

New NUS unit to help victims of sexual misconduct

Victim Care Unit has 5 care officers who will interact with any student seeking assistance

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A new unit dedicated to supporting National University of Singapore (NUS) students who are victims of sexual misconduct is now up and running.

NUS provost Ho Teck Hua announced the opening of the Victim Care Unit in a circular to students yesterday.

The unit – the first of its kind in a local university here – is headed by Associate Professor Sandy Lim of NUS Business School. She has done

research in the area of disrespectful or uncivil behaviour, including sexual misconduct.

Prior to her academic career, Prof Lim was a field psychologist at the Ministry of Defence and has experience providing psychological support to agencies during crises and national emergencies.

The unit was set up after a female undergraduate in April made public on Instagram her unhappiness with how NUS dealt with an incident of her being filmed by a fellow student in a shower at Eusoff Hall.

The posting sparked discussion on how sexual misconduct should

be handled in institutions of higher learning.

Various organisations, including the Association of Women for Action and Research and several universities overseas, were consulted in the process of setting up the unit.

In his e-mail to students, Professor Ho said: “(The Victim Care Unit) offers a safe space for victims to seek support from a team of trained professionals who are experienced in working with victims of sexual misconduct.”

The unit has five staff, or care officers, who will interact with any stu-

dent who seeks help, as well as administrative and research staff.

For a start, the team will be working on a survey of the university’s student population to better understand how prevalent sexual misconduct is at NUS, and to find out how often cases go unreported.

Prof Lim, in an article posted on the university’s website yesterday, said: “Relying on just statistics from campus security or the police is usually not very accurate, as these are just the reported cases.

“We are here to give (victims) a helping hand, so that they have

someone to talk to in a safe environment, and to help them along in the recovery process.

“As long as they are students of NUS, they can come to us for support, regardless of who the perpetrators are or where the incidents happened.”

The incidents can have happened off campus, in another country or in the past. Students will continue to receive help after they graduate, if necessary.

The care officers were chosen for their experience in helping victims from multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, identities and orientations.

NOT THE WHOLE PICTURE

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ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SANDY LIM, head of the Victim Care Unit, whose team will be working on a survey of the student population to better understand how prevalent sexual misconduct is at NUS, and to find out how often cases go unreported.



Associate Professor Sandy Lim (at right) heads the Victim Care Unit, which was set up after a female undergrad in April made public on Instagram her unhappiness with how NUS dealt with an incident of her being filmed by a fellow student in a shower at Eusoff Hall. PHOTO: NUS

They also have experience as counsellors and working with the police.

Victims can contact the unit via a 24-hour hotline, a confidential online contact form or e-mail.

They will then be connected to the care officers, who will work with them to identify pressing needs and resources.

If needed, the care officers will liaise with other units or agencies on their behalf, including referring them to counsellors.

The Victim Care Unit’s website is at <https://victimcare.nus.edu.sg>

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