

ABOUT

The idea for **Ontario Universities Taking Action Against Sexual Violence Conference** (August 10-11, 2016) emerged from a research project Roxanne Runyon & Bailey Gerrits undertook in the summer of 2015 for Ontario Public Interest Research Group Kingston. [We Believe in a Campus Free of Sexual Violence: Lessons From Campus Service Providers](#) includes insights from several campus service providers from across Canada about their experiences delivering prevention programming. After sharing their report with participants & stakeholders, Roxanne & Bailey wanted to keep the conversation going about effective prevention on university campuses & the relationships & institutional structures that facilitate these programs.

As the conference organizing committee grew to include 4 graduate students, 1 professor, & 1 Queen's University staff member, the conference vision began to take shape. At the heart of the planning is the belief that, despite the intensity of campus rape cultures, sexual violence is not inevitable on campus & among students & staff. Rather, universities have the responsibility & the ability to successfully reduce sexual violence & end the institutional & cultural structures that facilitate rape. The committee sought to include a multiplicity of voices & showcase some of the diverse work already taking place. When making the conference program, the committee was dedicated to centring anti-oppressive, survivor-centred, intersectional approaches.

The conference is organized around 3 themes:

1. Institutional Models that Promote Prevention

With [Bill 132](#)'s January 2017 deadline looming, Ontario universities are not only rethinking the mandatory stand-alone policy, but also more & more positions & offices are popping up to address sexual violence on campus. This theme considers the institutional options that support prevention. Is 1 dedicated staff member enough? What role do students, community partners have in these institutional structures? What about a on-campus centre? How can these institutional measures account for structures of inequality (such as racism, poverty, colonialism, ableism, & so on) that fundamental augments experiences of on & off campus sexual violence & people's ability to access response & prevention programming?

2. Effective Prevention Programming

Academic literature on sexual violence prevention programming highlights some types of programs & interventions that are not enough & do not substantially reduce experiences of sexual violence. It is clear that one-off measures do not work. It is not sufficient for universities to add a speaker to frosh week to address consent or add posters to select residence hallways. Simply adding more lighting to parking lots fails to intervene in the persistent rape culture. Indeed, these efforts alone are insufficient. This theme considers programs that are working, including peer support & education models & bystander intervention.

3. Building Relationships to End Sexual Violence

Rape culture on campus deeply impacts those attending school; statistics make it clear that people, especially women, are exceptionally likely to experience violence while attending university or college. However, the effects of it do not stay within the ivy-covered walls. People seek support off campus. People leave campus because of the violence. People perpetrate violence learned & condoned on campus against people not associated with the university. Relationships with diverse stakeholders on & off campus are vital to address rape culture & this theme sets out to tackle the problem of working in silos, difficulty building & maintaining relationships, & identifying allies & voices that need to be included.

The numbers, at a glance:

2 keynote speakers	Over 200 delegates
8 panellists	4 delegate-submitted roundtables
4 student-led programs presentations	Over 30 volunteers
1 conversation between 4 insightful anti-violence advocates	Over 30 donors from Queen's University, Kingston community, & further afield

OUTA 2016 builds on community desire & existing on & off-campus work to address sexual violence in post-secondary contexts. It is premised on the notion that all universities need to do a better job addressing rape culture. Together, we can end do better. Together, we must do better. It's time for Ontario universities to take action against sexual violence.

The conference organizing committee: Yasmine Djerbal (PhD Candidate, Queen's University), Bailey Gerrits (PhD Candidate, Queen's University), Stacey Kiefer (Residence Manager, Queen's University), Samantha King (Professor & Head of Gender Studies, Queen's University), Joyce Li (PhD Student, Queen's University), Roxanne Runyon (Master's Student, Queen's University)