**Article of the Week**

**Directions:**

1. **Show evidence of a close reading (highlighting key points and making notes in the margins – can be questions, thoughts, confusion, etc.)**
2. **Answer the question at the bottom of the article in paragraph form.**

**Saint Mary's students should see the consequences of condoning sexual abuse**

*Nova Scotia's Premier has expressed hope those students who took part in the offensive chant have learned from their mistakes. But how can they, when none of them are going to suffer the consequences of their actions?*

The sight of student leaders from Saint Mary's University chanting in a celebratory way about non-consensual underage sex, in a video recording of frosh week at the Halifax school, is shocking.

What is even more outrageous is the lack of an adequate response to their behaviour from the university's president, Colin Dodds, or from Darrell Dexter, the Premier of Nova Scotia.

A presidential council to investigate the incident – Mr. Dodds' proposed solution – does not go nearly far enough. Mr. Dexter's comments cautioning against overreaction are an absurdity in the very province where 17-year-old Rehtaeh Parsons committed suicide last spring – a tragedy that similarly involved apparently humiliating images.

The student leaders – both male and female – shown chanting in the video should be called to a disciplinary hearing by the university, where they should be held accountable for their actions. If they broke the rules, they should be punished and possibly suspended.

That's what is spelled out in the university's code of conduct, a copy of which every student receives during orientation week.

Misconduct is defined, in part, as "the use of abusive or offensive language or gestures at University-sponsored functions." The school's policy also says harassment "will not be condoned" at Saint Mary's University, because it "negates" the principles of university life.

Rather than punishing transgressions, politicians, university leaders and students have defaulted into treating incidents such as the Saint Mary's frosh week as a "teachable moment."

In the wake of public outrage, the school has sent its student union executive for sensitivity training and is making them attend a conference on sexual violence and consent. After that, they have been ordered to make a presentation to Saint Mary's about what they will have learned. None of this involves actually disciplining those who broke the rules by trivializing rape at a university event.

Mr. Dexter has expressed hope those students who took part in the offensive chant have learned from their mistakes. But how can they, when none of them are going to suffer the consequences of their actions?

**Response Question (answer in paragraph form and staple to this sheet): Do you feel that the students should be punished for this act? Why or why not?**