



Elise Graham, left, Jane Herbert, Anna Dubinski and Heather Chamberlin talk about safe sex and rape culture during a Consent Week event. (Photos by Lucie Edwardson)

King's hosts panel to define consent

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Heather Chamberlin graduated from Acadia University 10 years ago and says “it’s interesting to see that we are dealing with the same shit.”

She recalls a frosh week activity where the frosh leaders asked them to act out sexual positions.

“Of course,” she says, “if it was doggy style I was on my hands and knees because I was a girl and had been paired with a guy.”

A panel discussion with the goal of opening up the conversation regarding rape culture on campus was held at the University of King’s College on Tuesday as part of Consent Week.

The King’s Student Union, in conjunction with the NSCAD University Student Union, put on the week-long event.

The panel included Heather Chamberlin, a sex educator at Venus Envy, Jane Herbert of the Trust Women Project, Elise Graham, the equity and accessibility officer at the Dalhousie Student Union and Anna Dubinski, president of King’s Student Union.

The panelists discussed local issues regarding rape culture, including the frosh week rape chant, in which leaders chant “Y is for your sister ... U is for Underage, N is for no consent ... Saint Mary’s we like them young.”

This was followed up with recent sexually and racially offensive tweets out of Saint Mary’s University football team including tweets such as “bitch get on yo’ knees,” and “cut your face off and wear it while I’m fucking your mother #blackviking.”



Students can fill out posters with what they expect of their sexual partners.

Although Venus Envy is always educating and hosting discussions on the topic of sexual consent, Chamberlin says there has been an increase in demand for discussions outside the store in the months since the Saint Mary’s incidents occurred.

Chamberlin says that to her the most important issues not being discussed are those surrounding alcohol and consent, as well as ways to solve these problems.

This year, at King’s frosh week, Chamberlin gave a sex talk to first-year students, touching on a variety of topics including safe sex, fellatio and consent.

On Monday she was the speaker for the Consent Week kick off “Erotic Talk, Dirty Talk for Everyone.”

The event taught safe ways for all genders to take part in erotic and dirty talk, how to respect your partner and ways to clearly express yourself.

Dubinski explained that during her time as president, she has come to realize how important it is she educates herself about rape culture and sexual consent. She

believes it is the most important issue she has tackled.

Dubinski focused on campus issues regarding the encouragement of rape culture and how these issues can be openly and safely discussed.

She said students can speak with KSU staff about solutions, or team up with other organizations that offer individual support.

Last year the KSU put out a video called “Consent is Sexy.” This year, the KSU gave students the opportunity to express themselves through posters.

Students who wanted to participate were given white posters that either said “PLEASE DO:” or “PLEASE DON’T:” followed by a blank space for students to write their feelings. The bottom of the posters said “KEEP IT SAFE, KEEP IT CONSENSUAL.”

Some responses included “PLEASE DON’T: Re-tweet Bad Advice Dog on Twitter,” and “PLEASE DO: ask me what I like.”

Dubinski discussed the stigmas attached to individuals who speak out against jokes or comments that encourage rape culture, and

how they are often told they “can’t take a joke” or “are not fun.”

Herbert discussed the No Means No campaign.

The campaign “was so instrumental and so important, and has really moved on, deepened that message and moved on to enthusiastic consent, yes means yes.”

Graham, the final panelist, spoke about a recent campaign, Calling You Out, launched by the South House, a gender justice centre with an all-inclusive policy for sexual orientations.

“The campaign began as a response to the chants at Saint Mary’s University and people really wanting to respond to that

not just with an interview but with a sustained effort,” says Graham.

The goal of the Calling You Out campaign is to allow members of the Halifax community to voice ways they see rape culture being condoned and perpetuated.

Everyone is encouraged to submit stories documenting their experiences where rape culture was present and nothing was done about it.

“The idea is to begin discussions that make people feel safe and open, and that shows them there are places they can go to talk and be listened to,” says Dubinski.

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Thanks for reading and look for us again in November.