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UVic sex assault allegations lead to male student's arrest

Police say four women aged 19 and 20 came forward with allegations of sexual assault

CBC News · Posted: Feb 29, 2016 6:38 PM PT | Last Updated: March 1, 2016



Police are recommending five charges be laid against a man in connection with a recent string of sexual assaults on campus. (Megan Thomas/CBC)

Saanich police say they have arrested a male University of Victoria student in connection with a series of sexual assaults on campus.

Officers say four women aged 19 and 20 came forward two weeks ago claiming they had been sexually assaulted by a student they knew well.

"These assaults took place over a span of several months at the University of Victoria," said Sgt. Jereme Leslie with Saanich Police.

Leslie said the man, who has not been named, is facing five counts of sexual assault.

He has since been released and is scheduled to appear in court in April.

Student banned from campus

Jim Dunsdon, the university's associate vice-president of student affairs, said the accused student has been banned from campus.

"Issues of sexualized violence are never acceptable and as a campus we're deeply committed to providing members — all members of our community with a safe and supportive learning environment," he said.

The university and the student union acknowledged the bravery of the alleged victims for coming forward. They also both said they have been working closely together to develop programs to educate students about sexualized violence.

But Kenya Rogers, the student society's director of external relations, said more needs to be done.

"Institutions in B.C. don't have any sort of framework for how they deal with sexualized violence on campus," she said, adding the student society is lobbying the province for legislation to outline steps universities need to take in the wake of such allegations.

She said the news was difficult for many students to hear.

"We're devastated. It is so hard for us every single time an assault like this is publicized," she said.

"But we're also acutely aware of the fact these assaults are happening all the time and so often they're happening behind closed doors and with people that we know."

The university said it will be working with the student association to develop a communication plan for any students to ensure they're aware of the services available to them.

With files from CHEK

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