

The Jakarta Post, Tuesday, March 6, 2018

TOWARD SAFE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE-FREE CAMPUSES

Indraswari, Bandung

In early February, reports of allegations of rape by famous Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan surfaced. Ramadan, an Oxford University professor, has been charged with rape following claims by two women he allegedly assaulted in separate cases in French hotel rooms in 2009 and 2012.

News about Ramadan – a married father of four – and the alleged sexual assaults had been circulating for a while in international media outlets, especially after Oxford University released a statement in November that said he was taking a leave of absence from his post as a professor of contemporary Islamic studies “by mutual agreement”.

On Feb 5, news portal theconversation.com released a report titled, “Cambridge University received 173 anonymous reports of sexual misconduct in nine months”. The report is about the alleged miscondacts reported by Cambridge students and staff through the university’s anonymous reporting tool between its introduction in May 2017 and Jan. 31, 2018.

The case at Oxford and the tool developed at Cambridge – both prestigious universities in the United Kingdom – are partly a result of the global [#MeToo](https://www.tiktok.com/tag/metoo) anti-sexual harassment campaign, which has rippled around the world, with victims writing testimonies of their experiences in facing sexual violence.

What about Indonesia? As is the case elsewhere, it is hard to obtain accurate data on sexual violence in academia. A few reports included The Jakarta Post report on June 6, 2016 titled “Sexual abuse on campus” which is about four cases of sexual violence at two prominent universities, the University of Indonesia (UI) and GadjahMada University (UGM).

The first case involved several alleged victims who reported sexual harassment at UGM’s School of Social and Political Sciences in 2016. The second case involved a UI law student who reported her lecturer for sexual abuse to the university and the police. The third involved a student who reported a lecturer at UGM’s School of Humanities over alleged sexual abuse.

These last two cases occurred in 2008. In the fourth case, in 2013, a student reported a guest lecturer and noted poet at the UI School of Humanities over alleged rape that made her pregnant. All four male lecturers in the aforementioned cases were much older than the students and were all married when the alleged abuse took place.

Sexual violence is rooted in unequal power dynamics. On campus, this is clearly visible in the staff versus student cases. Only a few student victims report their cases, fearing their studies and future could be jeopardized if they challenge a “powerful” figure, such as their lecturer or academic supervisor.

The campus is both a work place and an educational institution, where sexual violence also occurs among staff and among students. In unequal power dynamics, socially, women are often perceived as inferior to men.

Among students, one of the most common forms of violence is dating violence, which can lead to unwanted pregnancies. Data from the National Commission on Violence against Women in 2016 shows there were 2,171 cases of dating violence, or 21 percent out of the 10,205 cases of violence in which the perpetrator and the victim were in a personal relationship.

There are many factors that affect a student's success or failure in higher education – one of them is a supportive academic environment.

This environment is an important part of a university's assessment, which is conducted through an accreditation mechanism. Every five years, all higher learning institutes in Indonesia are reviewed by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education Institutes.

Part of the assessment criteria is the students' average length of study and their grade point average (GPA). It is assumed that if a university sees a high percentage of students finishing their study on time and with a high GPA, it is providing an academic environment that enables a student to maximize their potential and benefit from the learning process. In turn, this contributes to a higher valuation of a department or a university.

In practical terms, in an assessment, a department or a university has to prove they meet indicators such as an updated curriculum, a minimum standard of a lecturer to student ratio, high lecturer and student attendance rates, updated syllabi of all subjects taught and sufficient facilities such as classrooms, libraries and laboratories.

Not included in the assessment is a requirement on campus safety, in particular as it relates to safety from sexual violence. With the problem of sexual violence on campuses, I propose this safety measurement to be included in the accreditation criteria.

The logic is simple. How can a student perform well in academia if she suffers from sexual violence and doesn't feel safe on campus for classes, thesis supervision and other academic activities? Creating a campus free from sexual violence is not for the sake of accreditation only, but to create a safe environment conducive to learning.

In line with the aforementioned measurement, a university should have a code of conduct of the lecturer-student relationship, as well as among other members of the academic community. It should include a clear mechanism on matters related to sexual violence such as penalties for the perpetrators and support for the victims.

A university is a place where parents send their children and young people spend significant years of their life with high hopes of receiving the best education. Therefore, it should be a safe place for everyone.

The writer is a lecturer at Parahyangan Catholic University's School of Social and Political Sciences in Bandung. The views expressed are her own.

The Jakarta Post

OPINION | 7

Toward safe and sexual violence-free campuses

In a daily *Jakarta Post* report of allegations of rape in Ganesha Mall in July 2019, Bandung resident, Indonesian student, Indrawati, was named as the victim following charges by her accused by allegedly assaulting or harassing her in a public toilet in 2019 and 2020.

These alleged incidents – a sexual assault of Indrawati – and the alleged sexual violence had been circulating for a while in internet-based media circles, especially after Oxford University released a statement in November that said he was taking a leave of absence from his post as a professor of contemporary Islamic studies “by mutual agreement.”

The Feb. 4 news portal the *International Business Times* reported that, in a report received by Cambridge University, 175 anonymous reports of sexual violence in one month. The report also alleged sexual violence against Cambridge students and staff through the university’s student mess reporting and between its introduction in May 2017 and Jan. 30, 2019.

The use of Oxford and the news developed at Cambridge – both prestigious universities in the United Kingdom – are partly a result of the global #MeToo sex violence harassment campaign, which has spread around the world, with various writing testimonies of their experiences in being sexual violence.

“What about Indrawati? Is it the case elsewhere. It is hard to obtain accurate data on sexual violence worldwide. A few reports included The Jakarta Post report in June 6, 2019 titled ‘Sexual



Indrawati

about no campus”, which reported four cases of sexual violence in the aforementioned universities, the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Deakin Music Conservatory (U.S.M). The data also reported several alleged victims who reported sexual harassment at U.S.M’s School of Social and Political Sciences in 2019. The second case involved a 22-year-old student who reported her behavior for sexual abuse in the university and the police. The third involved a student who reported a sexual violence at U.S.M’s School of Humanities in 2020 over an alleged sexual abuse.

These two cases occurred in 2019 in the fourth case, in 2020, a student reported a sexual violence and noted part of the U.S.M School of Humanities over alleged rape that took her program. All four male lecturers on the governmental level, were made aware that the students and their allegations about the alleged sexual violence.

Sexual violence is not in an equal power dynamic. The case goes far beyond victim in the high-income student cases. Only a few student victims report their cases, leaving their studies and how they could be progressed if they challenge a “powerful” figure, such as their lecturer or academic supervisor.

The campus is both a work place and an educational institution, which sexual violence also occurs among staff and among students. It cannot power the women, socially women are often perceived to inferior to men.

Among students, one of the most common forms of violence is dating violence, which has led to increased progression. Data from the National Commission on Violence against Women in 2019 shows there were 2,174 cases of dating violence, or 33 percent out of the 6,520 cases of violence in which the perpetrator and the victim were in a personal relationship.

There are many factors that affect a student’s decision to stay in higher education – one of them is a supportive academic environment.

This assessment is an important part of a university’s assessment, which is conducted through an accreditation procedure. Every five years, all higher learning institutions in Indonesia are reviewed by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education Institute.

Part of the assessment criteria is the students’ average length of study and their graduation rate (GPA). It is assumed that if a university sees a high percentage of students finishing their studies on time and with a high GPA, it is providing an academic environment that enables a student to maximize their potential and benefit from the learning process. In turn, this can result in a high reputation of a department or a university.

In practical terms, as an assessment, a department or a university has to prove they meet indicators such as an updated curriculum, a sufficient number of a lecturer-to-student ratio, high lecturer and student attendance rates, updated syllabi of all subjects taught and sufficient facilities such as classrooms, library and laboratories.

Not included in the assessment is a requirement on campus safety, in particular as it relates to safety from sexual violence. While the problem of sexual violence on campuses, I propose this safety measurement to be included in the accreditation criteria.

The logic is simple. How can a student perform well in a program if the safety from sexual violence and their best effort campus for classes, from supervisor, faculty or academic activities? Creating a campus free from sexual violence is key for the sake of accreditation, only but to create a safe environment for learning.

In line with the aforementioned business model, a university should have a code of conduct on the lecturer-student relationship, as well as among other members of the academic community. It should include a clear mechanism on matters related to equal violence such as procedure for the preparation and support for the victims.

A university is a place where parents send their children and young people spend significant years of their life with high hopes of receiving the best education. Therefore, it should be a safe place for everyone.

The writer is a lecturer at Parahyangan Catholic University’s School of Social and Political Sciences in Bandung. The views expressed are her own.