



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA



Annual Report 2022-23

**Office of Safe Disclosure
and Human Rights
Office of Vice-Provost
(Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)**

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Executive Summary

The Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (OSDHR) provides the university community with a safe, neutral and confidential space to hear about disclosures related to discrimination, harassment (including bullying), accommodations, health and safety, ethical concerns, financial mismanagement and other possible misconduct or wrongdoing.

OSDHR continued to experience a higher demand for its services in the reporting year of July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023.

OSDHR experienced a 10% increase in disclosures compared to last year and a 20% increase compared to two years prior.

YEAR	Number of Disclosures Received
2022–23	232
2021–22	208
2020–21	185

The increase in disclosures is likely due to a multitude of factors, such: participating in university-wide events, student orientation sessions and collaborative education opportunities within various faculties/departments. Overall, OSDHR's visibility across the institution has increased in the past year. While this is a positive development as more people are seeking advice and support, it increases the workload pressure.

In November 2022, the Office of the Provost appointed Dr. Carrie Smith as the new Vice-Provost of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (VP, EDI) and OSDHR was integrated into the Office of the VP, EDI. Under Dr. Smith's leadership, OSDHR aligned its goals and mandate to the broader VP, EDI portfolio. The VP-EDI has also provided a means for OSDHR to escalate more systemic human rights and equity-related concerns.

OSDHR has seen a 40% increase in the number of education sessions it has provided to the university community during 2022–23 compared to the previous reporting periods (2020–22).

YEAR	Number of Education Sessions	Number of Participants
2022-23	23	898
2021-22	14	375
2020-21	14	349

Overall OSDHR has maintained a steady increase of engagement with the University community through disclosures, education and subject matter expertise/consultation.



The Role of OSDHR

OSDHR is unique in that it provides services to all members of the university community such as: students, faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, visitors, and volunteers.

The role of OSDHR is to provide disclosers with appropriate advice and referrals. It is always the decision of the person disclosing to decide how they wish to proceed or whether they wish to initiate any formal processes.

The office also works to promote and steward human rights, equity, diversity and inclusion at the university through the multiple education sessions and workshops.



Disclosures: 2022–2023

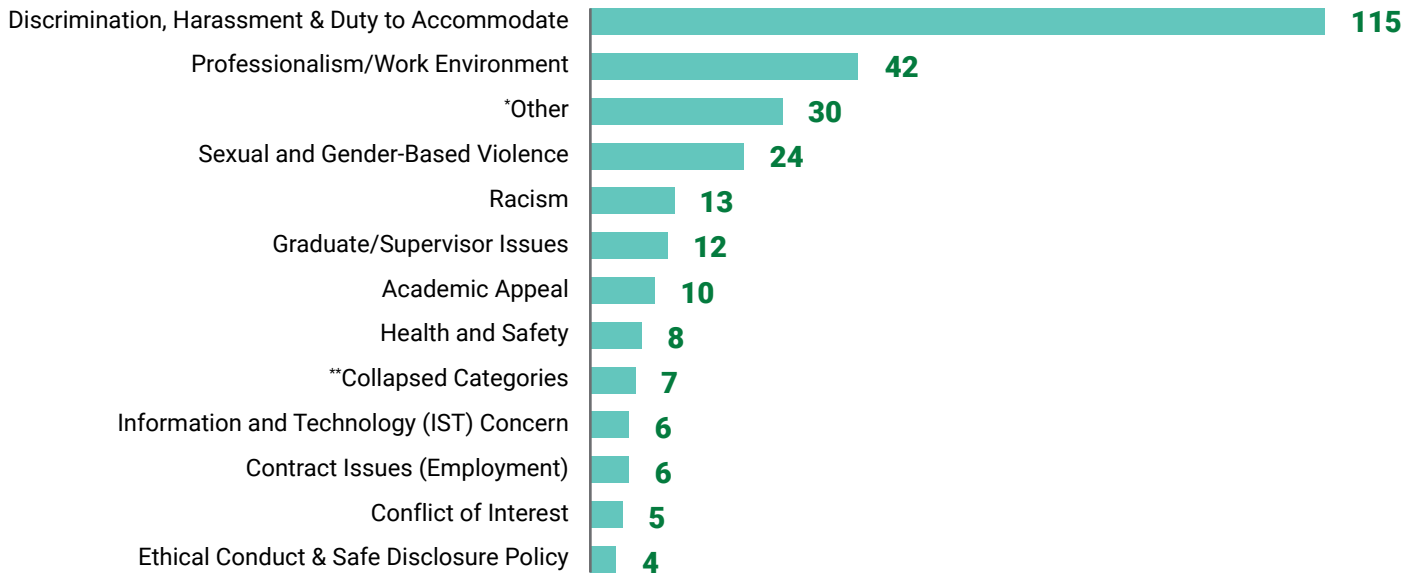
Overall Summary of Disclosures

Individuals may disclose multiple concerns during their disclosure; therefore, the type of disclosure may be captured in multiple categories listed in the charts below. The discloser is always the decision maker in terms of what information they would like to share with OSDHR. As such, OSDHR is only able to track the types of disclosures and specific details when the discloser has provided these.

In 2022–23, the office received 232 disclosures compared to 208 in the previous year. This represents a **10% increase** of disclosures.

Please note that in the charts below some categories have been collapsed to protect privacy.

Types of Disclosures: 2022-23



*Other reflects disclosures that did not fall within OSDHR’s standard categories such as off-campus events, social media, etc.

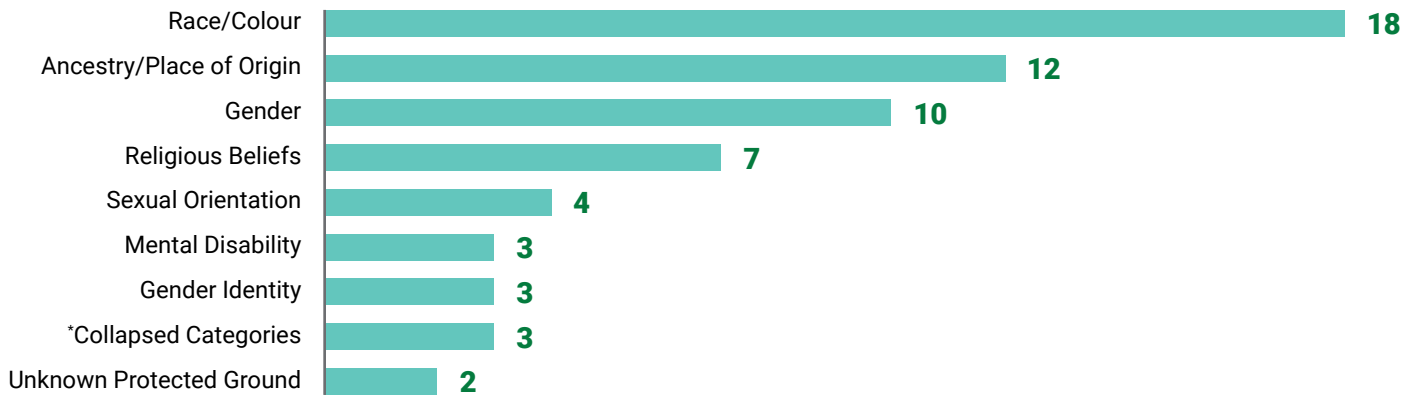
**Collapsed categories includes: professionalism, theft/fraud, information and privacy related, human research ethics, and intellectual property

Disclosures of Discrimination

The fifteen protected grounds listed under the [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate \(DHDA\) policy](#) are as follows: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, sexual orientation, age, political beliefs, or any other groups as amended from time to time.

Discrimination based on the protected grounds of: race/colour, ancestry/place of origin, and gender were the top three areas of discrimination disclosed in 2022–23. This remains comparable to previous years (2020–22).

Discrimination based on Protected Grounds



*Collapsed Categories include: age, marital status, and pregnancy

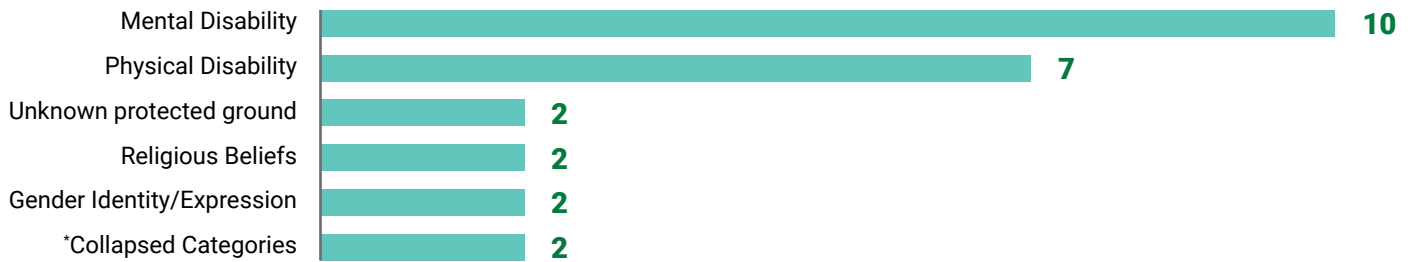


Disclosures Regarding Accommodation

Compared to previous years, OSDHR received a higher number of disclosures in 2022–23 regarding accommodation concerns based on the protected grounds of mental disability and physical disability.

Please note that in some cases, disclosers did not share specific details regarding their accommodation concerns. These situations are reflected as “unknown protected grounds,” in the chart below.

Duty to Accommodate: Protected Grounds

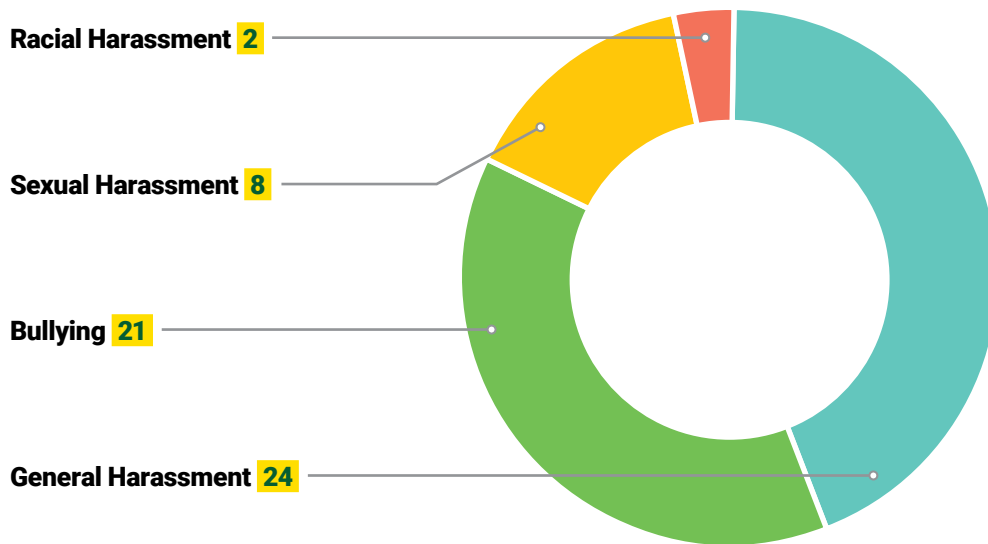


Disclosures of Harassment

Please refer to the [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate \(DHDA\) policy](#) for the definitions of harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, and racial harassment. OSDHR is only able to track the type of harassment when the discloser wishes to share details.

In the chart below, please note that sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination. Racial harassment is also a form of discrimination based on the protected ground of race/colour. General harassment is harassment that is **not** linked to a protected ground.

Types of Harassment

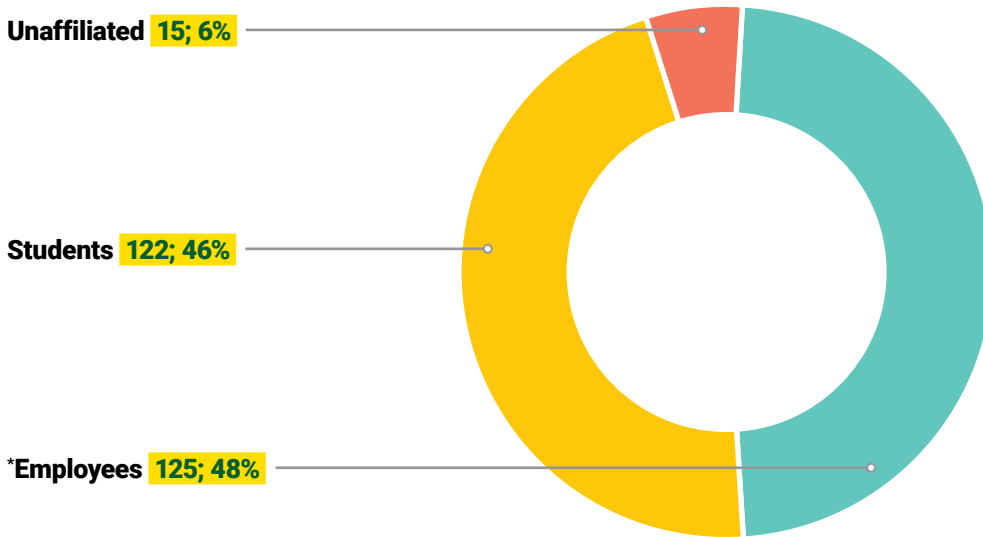


Discloser Demographics

The chart below provides a percentage breakdown of the three primary categories of disclosers: Employees, Students, and those Unaffiliated with the University of Alberta.

OSDHR can receive disclosures from more than one individual, for example, two students may choose to come to the office together to disclose a concern. In 2022–23 received a fairly equal number of disclosers who were students versus staff. This is comparable to OSDHR’s previous reporting periods.

Overview of Disclosers



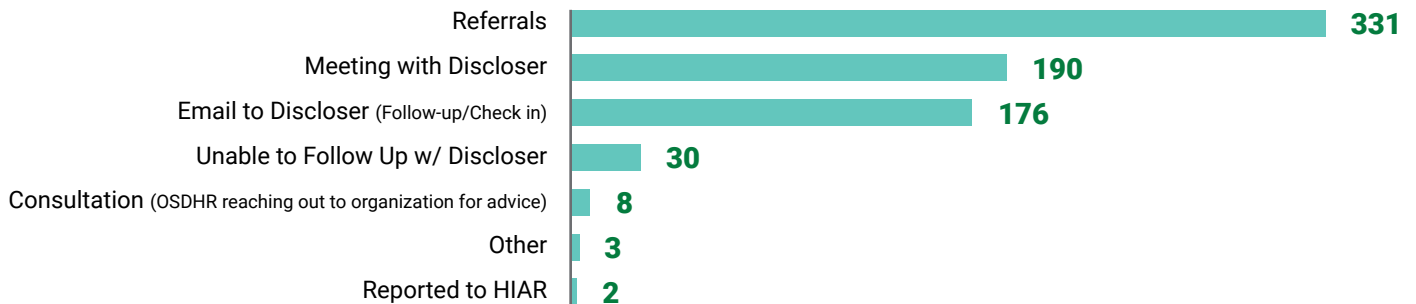
*Employees include all groups of employees (faculty, support staff, management, and excluded staff, etc.)

Overview: Disclosure Actions

OSDHR typically meets with a discloser via phone, in-person, or virtually to gain a comprehensive understanding of the concerns being brought forward. OSDHR then provides advice and referrals to the discloser for their next steps and action.

The chart below provides an overview of all the actions or steps that OSDHR has taken with a disclosure. Please note that emails to disclosers capture the amount of follow-ups, sharing resources (policies, procedures, etc.) and general checking in with disclosers.

Overview: Disclosure Actions



Referrals

Multiple referrals may be provided to a discloser in a meeting, however it depends on the nature of the concerns that the discloser shares. In 2022–23, OSDHR provided 331 referrals to disclosers. The highest number of referrals (39) was made to Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment (HRHSE), followed by the Dean of Students Office (28). Given the recent focus on a [Culture of Care](#), there has been more disclosures and general interest in health and safety in the workplace, and more specifically on psychological safety.

Referrals



*Senior Leadership – includes Chairs, Associate Chairs, Assistant Deans, Vice-Deans

**Collapsed Categories – includes Accessibility Resources, External Agencies (CMHA Distress Line, SACE, etc.), Student Legal Services, PDFA, Information & Privacy Office, Research Ethics Office, International Services Centre

*** Other – OSDHR provides specific referrals depending on the nature of the concern, such as to Alberta Health Services or the Edmonton Community Legal Centre

Meetings

In 2022–23, OSDHR had a total of 190 meetings with disclosers. In addition to meetings, OSDHR sent 176 emails to disclosers in 2022–23 to provide information, resources, referrals and to also follow up with them regarding their concerns.

Meetings with Disclosers



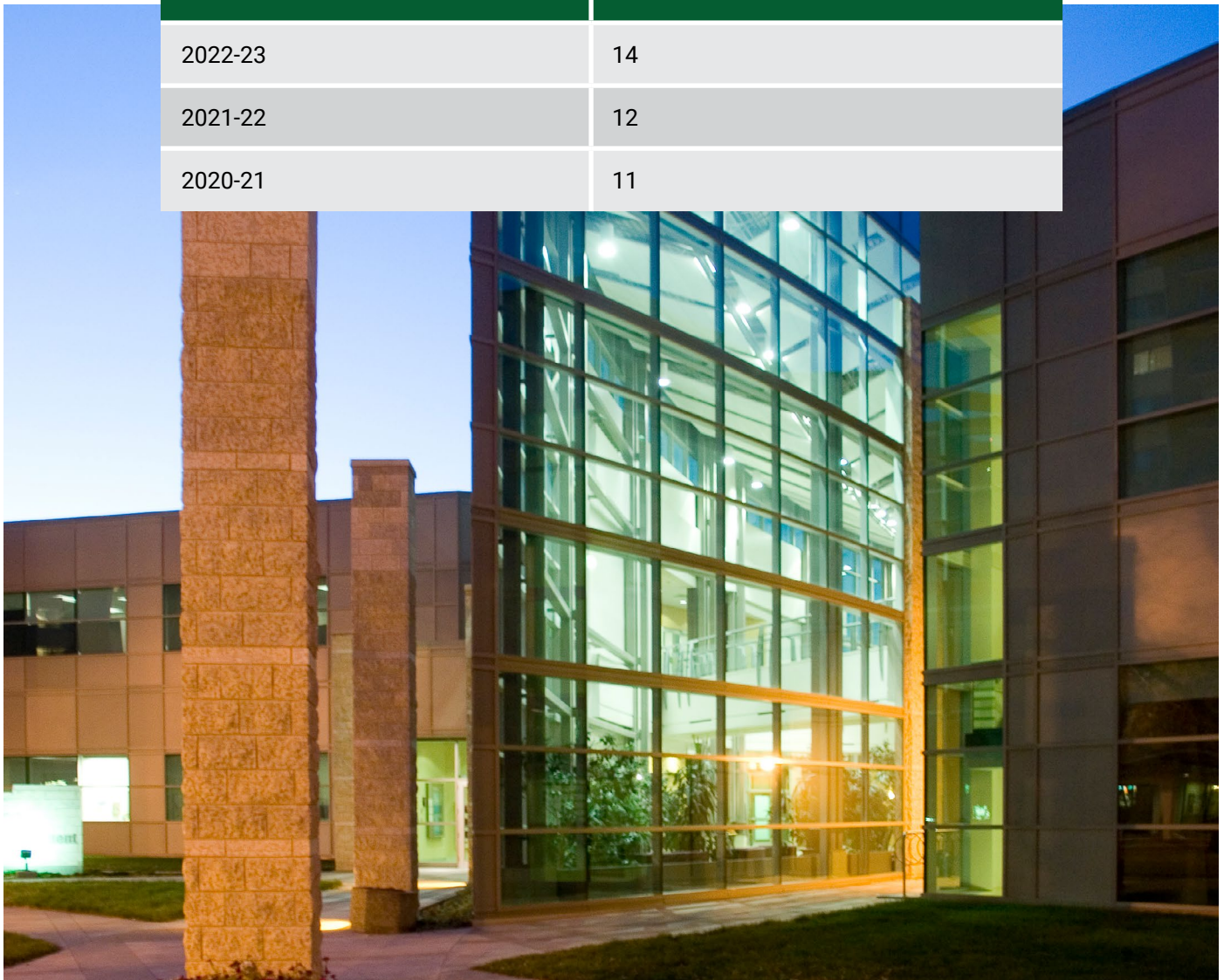
Consultations

OSDHR provides consultations to staff, faculty, student service providers and senior leaders on policies, procedures, best practices or legislation such as the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

In these contexts, the requestor is not disclosing a specific situation, instead they are requesting broader information and/or advice on policies, procedures, best practices or legislation.

OSDHR had a similar number of consultations (14) for 2022–23 compared to previous years.

YEAR	Number of Consultations
2022-23	14
2021-22	12
2020-21	11



Article 18 Intake Officer Role

The Advisor in OSDHR is also the Intake Officer for Article 18 complaints as outlined in the [Non-Academic Staff Association \(NASA\) Collective Agreement](#). The Intake Officer is a person designated by the Employer and endorsed by the Union who is skilled in the assessment of discrimination and harassment complaints. The Intake Officer reviews complaints to determine if they fall within the definition of harassment and/or discrimination, are complete (as outlined in Appendix G #2 of the Common Provisions of the NASA Collective Agreement) and are timely. If a complaint meets the criteria, the Intake Officer sends the complaint to the Case Manager for further next steps.

In 2022–23, seven complaints were received by the Intake Officer. Out of the seven complaints, three were accepted and moved to the next stage of case management.

YEAR	Number of Article 18 Complaints
2022-23	7
2021-22	9
2020-21	3



Education

OSDHR continues to meet its mandate of developing and implementing an educational framework supportive of human rights. This year, OSDHR provided 23 educational workshops/training to 898 participants, which surpasses the office's reach in the last two reporting periods combined (375 participants in 2020/2021 and 349 participants in 2021/2022).

OSDHR's increased visibility is a result of collaborating with faculties and educators through various education opportunities and the launch of Discourse Human Rights webinar series.

YEAR	Number of Workshops/Training	Number of Participants
2022-23	23	898
2021-22	14	349
2020-21	14	375

Faculty Education Requests

As a result of increased visibility of the office, OSDHR was able to provide 11 workshops, specifically requested by various staff and faculty leaders across the University. The number of requests have nearly quadrupled compared to previous years (3 requests in 2021–22). OSDHR received requests for the following workshops: Human Rights (5); followed by Receiving & Responding to Disclosures (3); then Anti Racism (2) and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (1).

After receiving a considerable number of requests last year for a workshop on anti-racism, OSDHR developed a 90 minute workshop titled, "How to be Anti-Racist". Since the launch of the workshop in February 2023, it has reached the maximum number of participants per session within hours of being advertised on the Employee digest. As a result, OSDHR will be extending this workshop to students throughout the 2023–24 academic year.

Discourse Human Rights

Discourse Human Rights is a webinar series which was inspired by the need to reach audiences who find informal conversations, storytelling and discussions more suited to their learning needs – a strategy that is rooted in decolonial, equitable and inclusive practices.

Discourse Human Rights provided an opportunity for members of our community to: gain insight into the work of people championing human rights within our institution; reflect on the systemic and procedural challenges/barriers in actualizing human rights, equity and inclusion; and collectively identify strategies for removing these barriers.

OSDHR hosted three Discourse Human Rights sessions for 2022–23 reporting period and the selected topics aligned with national and international days of recognition including: National Day for Truth & Reconciliation; 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence; and International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia.

The participants included:

- Dr. Crystal Fraser, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Native Studies and Faculty of Arts
- Deb Eerkes, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator
- Dr. Glynnis Lieb, Executive Director of the Fyrefly Institute.

What We Heard

- “Outside of the presentation itself, I appreciated the email beforehand clarifying what to expect and the expectations for those who were attending (zoom etiquette). I prefer to listen, so knowing that there wouldn’t be any cold calls helped me feel secure before joining the session.”
- “I came out of the meeting feeling empowered and motivated to study more. You’re also setting a great example of how to battle against racism in a kind way. I think there are so many layers to unpacking racism and it’s a stressful, exhausting, and discouraging process. However, you shifted it into a more meaningful process. The process is always going to be hard because it feels like you are against the world, but I am hopeful that if everyone takes the time and effort to truly engage in becoming anti-racist, we can help improve the world one day at a time.”
- “I feel so blessed to have been in such a supportive, safe, and open space. Clear examples, personal experiences and a lot of vulnerability.”
- “Sagal is such a wonderful presenter and creates a safe space for everyone - I always enjoy her workshops! I also really appreciate how the information was synthesized into digestible material - topics like this can feel overwhelming, so it is great to come away with a handful of very clear tools that we can use in our professional and personal lives to continue learning and growing.”

Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights

OSDHR continues to serve as a member of the selection committee to identify and plan one of our institution's most notable annual events, the [Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights](#).

On November 7, 2022 the University of Alberta invited Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a member of the Gitksan First Nation, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and professor at McGill University, to speak on colonialism, its legacy and the reality of Canada's promise of Truth & Reconciliation. The lecture was held in-person and streamed online for community members to access. There was a large turnout for the event, despite challenging weather conditions.



Current Challenges

Given the increased visibility of the office and workload in the last year, OSDHR's main focus has been on maintaining service levels. This has been a challenge to maintain for a number of reasons:

INCREASE OF DISCLOSURES

OSDHR experienced a 10% increase of disclosures compared to last year and a 20% increase compared to two years prior. (2020–21).

COMPLEXITY OF DISCLOSURES

There has been an increase in the complexity of disclosures that OSDHR is receiving. The complexity of these disclosures has required more resources, follow-ups and consultations with other stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

OSDHR also sits on multiple committees, councils and pilots in order to provide advice and expertise to institutional initiatives and projects. Given the role of OSDHR in providing a safe and confidential space to university community members, it has been involved in the university's initiatives surrounding sexual and gender-based violence.

Additional initiatives that OSDHR has been involved in include:

- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Council
- Ad Hoc Student Group Initiatives
- Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment (HRHSE) Initiatives (i.e. Safety Summits)
- The [Options Navigation Network](#)
- Workplace Response Coordinators Pilot
- EDI Scoping Committee

INCREASE OF EDUCATION REQUESTS

The increase in education requests from OSDHR has also led to constrained resources. OSDHR has tried to effectively manage the volume of disclosures it is receiving, while responding to an increase in requests for educational workshops/sessions.

Although OSDHR is currently meeting demands, there is potential for the office to be unable to do so if disclosures and education requests from the university community continue to increase. OSDHR is currently staffed by 2 Full Time Equivalents (FTE), and given the nature and volume of this work, both staff members are at risk for burnout.

For 2023–24, OSDHR would benefit from additional staffing to assist with the increased workload and the additional initiatives the office has been requested to be involved in.