

# Two assaults at York end violent week at five Ontario universities

SARAH MILLAR  
CUP Ontario Bureau Chief

TORONTO (CUP)—In the first week of classes, there have been eight sexual assaults at five university campuses across Ontario.

The first occurred on 1 September at Carleton University in Ottawa, leaving one woman in hospital with a broken jaw and a dislocated shoulder. On 3 September, there were other separate attacks at Laurentian University in Sudbury, where women were attacked on a trail near the University.

The following evening in Waterloo at Wilfrid Laurier University, a woman was sexually assaulted while dancing at a frosh party. Also on 4 September, a young woman was sexually assaulted by two fellow students from the University of Ottawa while on a trip to neighbouring Gatineau, Quebec.

Then, on 7 September, two students at York University were sexually assaulted as they slept in their residence rooms. The two victims of the assault at York were treated in hospital and released; Toronto Police are looking for two men in their early 20s.

Two students have also been detained in relation to the attack in Gatineau; all of the other assailants remain at large.

The perpetrator in the attack at Carleton University on 1 September may have been caught on camera, but cannot be identified due to poor quality video surveillance.

"The video we have ... is [taken from] a great distance, so when we zoom in, it becomes grainy, and that doesn't help with identifying the person," explained Constable Isabelle Lemieux, a spokesperson for the Ottawa police.

"This [video] gives us a location and

a time," she said. "But it doesn't help with identifying the person."

Following the assaults, several universities are stepping up their security.

Alex Bilyk, a spokesman for York University, said they have since boosted safety precautions there by increasing residence staff and security patrols. Officers from the Toronto Police Service are also patrolling the campus to supplement normal security patrols.

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ALEX BILYK  
YORK UNIVERSITY SPOKESMAN

Meanwhile, Carleton administration has conducted special presentations to residence students to make the community more aware of safety procedures on campus, and officials are discouraging students from going out alone.

"I guess the clear message here, really the beneficial one, is to give a warning to students to be on the look-out, to watch out for their safety," Bilyk said. "A lot of them are leaving home for the first time, living away from home for the first time, and they better understand that their environment has changed."

Ashley McPherson, a first-year English student at York and a resident where the assaults took place, said the incident made her and her roommate look at their safety precautions more closely, and prompted them to start locking their room's door at night.

"During frosh week, you hear, 'Oh just leave your door open; people will just walk in to say hi,' ... [and] you think, 'Oh, I'll leave my door open, and people will come by and introduce themselves.' So maybe they should tell people after a certain amount of time, 'Shut your door, and lock it,'" McPherson said.

Police are still uncertain how the two attackers at York got into the residence, which requires a swipe card to open the front door. However, McPherson said that students often hold the door open for others, making it easy for an outsider to get in.

Detective Christine Long of the Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit, who is investigating the assaults at York, said that while the eight incidents across the province are isolated, she believes there is a higher risk of assault at university campuses because people feel safer on campus. In reality, she said, students are no safer on campus than anywhere else.

"I think there's a higher risk. It's a different environment than a city, which is a blend of both community and business, whereas a university is kind of like a big house that teaches," she explained.

Long added that while universities pose a different kind of risk, more sexual assaults occur in the Greater Toronto Area than on all university campuses combined. She stressed the importance of individuals keeping themselves safe and not allowing an opportunity for an attack.

"Any crime can be committed if you have means, motive, and opportunity—so don't create an opportunity for anybody," Long said.

—With files from Diana Mehta (the Charlatan) and Precious Yutangco (Excalibur).

# McGill divests from Big Tobacco

## BoG resolution compels University to sell off \$4.5 million in stocks

ADRIENNE KLASA  
The McGill Daily

MONTREAL (CUP)—Under pressure from graduate students, McGill University has decided to divest from tobacco and tobacco-related industries.

The McGill Board of Governors (BoG) decided on 22 May to sell \$4.5 million in tobacco stocks, following a recommendation from its Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSAR).

The CAMSR proposal came in response to a student campaign that began last April, spearheaded by the BoG Post-Graduate Students' Society representative, Mehdi El Ouali.

"Tobacco is the only product on the market that kills when it is used as intended by the manufacturer," El Ouali said. "No safe use exists for tobacco."

The BoG resolution compels McGill's investment managers to divest from any corporation that derives more than 10 per cent of its revenues from the manufacture and production of tobacco products, according to an email from McGill Secretary-General Johanne Pelletier.

El Ouali gathered 549 signatures in support of divestment and submitted a report to CAMSR outlining the

socially injurious nature of tobacco investment. According to El Ouali, the signatures were collected from students, staff, alumni, and administration in just 48 hours.

"This is a very exciting move," said Ed Hudson, a councillor with the Post-Graduate Students' Society who was also involved in the campaign. "This is the first time that the provisions of CAMSR have been tried out ... and the results give the impression that the Board of Governors takes their suggestions half-way seriously."

CAMSAR was first created in the 1980s in response to student pressure on McGill to divest from apartheid-era South Africa, but was inactive until an overhaul of its mandate in 2004. The Committee reviews questions raised by members of the McGill community about possible "social injury" caused by the University's investments.

CAMSAR last made a recommendation to BoG in 2006, regarding investments linked to Myanmar, a country governed by a military regime. The BoG responded with a resolution condemning companies that cause social injury in Burma, but didn't divest from any companies doing business in the Southeast Asian country. A 2002 student-initiated tobacco divestment campaign at McGill was unsuccessful.

McGill's tobacco-related holdings, which included stocks in an assortment of interrelated companies including Philip Morris and Rothmans, accounted for only 0.5 per cent of the University's total endowment.

Hudson argued that the divestment was a "no-brainer," because it doesn't represent a significant financial sacrifice to the University, but still sends a clear message of disapproval to the tobacco industry.

The University of Toronto dropped its \$10-million investment in tobacco last March under pressure from a student organization called E-Butt. Many other universities disposed of their tobacco stocks long ago, including Harvard in 1989 and Stanford in 1998.

"Partially, what we are doing is catching up," Hudson said. "It was time that McGill [took] the social role of its investments seriously."

However, Pelletier insisted that this divestment will not set a precedent for future investment decisions.

"Each expression of concern from the community must be submitted by way of a petition and an accompanying brief and will be evaluated on its own merits," she said, adding that the tobacco industry "represents an exceptional, if not unique, case of social injury."

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