

Morganna Sampson crushes the competition and becomes the next FSU president



Fanshawe voted and Morganna Sampson is the college's 2017-2018 president.

CREDIT: JUSTIN FOX

MELISSA NOVACASKA
INTERROBANG

Fanshawe students voted and Morganna Sampson is the new Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) president 2017-2018.

Sampson, who has been involved with the FSU for two years and is currently VP Entertainment, will begin her one year term on May 1, taking over the reins from current

president Carlie Forsythe.

Though it was a tough competition, Sampson beat out two other candidates, current VP Internal Affairs Kevin Kaisar and first time runner Josh Mullan.

Sampson, who had the presidential bug since grade nine decided that this was her year to make things happen and run for presidency.

"It's always been a dream of mine. I'm very passionate about student politics and about helping

people in general and making the world a better place," Sampson said. "I started the dream I guess of wanting to run for president and never really went ahead and did it, and now we're sitting in about my third year of post-secondary and I decided that now is the time, I'm going to run for president and go big or go home."

Sampson said she's amazed and so thankful for the support she's been given over the campaign pe-

riod, and is looking forward to putting her campaign platform into place, but not before throwing a get-together in celebration of her victory and all those who helped her along the way.

Sampson believes it was her three specific items on her platform that made her stand out the most among the other candidates.

"[They] were very diverse and things that students really needed and I was really trying to focus

what I wanted to do for my campaign on what students wanted," Sampson said.

Sampson's platform is focused on the three aspects including student space, more work opportunities or less barriers to obtaining jobs on campus and allergen-free friendly foods. The latter is the first point Sampson believes she can work on first.

"[I think I'm] probably going to start with the menus because I think that's the simplest thing I could tackle. [It] would be taking a look at all of the food options that we have and bringing in new food options for all," Sampson said.

Sampson also credited her bubbly personality as something that helped her win the election, but that she's also happy people have "been so receptive to me as a person".

Though Kaisar and Mullan did not win, they both had some final words for the students.

"I wouldn't say I'm sad. I would say I'm happy for the other people running and for Morganna, who won. I've learned a lot, and I feel that I've met lots of really nice people and I'm glad I did it, and congratulations to Morganna," Mullan said.

Kaisar, who is an FSU veteran had mixed emotions.

"It feels a little disappointing to have lost. I feel I put in a lot of effort in this campaign. I really did think I was the best candidate for this position, being so experienced and my love for this school. I just think Morganna may have worked harder than I did and her platform may have resonated with the students, because ultimately it is their choice and I have to respect that decision."

To find out the full election results visit fsu.ca/elections.

Raised awareness of sexual violence increases province-wide need for counsellors

ANGELA MCINNES
INTERROBANG

Over three years ago, an anonymous Fanshawe student was sexually assaulted by someone she didn't know.

As she subsequently pursued a legal case against her attacker, she sought out support from the Sexual Assault Centre of London (SACL) in the summer of 2016. After an initial consultation with a counsellor, she was promised a wait of approximately five weeks before she was to receive regular weekly non-emergency counselling sessions.

After following up several times with the centre in the weeks after her initial appointment, the student remains on the waitlist as of March 2017.

She wonders what the reason for the extended wait may be, and if there are other area survivors experiencing similar frustrations.

"Why am I still on this waiting list? How many women are in front of me waiting? This is heartbreaking that there are this many survivors trying to get help and that the waitlist is this long," the student said.

Although she has been informed of other options including finding a paid counsellor or utilizing the centre's 24-hour hotline and emergency counselling sessions, the student stresses the importance of the con-

sistency attached to speaking in person with a trained professional on a regular basis.

"I needed that security with one person, not a phone call with someone. It's different when you're talking to that one person, but on the phone, you hang up and they're gone," she said. "I don't want to retell my story to someone who has never heard it before because it's hard for me to even verbalize it."

At SACL, AnnaLise Trudell, PhD, manager of education, training and research said that the student's lengthier wait is uncommon, and that she hopes to support her in determining its exact cause.

According to Trudell, the speed of intake depends on an individual's level of crisis, but the average wait time for weekly counselling is typically three to five weeks.

Whether it is over the hotline or in person, a client's needs are evaluated upon their first contact with SACL. A triaging takes place and they are directed to the most appropriate service at either the centre, or community partners such as the Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program at St. Joseph's Hospital.

She also acknowledges that there are faults within the system that need to be addressed.

"We always have a waitlist. There's never a point in time when we don't," said Trudell, who attri-

butes the more general wait times to a capacity issue at the centre.

March 2015 saw the Ontario government's inauguration of *It's Never Okay*, an action plan designed to stop sexual violence and harassment.

As part of the plan's implementation, expanded funding was dispensed by the attorney general to the province's network of community-based sexual assault centres to improve their services, based off the number of clients in each location.

"That enabled us to get some extra public education and we increased our administrative capacity," Trudell said of the funding. "But you can't hire a new counsellor on a one-off fund. You need ongoing funding to support ongoing programming."

SACL currently has enough funding to employ two full-time counsellors. Responsibilities are divided between them to cover county outreach, run group counselling sessions and hold 13 to 15 private counselling sessions per individual client.

Last year, SACL's highly trained volunteers served over 800 individuals over their crisis hotline.

Over 400 clients received one-on-one counselling.

"Our average wait time is not where we want it to be. It's a redundant record playing, but there's not enough money particularly around counselling. That's what we hear

from survivors," Trudell said.

Trudell emphasized that even though funding is a problem, she has seen a significant increase in overall awareness about sexual violence prevention and rape culture amongst the groups she educates. This, she said, is thanks to the strides made by the *It's Never Okay* action plan.

Leah Marshall represents another stride accomplished by the plan. As Fanshawe's sexual violence and prevention advisor, she fills one of the province's first roles created specifically to enact a stand-alone policy in colleges and universities that will support students who have recently or historically experienced sexual violence.

According to Marshall, one in five women experience sexual assault on a college campus.

With over 20,000 students, Marshall's division was created through counselling and accessibility services, out of a substantial need for an immediate response that would be easily accessible to survivors, thereby reducing strain placed on other local resources.

"With most services, there's usually some kind of waiting time. The new action plan coming out really stimulated a conversation around the fact that there needs to be more money put into these services," Marshall said.

Nicole Pietsch, co-ordinator of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Cri-

sis Centres, agreed that the efforts of the action plan have positively resulted in an increased widespread awareness of sexual violence and its related issues.

Yet while the emergence of high profile cases of sexual assault paired with the plan's focus on education has led to an influx of survivors reporting their attacks and seeking support, the number of full-time counsellors has remained the same.

"Ten years ago, Ontario's community-based sexual assault centres saw around 30,000 survivors. There were 50,000 in the most recent fiscal year, but we still have the same capacity," Pietsch said.

While all centres have been working to adjust to the drastic increase in intake, the reality is that the demand surpasses all available resources, particularly in urban areas.

For the anonymous Fanshawe student, the disproportion between survivors and counsellors is taking its toll.

"I wish SACL would call me and update me on where I was on the list," she said. "I understand it must be extensive, but having this system in place would make me feel more listened to and that I'm not just a number on a list, which I shouldn't feel at all as a survivor trying to get help."

Ultimately, she said being heard and believed is what she and other survivors need most.