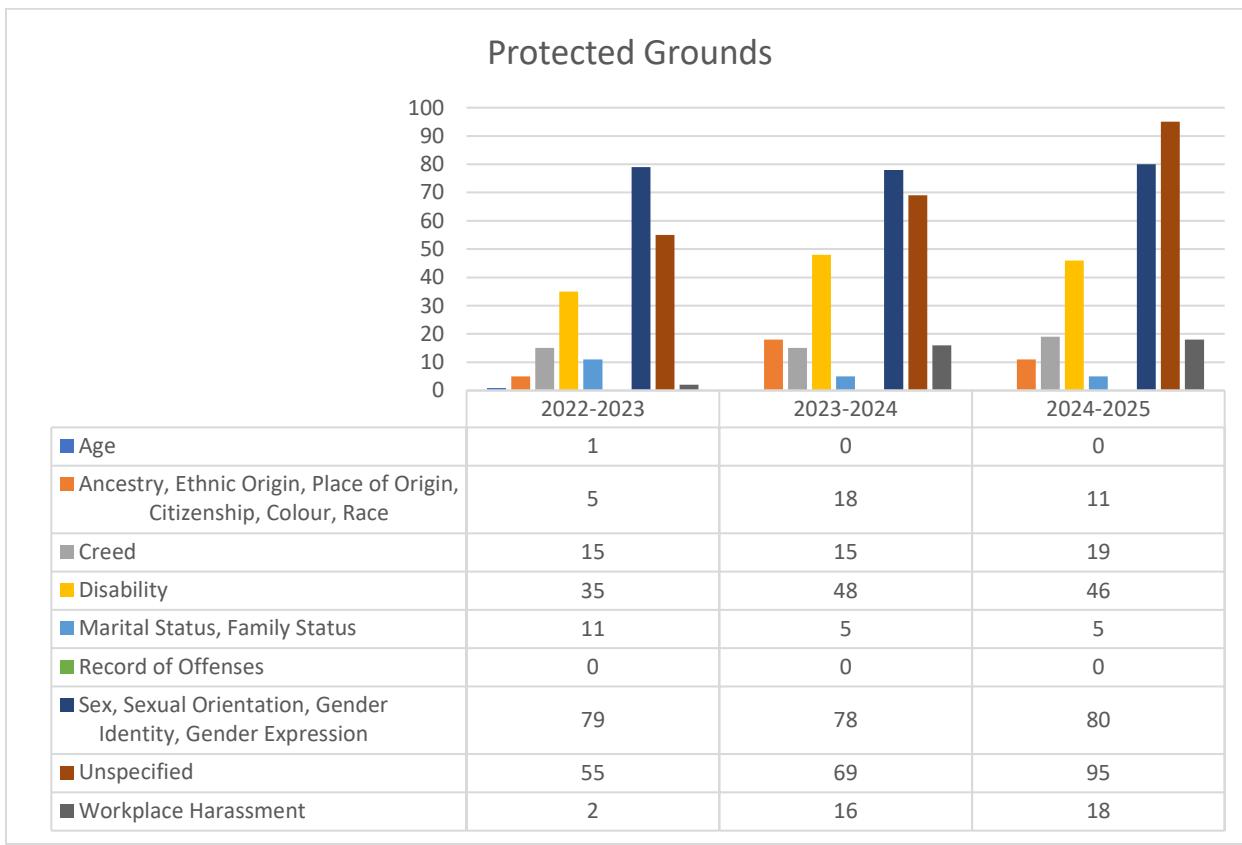


Table: 5

The increase in Workplace Harassment issues is largely reflective of a broad lack of insight regarding the difference between workplace harassment and disrespect across the University. Of the 18 matters identified in the reporting period, only 1 report was confirmed to be workplace harassment after an investigation. During the next fiscal reporting period the HRO will release training modules to assist the campus community in understanding the difference between harassment and incivility, as well as guidance to support individuals with conflict de-escalation techniques.

The 3-year upward trend in ‘unspecified’ matters highlights the positive and constructive role the HRO plays as a trusted source of advice and guidance for the University community. The HRO will continue to monitor these trends and will direct education supports as needed. Many individuals now seek preliminary consultation to clarify their

options or better understand policy definitions before determining whether to proceed formally.

This pattern reflects increased awareness of the HRO's services and confidence in its accessibility and neutrality. Moving forward, the HRO will continue to monitor these trends closely, using the data to identify emerging issues and to target education and capacity-building initiatives where they are most needed across the University.

PART IV ANTI-RACISM/ANTI-HATE

Introduced in September 2024, *the Anti-Racism/ Anti-Hate Directive for Publicly-Assisted Colleges and Universities*, issued by the Minister pursuant to subsection 20 (4) of the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*, requires universities to provide their Board with annual reporting that includes information about their Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate programs by January 31, 2026.

Ontario Tech University continues to advance its commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and equitable campus environment through a series of anti-hate and anti-racism initiatives. Building on the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, the University has undertaken coordinated efforts to raise awareness, strengthen accountability, and support those affected by incidents of racism and hate. These efforts include the development of a new Guideline on Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents, designed to complement the Respectful Campus Policy by providing clear definitions, reporting pathways, and support options for those impacted.

The HRO is in the process of expanding education and outreach initiatives that promote anti-racist learning and dialogue. Through partnerships with student groups, academic units, and community organizations, Ontario Tech continues to foster meaningful conversations and collective action to counter discrimination and hate in all its forms.

These initiatives reflect Ontario Tech's ongoing dedication to ensuring that every member of its community feels valued, respected, and safe—and to embedding anti-racism and anti-hate principles in the University's policies, culture, and daily practices.

During the reporting period there were 15 matters categorized solely under Creed, 5 matters categorized under Race Related Grounds (Ancestry, Ethnic Origin, Place of Origin, Citizenship, Colour and/or Race), and 4 matters that are categorized under both Creed and Race Related Grounds.

Of the 24 matters received by the HRO related to Creed and Race Related Grounds, 8 involved creed accommodation consultations and assessments, there were 3 additional consultations, and 6 were related to alleged discrimination.

The remaining 7 matters were classified as harassment and breakdown as follows:

- Creed: 3 alleged Islamophobia – 2 from students (verbal) and one from external (social media)
- Creed: 1 from student – alleged Antisemitism (verbal)
- Creed: 1 from student – alleged Proselytizing (verbal)
- Race Related Grounds: 1 from student – alleged Anti-Black Racism (online)
- Race Related Grounds: 1 from student – alleged Anti-Asian Racism (social media)

5 reports did not proceed after an assessment, 1 report was successfully settled to the satisfaction of the complainant and 1 was investigated. The investigation was completed over a 2-month period and concluded that a student breached the Respectful Campus Policy, resulting in discipline.

PART V CONCLUSIONS

We conclude by acknowledging the numerous University Members who assist the HRO in our goal to create and reinforce an inclusive campus for all. Preventing harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence is a collective effort, and everyone at the University has a role to play. We continue to encourage all University Members to act with respect and to call out inappropriate behaviour if it occurs. Together, we can continue to ensure a positive campus environment.

APPENDIX A – STUDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORTS, SERVICES & PROGRAMMING³

1. Advisory Committee on Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy & Program

The Advisory Committee on Student Sexual Violence Prevention and Support, established in December 2017, is mandated to ensure the university's Student Sexual Violence Policy and Program are reviewed on a regular basis and continuously improved upon. This year, the Committee was composed of 6 students, 1 representative from the Ontario Tech Student Union, 8 staff from across the university, 1 community partner and 1 alumnus.

2. Counselling Supports and Accommodations:

Support Workers, through the university's Student Mental Health Services, support students who have experienced sexual violence, including working with Student Accessibility Services to ensure academic accommodations are put in place when necessary. 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.

3. Mandatory Training Modules:

New students are required to take online training modules designed by the HRO to ensure students know what student sexual violence is, how to obtain support and services if they experience sexual violence, and how to report a concern. The HRO organizes a communications and incentive strategy to promote student completion of the modules.

The modules are also mandatory for faculty members and staff and ensure that everyone in the campus community has the same general knowledge about supports and services available to students who experience sexual violence.

4. Awareness and Programming

Efforts to raise awareness and educate students are also driven by the Student Engagement and Equity Team in the Office of the Deputy Provost. Initiatives to raise awareness and educate on sexual violence included:

- **#WeGetConsent Awareness Week Workshops:** At the beginning of the Fall semester, Student Engagement and Equity hosts our #WeGetConsent Awareness Week which focuses on educating our campus community about sexual violence prevention and our institution's sexual violence policy. This year, 8 workshops were delivered between September 16-20, 2024.

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

- **#WeGetConsent Online Campaign:** The #WeGetConsent online campaign continued this year with several initiatives throughout the year aimed at educating students about consent and sexual violence prevention. Programming included social media posts and scavenger hunts aimed at continuing the consent conversation online and encouraging students to share their own understanding of consent and ways they can be upstanders should they observe anyone causing harm.
- **#LetsTalk about Safer Sex:** Health Promotion's Peer Wellness Education Team ran a sexual health outreach booth during a collaborative STI testing drive with Durham College. The goal of this campaign is to teach students about safer sex practices. Peer Wellness Educators cover consent, STIs, methods of STI protection and provide examples of common types of contraception.
- **RISE: Sexual Violence Prevention:** The RISE (Respecting Inclusivity and Supporting Equity) program, offered by the Student Engagement and Equity Team, is a series of workshops focusing on the development of by-stander intervention strategies. Students are encouraged to attend these workshops to earn a RISE Certificate officialised by the University. RISE Topics include: two mandatory workshops - RISE: Let's Talk Equity and RISE: First Peoples. As well, seven elective workshops - RISE: Anti-Ableism, RISE: Anti-Racism, RISE: Consent and Sexual Violence Prevention, RISE: Feminism, RISE: Health Equity, RISE: Sexual Orientation, and RISE: Trans Identities. A total of 23 students participated in the RISE workshops in 2024-2025.
- **Pride Space:** In collaboration with the Ontario Tech Pride Club, Pride Space is a place for all 2SLGBTQ+ students and allies to come together and create a space of belonging within the university community. This space was offered in Fall 2024, a total of 68 students participated.