



## **NEWS RELEASE - Conference addresses prevention of sexual violence**

KINGSTON (August 10, 2016) – Over 200 delegates will gather today at Queen’s University for Ontario Universities Taking Action Against Sexual Violence Conference (OUTA). This two-day event addresses the critical task of preventing sexual violence on university campuses and brings together advocates, researchers, students, university administrators, policymakers, and campus and community service providers from across Canada and the United States.

OUTA’s goal is to foster connections and generate knowledge about how to prevent sexual violence in university contexts.

“Promoting a safe and respectful campus that is free from sexual violence and harassment is a priority at Queen’s. This is why, among other measures, we have recently appointed a full-time sexual violence prevention and response coordinator. We are fully committed to this issue and hold strongly that effective prevention is a key component of addressing sexual violence on campuses and elsewhere. I want to thank the students involved in organizing this timely conference for their work and commitment,” says Benoit-Antoine Bacon, Queen’s Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic).

OUTA 2016 will feature two keynote presentations:

Today (Aug 10, 9:15 a.m.), Chris Linder (Assistant Professor, College Student Affairs Administration, University of Georgia) speaks about the importance of centering students who are the most marginalized in sexual violence prevention initiatives.

Tomorrow (Aug 11, 9:00 a.m.), Charlene Senn (Professor, Department of Psychology and Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Windsor) will discuss innovative and evidence-based sexual prevention programs.

Other conference panelists include Farrah Khan (Sexual Violence Support and Education Coordinator, Ryerson University) and Carol Bilson (Coordinator/Director, Anti-Violence Project, University of Victoria). At 4:15pm today (Aug 10) Mandi Gray and Ellie Ade Kaur (co-founders, Silence is Violence at York University and the University of Toronto respectively) will discuss the importance of centering survivors’ voices in prevention efforts.

Tomorrow (Aug 11, 8.30 a.m.), the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues, will address the conference. MacCharles says: “Ontarians deserve to feel safe, secure and respected in their workplaces, homes and on campuses. Through our Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, Ontario is challenging deep-seated attitudes and behaviours, myths and stereotypes that normalize rape culture, but there is still work to be done. Through their actions, all members of campus communities – students, teachers, residence advisors, and staff can play a role in stopping sexual violence and harassment. I look forward to attending this important event.”

The conference will conclude with a plenary dialogue featuring Julie Lalonde (Public Educator), Hayley Moody (Sexual Violence Counsellor and Advocate, Sexual Assault Centre of Brant), Yamikani Msosa (Public Education Coordinator, Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa), and Samina Sami (Executive Director of Community Safety, York University).

The conference runs August 10-11 in the Biosciences Complex, Arch Street, Queen’s University.

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