Academic Matters

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OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR DE L'OCUFA

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This journal is produced in the Dish With One Spoon Territory, which extends from the Great Lakes to Quebec and from Lake Simcoe into the United States. The territory exists as the result of a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to protect and share the land and creatures within it. Subsequent Indigenous nations and peoples, Europeans, and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. It is in this spirit that each issue of Academic Matters is produced.

This journal is printed with union labour, on sustainably sourced paper, and with vegetable-based link.

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Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR DE L'OCUFA

Academic Matters is published two times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 17,000 professors, academic librarians, and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful, thought-provoking, original, and engaging discussion of current trends in postsecondary education and consideration of academia's future direction.

Readers are encouraged to contribute their views, ideas, and talents. Letters to the editor (maximum 250 words) are welcome and may be edited for length. To provide an article or artwork for Academic Matters, please send your query to Editor-in-Chief Manisha Aggarwal-Schifellite at editor@academicmatters.ca.

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Editorial Matters

Manisha Aggarwal-Schifellite

How can a university become a more equitable place to learn, study, and work?

THIS QUESTION has been the driving force behind many new initiatives at Ontario universities in recent years, from curriculum changes to new names. The current landscape of equity work on campuses is dynamic in scope, with more voices at the table calling for big changes to campuses as we know them. And as many Indigenous scholars argue, Indigenization and decolonization are distinct from equity, and must be pursued as such.

This issue features the expertise and experiences of faculty and academic administrators who have been working in these spaces since before equity priorities and initiatives were written into University Strategic Plans. In each article, the authors ask vital questions of themselves, their colleagues, and those who run their institutions. They challenge all of us to think deeper about the ways in which we can all contribute to a more equitable future. They also offer personal reflections on their experiences as researchers, teachers, administrators, and university employees.

Through her teaching, research, and administrative work, Lynn Lavallee has dedicated her career to advancing Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in the academy. In an interview about her work in Indigenous resurgence, she asks: Are universities supporting Indigenous students and faculty beyond token gestures?

Reflecting on the experience of convening the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences with a pointed focus on equity, Andrea A. Davis asks: How far will such interventions go in changing the way things have always been done?

Historian Sara Z. MacDonald looks back at the tumultuous turn of the twentieth century when women were first admitted as students into English-Canadian universities, and asks: What lessons can we learn from that history that could help us make institutions more inclusive now?

After three years of service as an Affirmative Action, Equity, and Inclusion Officer at her institution, Tania Das Gupta evaluates her experience facilitating unconscious bias training for faculty. She asks: What do we talk about and learn about in equity training, and what goes unsaid?

In a piece on universal design, Erika Katzman analyzes the current landscape of accommodations and engagement for disabled faculty, students, and staff on our campuses, and asks: how can universities become *truly* accessible?

Finally, the first article by the 2021-2022 recipient of the OCUFA Henry Mandelbaum Graduate Fellowship for Excellence in Social Sciences, Humanities, or Arts appears in these pages. The recipient of the Doctoral Fellowship is now required to contribute a piece to *Academic Matters* on their research. The doctoral research of Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa also begins with a probing research question: What is your first memory of HIV/AIDS?

These are just some of the many evocative queries that will inform the next iteration of equity on university campuses. It's up to all of us working in these spaces to engage meaningfully and seriously with these issues, and to listen to the experts whose work will guide us there.

I am grateful to all the authors for contributing their words and time to *Academic Matters,* and for their reflections and recommendations on the next iteration of this important, often undervalued, work.

All articles in this issue are available on our website: www.academicmatters.ca.

Thank you. AM

Manisha Aggarwal-Schifellite is the Editor-in-Chief of Academic Matters *and Communications Lead for OCUFA.*

Why Indigenous Resurgence is Needed at Universities

An interview with Lynn Lavallee

Universities in Ontario and across the country have, on the surface, committed to supporting reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization. Are those commitments helping Indigenous faculty, students, and staff navigate the postsecondary system? What should universities do to ensure Indigenous people can thrive on campus?

Through her teaching, research, and administrative work, Lynn Lavallee has dedicated her career to advancing Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in the academy. Her areas of expertise include Indigenous ethics, research methods including Indigenous research methods, and Indigenous health and well-being. She is a Professor in the School of Social Work and Strategic Lead, Indigenous Resurgence, at Toronto Metropolitan University's Faculty of Community Services. Lynn Lavallee spoke to *Academic Matters* about her goals for Indigenous resurgence work on her own campus, the importance of Indigenous leadership at all university levels, and how universities can concretely pursue reconciliation.

Academic Matters: Please introduce yourself and your role at TMU.

Lynn Lavallee: I am Anishinaabe and a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario. It's so important that we identify who we are, where we come from, who our relations are, and what land we come from, in part because of cultural fraud of Indigenous identity in the academy, but it's also simply what we do. My roots come from Temiscaming, as well as the Red River and include the last names Lavallee, Labelle, Taylor, Godon, McIvor, Swain, and Lillie.

What does Indigenous Resurgence mean to you in your role?

Often, there isn't a lot of support for Indigenous people at institutions, yet reconciliation and decolonization are noted in their strategic plans. I've done a lot of administrative work from the time that I achieved tenure and promotion, and I think that things need to change at institutions to make Indigenous people feel included and to do no further harm to Indigenous students, staff, and faculty. That's the minimum, but has not been the focus for many reconciliation efforts in universities.

I think about Vern Harper, who was an Elder. He would talk about the fact that we've been de-feathered. Part of Indigenous resurgence is gathering those feathers, gathering our bundles, gathering our medicines, and gaining strength through community language, land, and ceremony. So for me, that's what it [my role] is about. I want to support Indigenous people at the institution.

What should universities be considering with regards to Indigenous student and faculty experiences?

I would ask all institutions to really think: Where are their Indigenous people at, within their institutions? What is their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health like? Are we thriving within the institution?

That's why I wanted to use the term Indigenous resurgence—to support Indigenous students, so that when they go through their four-year degree, there's no further harm [done to them]. It sounds like a low bar, but Indigenous people are harmed in the institution all the time—Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. Harm happens in meetings, informally, formally. My role is all about supporting Indigenous people. It's about trying to ensure more Indigenous students actually get through the institution.

What would your vision of Indigenous Resurgence look like on a campus?

There needs to be Indigenous senior leadership around all tables at an institution. We also have to make our institutions more attractive for Indigenous people. That means looking at strategic plans and asking: are they really helping Indigenous people [at the institution]? The institution should establish Indigenous-specific representation on Boards of Governors and Senate, beyond a token individual. It's also important to have Indigenous representation for academic *and* non-academic roles. We need Indigenous leadership at the school and faculty level, to design programs that do no further harm.

Academia is really grappling with the issue of cultural fraud, which is huge. Now there is

The colonial model of higher education doesn't work for us, so how do we do this a bit differently?

more and more research being done that really talks about the harms of cultural fraud. It's the tip of the iceberg. So who is responsible for that? With respect to reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization, if [administrations] can write a land acknowledgment, and deliver land acknowledgments at Board of Governors and Senate and all their meetings, they can address cultural fraud.

Universities need to change their human rights policies and their investigative policies. Human rights complaints policies at universities are often not restorative; they are very litigious. We need new policies that are restorative for complaints. Our human rights offices are ill equipped to deal with Indigenous-specific racism. They also don't know what to do when somebody has been lying about who they are, in the case of cultural fraud. Institutions have to look at that. They have to put together policies that look retroactively at the harm done by cultural fraudsters, not just moving forward with new policies for new hires. *That* would be reconciliation. It's reconcili-*action* to do something about that.

What initiatives might help Indigenous faculty thrive?

TMU has non-academic Indigenous leadership, which is absolutely amazing, to support Indigenous students. But senior Indigenous academic leadership should also be in place to support Indigenous faculty. Universities have to promote from within and acknowledge the Indigenous people that are [already] at our institutions. I was the first Vice-Provost of Indigenous engagement at the University of Manitoba, and I started a speaker series there that acknowledged the Indigenous people who were already working at the university. Often, institutions do not value the Indigenous people they have because these folks have been pushing decolonization before it became fashionable and were often labelled as agitators and dismissed for internal opportunities.

More and more collective agreements are including Indigenous approaches to tenure and promotion, which is phenomenal. We can't do our work without engaging community, but oftentimes that is not weighted as heavily in our tenure and promotion files. Institutions and unions also need policies to support Indigenous faculty, and policies about Indigenous identification. Many institutions put the issue of identity fraud on Indigenous people with no support. Most unions have also not contributed to matters related to identity fraud. Unions and institutions need to do their jobs.

What do you see as the way forward?

We're in a really challenging time. I don't want to just be discouraging for Indigenous faculty who are new to their career in in academia—we can make a difference in the institutions. We can make a difference with Indigenous students. We know the harms we're facing every day.

Indigenous people at universities are doing the work of pushing boundaries and as a collective, trying to move things forward. I resigned my position at the University of Manitoba and made that statement. I wrote a letter to the university with many recommendations when I left, and they implemented many of them, which is amazing. At every university, there are some people who are seen as the agitators and some people who put their head down and do their work with students. There are many people doing different things at institutions to make change. And as Indigenous people, we need to work together, as a collective.

The colonial model of higher education doesn't work for us, so how do we do this a bit differently? We need more Indigenous governance at multiple levels. We need more Indigenous faculty in our schools in order to get this work done. If they want to do the work of reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization, universities have to hire tenure-track Indigenous faculty. It is important to have Indigenization on campus, like Indigenous welcome signs, art, and greetings. *And* it's important to support Indigenous students and faculty, and to ask: how are they being harmed by [an institution]? How does [an institution] actually remedy that harm? Once institutions start to look at that, then they can do a land acknowledgement. AM

Lynn Lavallee is the Strategic Lead, Indigenous Resurgence in the Faculty of Community Services and Professor in the School of Social Work at Toronto Metropolitan University.

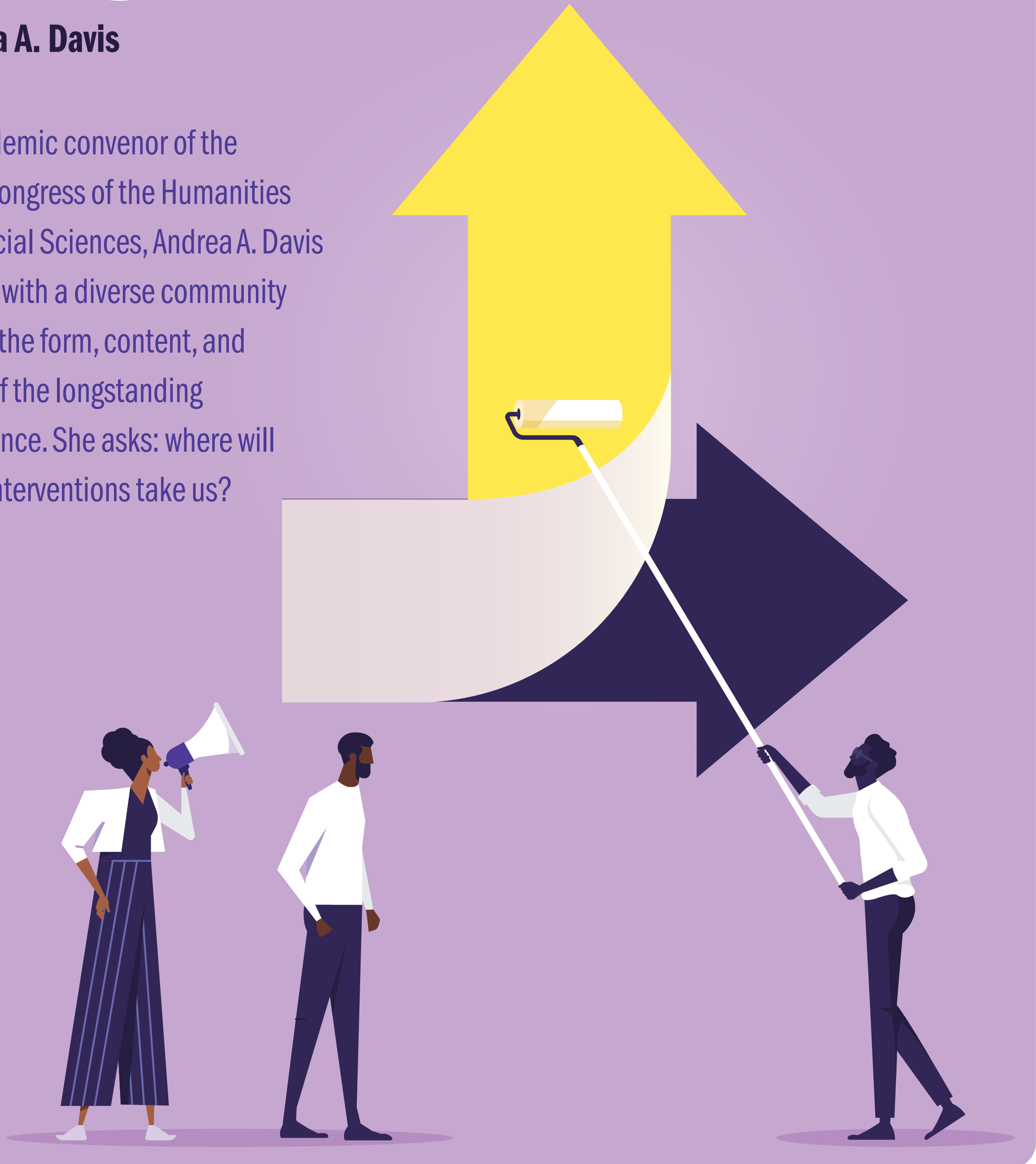
This interview was edited for clarity and length.

RECKONING WITH THE LEGACY OF UNIVERSITIES:

Reflections on Congress 2023

Andrea A. Davis

As academic convenor of the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Andrea A. Davis worked with a diverse community to shift the form, content, and vision of the longstanding conference. She asks: where will these interventions take us?



I received the invitation to assume the role of Academic Convenor of the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in the fall of 2021, after having just completed a year as inaugural special advisor on anti-Black racism strategies in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies at York University. Both the invitation to convene Congress and the advisory role occurred within the context of global social protests following the police murder of George Floyd in spring 2020. George Floyd's death took place 186 years after the abolition of chattel slavery in Canada in 1834, 153 years after Confederation united the so-called white "founding nations" and excluded Indigenous peoples from the formation of the nation-state in 1867, and almost 200 years after the establishment of McGill College in 1821—Canada's first university. It, therefore, took Canadian society and its educational institutions more than a century and a half to begin, in some earnestness, to look for ways to correct their history of white supremacy and problem of underrepresentation, trying to land on the right side of history.

Recognizing Black and Indigenous Humanity

Certainly, for Black people, this slow trajectory of change is stunning, but also unremarkable. It is unremarkable because, as professor and author Rinaldo Walcott suggests in the 2021 book *The Long Emancipation,* Black people (whether we are descendants of the enslaved or experienced a different kind of conquest as indigenous continental Africans) "are still in the time of emancipation," waiting for a freedom that is yet to come; a freedom "which is extra-emancipation or beyond the logic of emancipation." The freedom that would allow Black people to exist as they would simply *want* to be is beyond the logic of emancipation because even the white abolitionists who fought to dismantle the system of slavery and many of the liberal white progressive professors in university departments and classrooms did not, and still cannot, imagine a Black subject that is their equal with the same capacity for thought, ideas, and sentience. In her critique of humanism, Sylvia Wynter argues that the construction of the category of "Man" was made possible only through the negation of different Others, including Black and Indigenous peoples, poor people, women, and refugees. That the category "Black" routinely assumes all these categories of exclusion (someone who is differentially raced, poor, jobless, and globally homeless) makes clear the extent to which Black people have been and continue to be imagined as outside the normative conception of a humanity deserving of justice, protection, and care.

If the murder of George Floyd and the murder of Indigenous women and girls have been the catalyst for this belated reckoning in Canadian universities and the wider society, then we must ask ourselves why it always takes Indigenous and Black death and abjection to produce change. The fact that Indigenous and Black peoples are entitled to life, freedom, and a sense of humanity doesn't seem to be enough to move the arc of the moral compass of our societies in any meaningful way. At the end of the day, Black people can only be understood through what Saidiya Hartman, in her 1997 book *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America,* calls "the spectacular character of Black suffering," through exceptional violence, and through Black fungibility. According to Hartman, white abolitionists could only understand Black suffering by resubstituting themselves as the abused; by replacing the imagined Black body with a white body; by recasting that Black body as their own. "Black sentience," Hartman says, is "incommensurable and unimaginable" in its own right; "the very ease of possessing the abased and enslaved body…elide[s] an understanding and acknowledgement of the slave's pain." In the same way, it was the spectacular death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man—viewed over and over again—that made possible a certain kind of substitution that then released a sense of horror and empathy that galvanized the protests, that led to the changes we are seeing in universities. It was by visually and vicariously standing in the place of Black suffering that Canadians were collectively moved.

Learning to think and act oppositionally

How do we make it possible to recognize the everyday hurt Indigenous and Black students experience in classrooms, from university instructors who assume they are not smart enough and must therefore be monitored and surveilled, or from students who resent their interventions? How do we recognize the everyday violence against brown students who are stereotyped or dismissed as non-speakers of English and non-Christians? How do we make knowable the pain racialized faculty, students, and staff carry across their campuses, into their classrooms, onto buses and subways and city streets, knowing that one moment of misrecognition could result in another catastrophe? I am an immigrant to this country, but most of my students are not, and the country in which they were born or have lived since they were children has not loved them or desired to protect them. And they have experienced that violence of national abandonment most consistently in the educational system: first in kindergarten and elementary and high school, and now in university systems premised on white supremacy. As James Baldwin notes in his 1965 speech at the Cambridge Union, "it comes as a great shock to discover the country which is your birthplace, and to which you owe your life and your identity, has not in its whole system of reality evolved any place for you."

How might we think oppositionally, against the grain of racism, classism and sexism, and the institutions and discourses that support and normalize these forms of violence, including universities?

As a Black woman who has spent her career doing the work of diversifying the academy long before "equity, diversity, and inclusion" became a catchphrase, how do I resist having those efforts co-opted while continuing to serve racialized students and faculty? If we know that Canadian universities are not exempted from, but deeply implicated in histories of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism and white supremacy, what does that knowledge require of us? If anti-Blackness, as Christina Sharpe argues in the book *In the Wake: on Blackness and Being,* is the ground we walk on, how does this knowledge demand that we read, think, and learn against the grain of our own disappearance? How might we think oppositionally, against the grain of racism, classism and sexism, and the institutions and discourses that support and normalize these forms of violence, including universities?

Reimagining academic engagement at Congress

These questions animated webinars and teach-ins throughout 2020 and 2021 and were at the forefront of my mind when I stepped into the role as academic convenor of Congress. Several scholarly associations, in fact, had previously withdrawn their participation in Congress in protest of anti-Black racism. It was clear that something fundamental needed to shift, both in the way we understand and do research in the humanities and social sciences and in the way we conceptualize academic conferences as elite, often inaccessible spaces of knowledge production and exchange. I understood that it was important first to rebuild trust, and I had to be sure I could bring others along with me. Before even accepting the role, I reached out to Black scholars outside of York to see what the possibilities were for collaboration and genuine change. Having established that participation, the work at York could begin in earnest. With a scholarly planning committee made up of Indigenous, Black, and other racialized colleagues and graduate researchers, women and co-resistors, we set out do this work, undertaking broad consultation with the university community and local community partners and high schools in the surrounding Jane and Finch neighbourhood. While incorporating university priorities, the scholarly planning committee sought from the beginning to make this a Congress that was animated from the margins—a Congress driven from below.

Guided by the Congress theme, "Reckonings and Re-Imaginings," we sought to shift the culture of Congress in ways that moved our desire from merely an aspiration on paper to one that could be felt in tangible ways. We needed to provide the space for meaningful engagement with the difficult issues raised by the theme, while leaving room for delegates to self-reflect and grow. That demanded a sense of community that could connect attendees across scholarly associations, as well as places of safety to which Indigenous, Black, and other racialized scholars could retreat if they needed to. By centring the knowledges of Indigenous and Black communities, and the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) embedded in York University's Academic Plan, we hoped to make visible the ways in which Black and Indigenous thought allowed us to think critically about global challenges of sustainability, forced migrations, racial inequities, colonialism, and overconsumption while also allowing possibilities for thinking otherwise. Emphasizing art, media, and design as important modes of academic inquiry and embodied memory deepened the sense of community and helped to signal Congress 2023 as a multi-modal, interdisciplinary, and deeply generative space.

For the first time in the history of Congress, all speakers and moderators at the Big Thinking lecture series were

As humanities and social science scholars, have we established a benchmark from which we cannot retreat or do we silently go back to “business as usual”?

Indigenous or Black. Moving away from the idea of a singular, authoritative academic thinking and working in isolation, we brought Indigenous and Black thinkers—including artists and public intellectuals—into conversation with each other in panels, and as moderators and respondents. Rather than simply thinking from the space of discrete disciplines, these thinkers met each other across their histories and lived experiences and from their own spheres of influence to think deeply and honestly about the crisis of our times, the precarity of Black and Indigenous life, and a planet under siege. There was no denying the power of these offerings. From filmmaker Alanis Obamsawin’s invocation of love, to Michaëlle Jean’s haunting memories of Haiti, and the various reflections on decolonial, anti-racism, queer, two-spirit, and critical disability perspectives, each meeting was rich and profoundly moving. In the midst of rigorous academic inquiry, there was poetry and song. From the literal sharing of smudging and other healing practices backstage to the figurative holding of hands and hearts on stage, this was an academic conference I had certainly never experienced before. The fact that most scholarly associations leaned into and amplified the theme in their own conferences demonstrated that centring Indigenous and Black knowledges in humanities and social science research is not only possible, but necessary, and that more and more today’s researchers and students are demanding this recognition and accountability.

Congress 2023 also sought to offer concrete responses to the crisis facing our planet. Designated as Canada’s largest Fair Trade event and the first hybrid Congress, it modeled possibilities for sustainability for future academic events. This included a significant reduction in print material and the use of Swag Stages featuring music, dance, and theatrical performances in place of branded promotional items. Delegates could take the memory of these performances with them rather than items most of them would not use. A zero-waste approach was also taken to the Big Thinking lectures, President’s Receptions, and Volunteer Recognition event after Congress. Hosting a hybrid Congress, while extraordinarily challenging, helped to mitigate stresses to the planet caused by air travel. This also made the event more accessible to those unable to travel because of their health, or the difficulty of acquiring visas because they live and work in the Global South.

What will we carry forward?

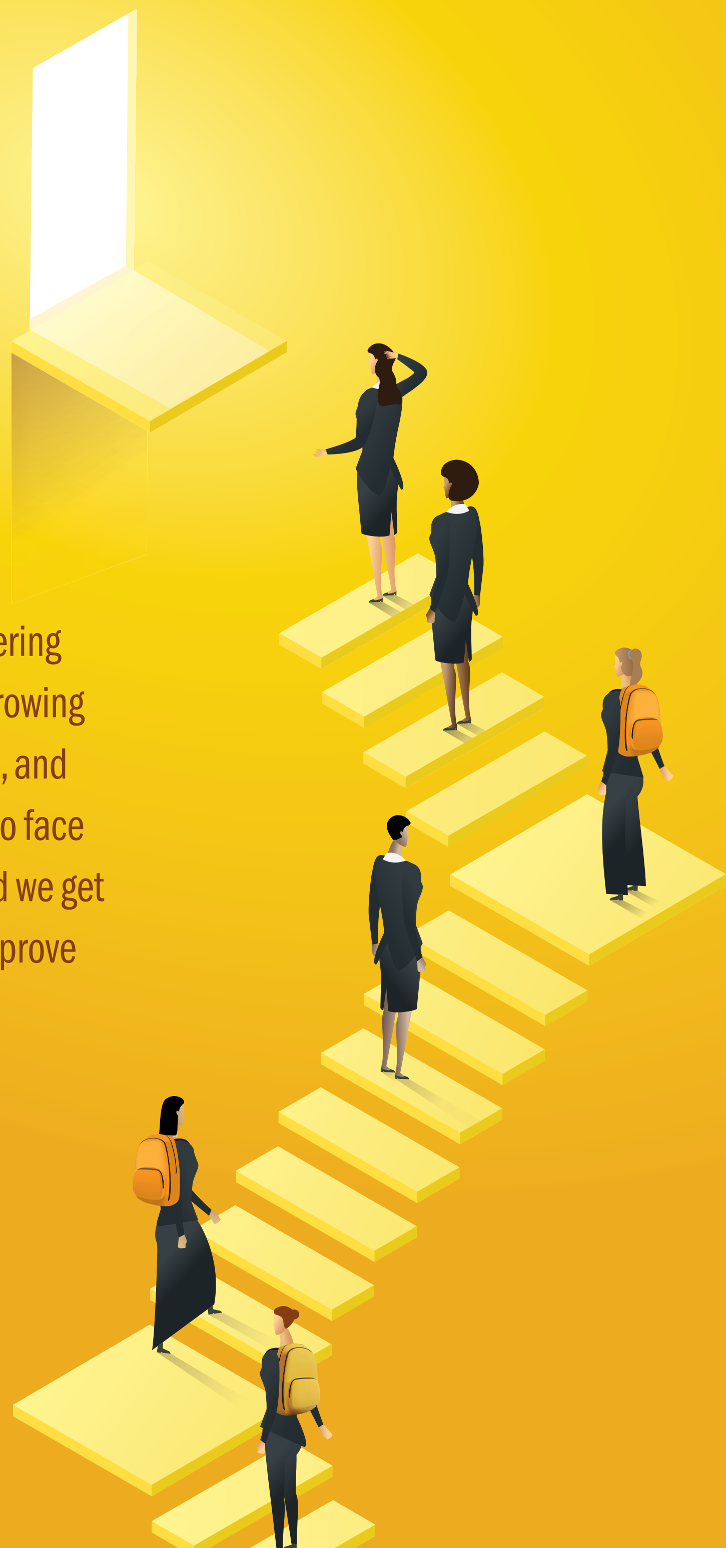
As we enter a new academic term, the question becomes: where will these interventions take us? It’s been more than three months since Congress ended. How quickly will we rush to forget? As humanities and social science scholars, have we established a benchmark from which we cannot retreat or do we silently go back to “business as usual”? Was Congress 2023 a box we checked? Was it something to reflect on with some degree of pride rather than a reminder of how far we have yet to go, of how much work is yet to be done? Those of us who have been doing forms of this work for a long time know that the attention span of universities can be as short as the attention span of governments and wider publics in search of the next newsworthy thing. But, as George Floyd reminded us, the work some of us do is never just about research. It’s often about life and death, and we know the work to save lives must continue. AM

Andrea A. Davis is Professor of Black Cultures of the Americas in the Department of Humanities at York University, and recent Academic Convenor of the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Co-editor of the Journal of Canadian Studies/ Revue d’études canadiennes, she is the author of Horizon, Sea, Sound: Caribbean and African Women’s Cultural Critiques of Nation *(Northwestern University Press, 2022).*

Admitting women into English Canadian Universities:

A SHORT HISTORY

Sara Z. MacDonald



As students and faculty, women have been entering into postsecondary education institutions at growing rates for decades. However, women, trans folks, and gender-diverse students and faculty continue to face barriers and challenges at universities. How did we get here, and how can we learn from the past to improve conditions for the future?

On International Women's Day in 2020, the OCUFA Equity and Social Justice Committee issued a statement warning that women, trans folks, and gender-diverse faculty continue to be underrepresented as full-time, tenure-stream faculty, and that this discrepancy is more pronounced for those marginalized by multiple aspects of their identities including Indigeneity, race, sexuality, and ability. In 2017, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) *Report on Women in Science and Engineering in Canada* concluded that while progress has been made in the representation of women in the natural sciences and engineering in universities and in related careers, they are still underrepresented in many academic programs, particularly physical sciences, computer science, engineering, and mathematics. Women have gained access to all institutions of higher education in Canada, with 40 per cent of young women aged 25 to 34 reporting having a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 29 per cent of men as of 2016. Yet, systemic inequities persist. These inequities are rooted in the history of women's admission into Canadian universities.

The right to become an undergraduate

In the nineteenth century, the right to become an undergraduate in Canada belonged to a small number of young men. The experience of schooling at all levels was determined by intersections of race, class, and gender, as well as differences in religion and region. At a time when most Canadians were unable to attend more than the first

> Unlike many campaigners in the United States and Britain, the primary goal of reformers in Canada was university coeducation, rather than the creation of separate women's colleges.

year or two of high school, access to higher education was severely limited, improving only gradually as the number of universities and degree options expanded in the years before World War II. In 1871-72, for example, the total enrolment in Canadian universities was 1,561 students, all men, of whom only 240 graduated: 112 received degrees in arts and science, 106 degrees in medicine, and 22 degrees in law. An analysis of students at Queen's University between 1895 and 1900 by Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin reveals that 31 per cent of the students had fathers who were farmers, 16 per cent were working class, and the remainder were dispersed among middle-class occupations such as clergymen, merchants, doctors, manufacturers, and other professionals.

To gain membership in this closed scholarly community, women in Canada campaigned not just for higher education, but for admission to men's universities. Unlike

many campaigners in the United States and Britain, the primary goal of reformers in Canada was university coeducation, rather than the creation of separate women's colleges. In the United States and Britain, the movement resulted in the establishment of many forms of postsecondary education provision: independent women's colleges such as Vassar and Smith; women's colleges affiliated with men's universities, like Girton at Cambridge and Barnard at Columbia; and coeducational universities that admitted both men and women into the same classes, such as Nebraska and Colorado.

In Canada, however, reformers believed that their only hope for truly equal education lay in women gaining admission to men's universities, achieving access to the same classrooms, programs, and degrees. In sharp contrast to the American and British movements, Canadian reformers focused almost exclusively on coeducation. While they were

justified in pursuing this goal, the unintended consequences of these developments remain today. Historically, even as women gained access to higher education, policies and institutional structures within universities have not always evolved to provide a more inclusive environment.

The effects of colonialism

Universities still reflect the patriarchal and colonial structures of the past, and scholars have argued that the demand for equal education for women has not fundamentally altered these structures. In their book *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities,* 1950-2000, Susan L. Poulson and Leslie Miller-Bernal contend that although most of the remaining men's institutions in the United States have become coeducational, they have admitted women without addressing issues of gender equity, requiring adaptation and acceptance of existing campus culture, and thereby maintaining the status quo. These conclusions were confirmed by a symposium on gender equality in higher education hosted by the Royal Irish Academy in 2018.

In a recent article, Pat O'Connor, Judith Harford, and Tanya Fitzgerald state that institutions across Ireland, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain male-dominated; designed by men for men, their structural and cultural features reflect, reinforce, and perpetuate patriarchal and, increasingly, managerialist forces. Canadian universities also perpetuate historically constructed barriers on the basis of race and Indigeneity. Sheila Cote-Meek argues that as Indigenous students and faculty enter academia in growing numbers, they often experience a hostile classroom environment charged with racism. In her work, including the book *Colonized Classrooms: Racism, Trauma and Resistance in Post-Secondary Education,* Cote-Meek has called for transformative pedagogy to increase the awareness of ongoing colonialism in Canadian universities.

While they protested their own exclusion from this world, women reformers themselves contributed to a larger cultural and political Canadian discourse that served to reinforce Anglo-Canadian colonialism. Canadian historians have analysed how femininity and race were fundamental in shifting perceptions of modernity and defining women's

While they protested their own exclusion from this world, women reformers themselves contributed to a larger cultural and political Canadian discourse that served to reinforce Anglo-Canadian colonialism.

emerging role in the public sphere. Racial theory became a decisive factor both to support, and to argue against, the admission of women into men's universities.

As Social Darwinism infiltrated popular discourse, opponents of women's admission to university explicitly charged university coeducation with undermining the reproductive fitness of white women and the integrity of the Victorian family. In response, women's education

campaigners increasingly exploited existing racist ideas to promote what they regarded as the specific rights of white women to higher education and professional work, above those of racialized and Indigenous men and women. During the most contentious public debates of the 1880s, women's rights advocates seized on Lamarckian theory to transform the goal of equal education into an imperative for the advancement of future generations; if women could pass along any acquired intellectual capacity to their children, then the education of Anglo-Canadian women was not simply a privilege, but essential to the work of nation-building.

Separate or equal?

The movement for women's higher education was divided by a tension between the demand for equal standards, and the argument that women's distinct needs could best be met by separate models of university provision. Reformers from the second camp tended to assume that higher education for women was inherently good, that it did not require the same intellectual rigour as men's education, and that it should prepare women to return to the domestic sphere as wives and mothers. Coeducation at men's universities was perceived to be far more subversive of normative gender relations. From the beginning, coeducation was linked to competition with between men and women for middle-class employment.

In Canada, support for coeducation developed first at small Protestant colleges, for example, at Mount Allison, which had ties to similar evangelical institutions in the United States. By contrast, the association of coeducation with American populism gave it little credibility within Anglican institutions—McGill, Trinity, and St. John's at Manitoba—where cultural attitudes were shaped by Oxford and Cambridge. In Catholic higher education, universities such as St. Francis Xavier and Ottawa, as well as those Catholic colleges within federated structures like St. Boniface at Manitoba and St. Michael's at the University of Toronto, were intended for priests and lay leaders. The men who made up their faculty and Boards could not accept coeducation. To provide for women, orders of women religious, such as the Congregation of Notre Dame at St. Francis Xavier, founded colleges in connection with their convent academies, playing an essential role in the provision and expansion of Catholic women's education.

In response to an intense campaign, by 1903, women had been admitted into most men's universities in English Canada. Outside of Catholic higher education, coeducation became the dominant model in Canadian universities. By 1900, most English-Canadian universities accepted women into their faculties of arts and science, as undergraduates with the right to attend classes alongside men students, and graduate with a degree. Francophone women had only limited access to higher education during this early period. Except for two Catholic colleges, Notre Dame and Bruyère, which gained affiliation to degree programs at the Université d'Ottawa in 1919, French-language universities did not admit women until 1936, when Laval opened its degrees to women.

These women entered an academic world shaped by religion, and at most Canadian universities at this time, that world was one of evangelical Protestantism. Each university operated within distinct provincial and local contexts, and it is significant that Mount Allison, Queen's, Victoria, Acadia, and Dalhousie—the first five universities to admit women between 1872 and 1881—had ties to the Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist churches at the time. Universities offered a broad foundation in the liberal arts, and their courses were designed to form young men into leaders in professions like medicine and law, as well as in business and politics. Gradually, the B.A. degree expanded to include new courses in physics, biochemistry, history, and modern languages. Yet, even as universities became more specialized, the sciences usually continued in faculties of arts, or in combined faculties of arts and science. Only in the 1920s did the B.Sc. emerge as a distinct degree granted to students in mathematics or science rather than arts.

> Women's integration into higher education cannot be seen as a linear and progressive narrative.

For the small Protestant colleges, allowing women to attend classes was part of a larger embrace of more sweeping changes that gave their institutions a stake in the future. Universities were cognizant of the material changes brought about by the rise of public education, the new market economy, and the shifting financial priorities of many Canadian families. While these institutions publicly endorsed the ways in which coeducation would benefit women, they also recognized that women's participation in their institutions would be an important component of their future successes. Thus, the admission of women was accomplished in a spirit of optimism but grounded by a calculated measure of expedience.

Changing structures, narrowing opportunities

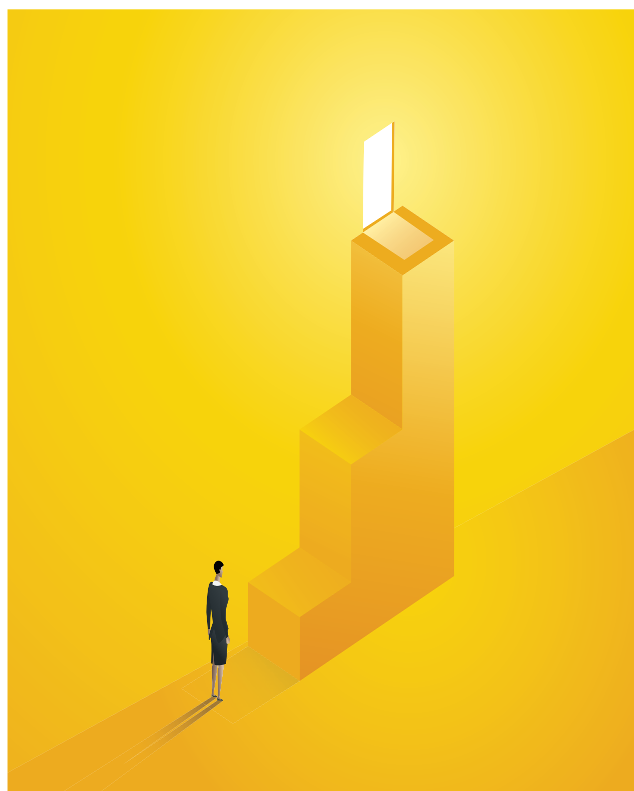
Early women students were attracted into the sciences, studied physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology, and sought employment as journalists, civil servants, and researchers. As new kinds of work became available in the commercial and business sectors, women trusted that a bachelor's degree would provide the foundation they needed to access a wide variety of middle-class jobs in banks, business offices, real estate firms, hospitals, or municipal government.

The promise of equal education, however, was not fulfilled in the longer term. Women's integration into higher education cannot be seen as a linear and progressive narrative. For much of the twentieth century, coeducation proved to work against women's interests in a variety of important ways. It deterred women from entering programs dominated by men, delayed the hiring of women faculty and researchers, and often resulted in inferior space on campus for women's extracurricular and athletic activities.

The history of women's admission to universities offers us the important reminder that even the most rigid institutions *can* change.

By the 1920s, universities were more specialized and began to play a more central role in the process of professionalization. Universities became modern research institutions with professional schools in law, medicine, and engineering, as well as greatly enlarged faculties of arts and science with new programs in the sciences and social sciences. The idea of professional status changed to include a more specific occupational identity, one regulated and defined by a body of knowledge imparted by university education and certification. Most of the new professional schools established boundaries that excluded women. Some institutions refused women outright during the admission process, while others discouraged them by introducing formal or informal quotas, restricting access to articling or interning experiences in law offices and hospitals, and fostering unwelcoming environments.

All these changes in higher education stimulated gendered debates over what constituted a profession, the greater value of theoretical disciplines based on academic knowledge versus technical skill, and the extent to which the university should teach applied and practical training. In the early twentieth century, motivated by fear that B.A. degrees were becoming feminized and diminished in value, Canadian universities created professional courses designed to attract women out of the faculties of arts, predicated on gendered assumptions about women's interests and abilities, such as household science, social work, nursing, and library science. The segregation of gendered



professions was compounded by a larger movement of the sciences away from the arts faculties, the establishment of the B.Sc. as a degree distinct from the B.A., and the development of an increasingly masculine culture within the fields of science and technology.

Systemic inequities have shaped Canadian higher education, and much more transformative change is necessary before all students can exercise their right to equal education in a supportive and inclusive environment. But the history of women's admission to universities offers us the important reminder that even the most rigid institutions *can* change. In Canada's newly coeducational universities, women proved that they could compete with men in arts, sciences, and professional programs, and challenged the gendered discourse that academic citizenship belonged to men alone. AM

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UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING: Performativity or pushing the margins?

Tania Das Gupta

Faculty play an important role in developing and implementing anti-racism and equity policies and practices at universities. What lessons can be learned from their experiences about how and why to pursue this work?

Having just finished three years in a role as Affirmative Action, Equity, and Inclusion (AAEI) Officer at York University, it is a good time to reflect on the work that I and others do to move forward anti-racism and equity work (known commonly as equity, diversity, and inclusion, or EDI) on campuses across Canada. Specifically, I am investigating the questions: what works, what doesn't work, what is discussed, and what remains in the margins of conversations?

A critique that has been levelled against EDI programs is that they are performative or a public relations exercise to capitalize on diversity in recruitment and fundraising campaigns. I agree with this critique, but my experience has taught me that such programs do open up space to contemplate equitable futures—a goal worth pursuing.

What is discussed?

In my experience, what is discussed most of the time in EDI work at universities is "unconscious bias." A big part of my responsibility as an AAEI Officer was to co-facilitate workshops for faculty on anti-racism and equity issues. This task later morphed into leading debriefing sessions following online modules created by the University towards the end of my term. Initially, members of faculty hiring committees, particularly the Affirmative Action representatives on these committees, had to attend our workshop delivered online to groups from all units and Faculties. Once these workshops were turned into shorter debriefing sessions following the creation of online modules, they became mandatory for all tenure-track faculty hiring committee members.

In the sessions, we engaged participants in discussion on the "educational pipeline"—the invisible institutional pathway that academics follow from graduate schools to the halls of academia—and the systemic ways in which under-represented groups of racialized people, women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and 2SLGBTQ+ people are "leaked" out through unconscious biases (UB). These biases play out through lack of encouragement and mentoring at the front end; reliance on the "old able-bodied white guys' networks" for recruitment, subjective reference letters, elite school and resume biases, hidden and not-so-hidden criteria such as "good communication skills," "team player," "good fit," "refereed publications," "world class," "excellent teacher," "leadership," "collegiality," and other familiar yet vague markers throughout the hiring process; and through the hurdles of tenure and promotion and "retention" in the end.

Some applicants are swept out at the beginning, while others are eliminated in the middle, and still others at the end of the pipeline, sometimes through exhaustion, illness, or harassment, sometimes through lack of support, or as a matter of survival. The point behind these UB discussions with hiring committee members was to explore what could be done proactively to counter these practices of exclusion and leakage. We also acknowledged that the pipeline extended to earlier years of education prior to graduate studies, including undergraduate years, high school, and primary school, and that many from under-represented groups were being lost even before they could reach post-secondary education. Indeed, the lack of diversity in certain areas among educators serves as a hidden curriculum for young students who might only see white teachers, thereby ruling out pursuing higher education.

> My general impression from these experiences is that faculty members from all disciplinary backgrounds are hungry to have these conversations.

The nature of engagement

There were two aspects of my experience that were different from those of my predecessors in

this role, and which potentially gave me a different perspective on the process. The first was the fact that my term fell during the COVID-19 pandemic when all our work was transferred online. My predecessors did this work in person. Another distinction in my term was the fact that my co-facilitator and I are both racialized women. This fact may have changed the dynamic between us and the participants from previous iterations.

Even though I co-facilitated these discussions online during the pandemic and do not find online conversations ideal, I enjoyed the animated and enthusiastic exchanges on Zoom and usually left feeling exhilarated. I often felt that we were our way to developing a collective understanding of how inequitable hiring practices occur. Most participants were vocal and asked interesting questions, some pointed to contradictions, and some shared insights based on experiences and prior learnings. We co-facilitators were constantly learning from these collective dialogues, and we frequently modified our workshops based on our deepening knowledge base. There were of course some participants who were silent, and we knew they were there because they had to be, but those were few and far between.

My general impression from these experiences is that faculty members from all disciplinary backgrounds are hungry to have these conversations. Out of hundreds that we engaged with, I can remember only a handful who vocalized their resentment that they were mandated to attend the sessions. A few indicated verbally and non-verbally that their knowledge on these matters was already extensive and that these sessions were not adding anything new—which I found hard to believe. Interestingly, these attitudes did not always come from units that were diverse. There were also a few instances of blatant articulations of sexism and racism by participants in these sessions, which we had to address during the meetings and afterwards.

Equity work as "training": A misconception

There is often an expectation that equity and anti-racist work will come with formulaic answers from "experts" and that UB discussions constitute "training" rather than developing a particular lens, a certain reflexivity, and self-awareness that applies differently in unique hiring situations. To this point, some participants expressed anxiety that we were not providing them with clear-cut answers or ways to hire equitably, and that we were merely increasing the complexity of the job at hand. This view of seeing UB as training that would provide formulaic answers is very compatible with neoliberal bureaucratic thinking, where every social problem is understood as an individual discrepancy and the solution is also left to individual actors following set procedures.

To be sure, some of this work does constitute training, i.e., collecting data and following established procedures flowing out of laws and collective agreements, including the production of certain documents. However, of central importance is the expansion of our collective knowledge about these issues, which allows us to make fair and equitable decisions.

educated professionals in their field would have to be licensed or demonstrate eligibility for licensing in order to be considered for shortlisting at a Canadian university. This requirement eliminated many applicants, including those who are permanent residents of Canada. Colleagues in some units pointed out that external funding regulations limited the number of applicants that can be hired. We did not explore what hiring might look like if these parameters were different—needless to say, it would greatly change the nature of hiring at our universities.

One of the assumptions of the UB paradigm is that we are all guilty of partiality, predispositions, and prejudices. Thus, there was a comfort level imagined among participants, since the framework was not asserting questions of power nor accusing certain groups of having more social power than others. This framework assumed that Black, brown, and Indigenous colleagues were also carrying unconscious biases with them along with white counterparts, and so the conversation became less confrontational, and members of dominant groups were absolved of racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia.

However, we know that privately, members of underrepresented groups talk about the fact that we are not operating on an equal plane and that power differentials among professors play out on an everyday basis, including in hiring situations. Anti-racist educator Shirley Anne Tate, who was a guest panelist on our campus earlier this year, points out that not considering systemic racism maintains what she calls "whiteliness" or white supremacy.

Once or twice, participants in our workshops pointed out that it is not clear what is unconscious and what is conscious. While noting that fact, we did not pursue that question to any great extent, not being trained in psychology as facilitators. Perhaps facilitators could dwell on that more in sessions, but it would have to be done carefully and requires thoughtful pedagogic interventions (and where do we learn those?).

Dealing with difficult encounters

To be honest, I am not sure that we addressed every situation satisfactorily when it came to dealing with racism, sexism, and other conflicts in our sessions with faculty. As a matter of fact, I know we didn't on some occasions. Those occasions linger in my mind. There were some difficult conversations, for instance, when members would talk about conflicts within their hiring committees and power imbalances, including racism, microaggressions, and even harassment. The sensitive work of listening and advising members confiding in us with such experiences is not in our job descriptions, but it inevitably happens. It is uncompensated emotional work that has been described as "a tax" paid particularly by racialized advocates within higher education.

What I learned from these occasions is to suspend the agenda and attend to the situation at hand just as we would do in a classroom situation. I have heard of the notion of using such "teachable moments" for deep analysis and creative thinking. That is easier said than done! But it is not impossible, and we can work towards it.

This brings me to what was not discussed (or not discussed adequately).

What is not discussed?

In our sessions, we left certain structural obstacles as fixed, for instance: government requirements around employment equity, free trade agreements, immigration rules, and availability of occupational expertise. Occasionally, colleagues would point out that internationally

The role of systemic discrimination

Another issue that we did not interrogate in our sessions, but remains critical to anti-racism and equity work, is the role of systemic and institutional discrimination in the lives of the people who work and study within those systems and institutions. UB discussions assume that discrimination is a result only of individual inclinations and individual practices based on those inclinations and fail to see its systemic and institutionalized parts. The fact that individuals can act in discriminatory ways because the institutional structures and cultures allow them to do so without impunity is an aspect of institutional discrimination. It is a topic that is rarely acknowledged by universities and skirted around in UB discussions. The question remains: How must we consider the fragility of dominant group members in pointing out racism, sexism, ableism, and the like, while ignoring Indigenous, Black, racialized folks, women, and others traumatized by violence? When we often glibly declare that we are providing a "safe space for everyone," is that even possible when there are unequal power relations in every group? And what are the pre-requisites for that to be true? Systemic discrimination, such as systemic racism and sexism, is significant to name and disrupt, because that is the reason why, for instance, certain groups, including Black, Indigenous, women, persons with disabilities, and trans folks remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), despite all the years of UB discussions.

Another systemic element of the hiring process that we examined—but did not reimagine in our sessions—is the job advertisement itself and the job criteria highlighted in it. Its importance in ensuring that certain folks are not being excluded from the outset is often disregarded. By using and re-using old templates of ads, it is easy to use hackneyed phrases such as "refereed publications" in "high-impact journals" or the industry's "top-ranked journals," which serve to eliminate excellent candidates from historically under-represented groups. We did talk in our sessions about the significance of ads in systematizing racism, sexism, and other discriminations but there is often not enough thought given to drafting those ads or to the fact that the Dean's Offices often have a decisive say in the language in those ads. It is not clear to me that administrators at higher levels are well versed in issues of equity and diversity, as seen in the language used in contemporary job postings for university faculty. Participants in our sessions often acknowledged their powerlessness to consider alternatives to certain received practices although they knew the problems with them.

Another systemic issue that is not part of UB training is the kind of work experience under-represented group members have in academia after they are hired. Are their perspectives and knowledges recognized within departmental curricula in a central way, rather than peripherally? Are they being allocated only to teach "elective" courses as opposed to "required" courses? Are their community engagements recognized as indicative of "scholarly impact"? Are their research projects amplified? Are they being treated as tokens? Are they being harassed? Are they being evaluated negatively because they teach against the grain and use different pedagogies? If they face challenges, are they supported by co-workers, chairs, and administrators, or pathologized as problems? In our sessions, we invariably talked about mentoring and the need to ensure "readiness," but I often had a feeling that there was dissonance between the discussions that took place in our sessions and what happened in reality.

Even after expressing many concerns and sharing my apprehensions about affirmative action and equity programs in general, and UB sessions in particular, I would still insist on their importance and urge their continuation on our campuses.

Even after expressing many concerns and sharing my apprehensions about affirmative action and equity programs in general, and UB sessions in particular, I would still insist on their importance and urge their continuation on our campuses. These programs provide us with a crucial space to engage, clarify, share, struggle over, learn from each other, and create much-needed relationships and knowledge on these matters. They may be somewhat performative, but they are also pushing the margins in pursuit of a more equitable university. AM

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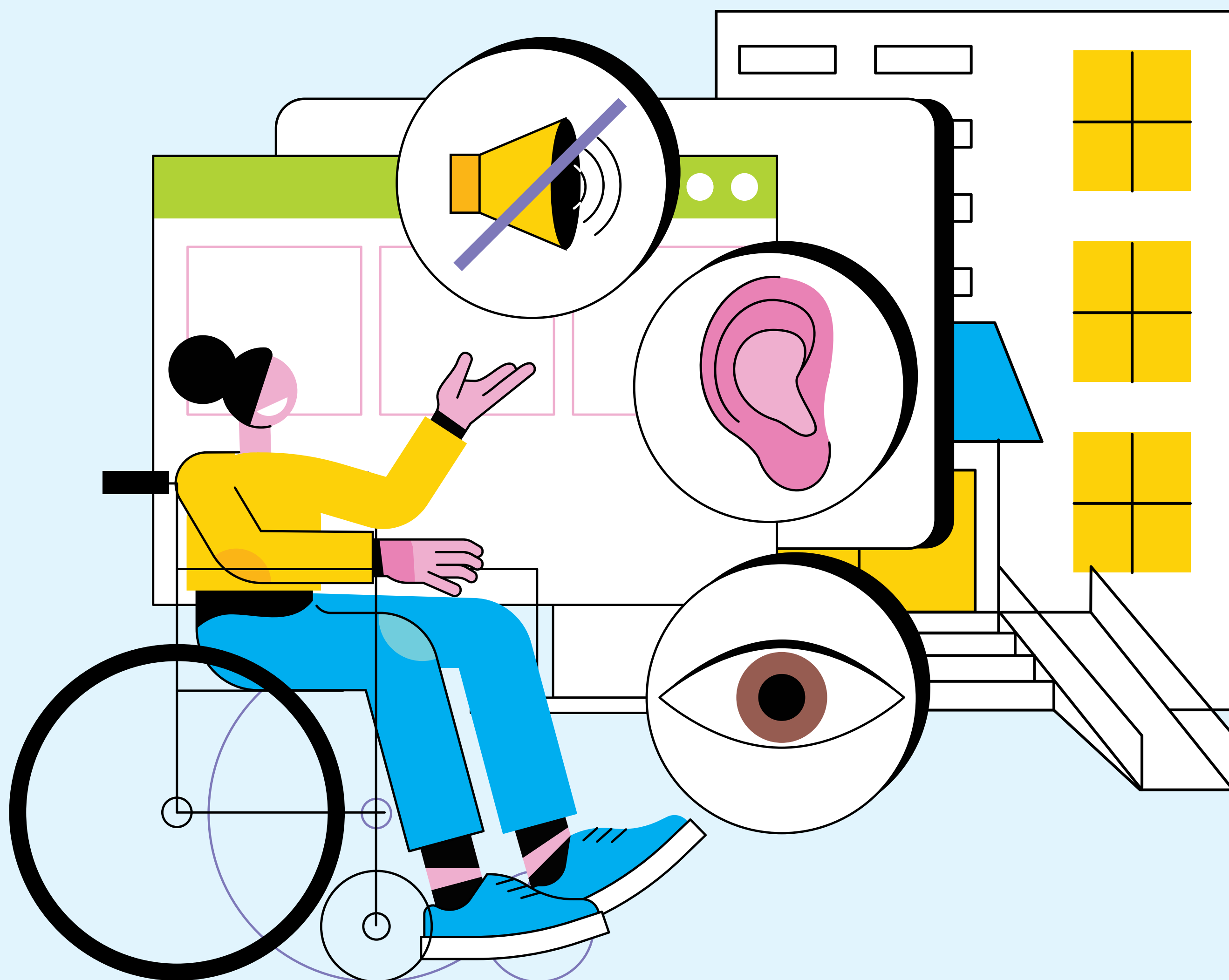
Universal design for universal access

Erika Katzman

What does it mean to truly access an academic space? According to disabled activists and disability studies scholars, universities have a long way to go in making their physical, digital, and cultural spaces accessible to students, faculty, and staff—and they have recommendations for how to do so.



Disabled knowledge (aka “crip wisdom”) holds potential to transform antiqued systems in ways that stand to benefit us all.

Disabled people may be welcome in academic spaces, but we are seldom actively welcomed. For this kind of active welcome to take place—whether for students, faculty, or staff—institutions must start to think differently about disability. A dominant deficit model constructs disability as a medical problem to avoid, rehabilitate or eliminate. Disabled activists and disability studies scholars argue that this limiting view stifles creativity and prevents full inclusion.

Physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional differences are normal facets of human diversity, yet stereotypes and stigmas cause people whose differences fall too far outside of the norm to be labelled as burdens on already stressed social support systems.

While daily encounters with ableism and constant self-advocacy tax precious personal resources (emotional, physical, and temporal), experience navigating systemic barriers, attitudinal barriers and nebulous support systems is also generative. Disabled knowledge (aka “crip wisdom”) holds potential to transform antiqued systems in ways that stand to benefit us all.

Access as a Legal Responsibility

Human rights laws, such as the *Ontario Human Rights Code,* compel postsecondary institutions “to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.” The Code responds to documented histories of systemic oppression and inequitable treatment experienced by people whose bodies deviate from societally constructed norms and ideals. The Code identifies disability as a protected ground, alongside age, race, gender, and sexual orientation, among others.

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was adopted, addressing a need for more specific guidance to support equal access and freedom from discrimination. Under the AODA, standards have been created to ensure equal access for disabled people in specific areas of public life, including publicly funded postsecondary education. While the postsecondary education standards have not yet been formalized as laws, a comprehensive report by the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee outlines recommendations—including significant changes in attitudes and practices—as well as government and institution funding to support implementation of the standards. In the interim, postsecondary institutions should begin making changes immediately to remove barriers for disabled students, faculty, and staff.

Access as Accommodation

Accommodations represent the dominant framework for access in postsecondary education. The concept of accommodation frames disability as anomalous, extraordinary conditions attached to a minority of individuals. From this perspective, accommodations exist to level the playing field when *disabilities* (understood as impairments or conditions) create barriers to inclusion or access.

For decades, disabled activists and disability studies scholars have touted an alternative definition of disablement: as systemic discrimination against bodies and minds that deviate too far from societally determined norms. As activist Talila Lewis explains, these norms are not arbitrarily determined: “These constructed ideas [of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness] are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.”

Accommodations, then, compensate not for a person’s impairments, but for dominant systems that were designed to welcome and support a limited range of human diversity.

The work of self-advocacy and of navigating systems designed without disability in mind adds to the already onerous day-to-day work of living with disability.

When disability is re-framed to highlight physical, social, attitudinal, and organizational barriers, best practices for supporting access can be re-imagined as well.

Access as Work

Under the current legal framework, the work of securing access falls on disabled community members and their allies, taxing already strained resources of energy and time.

Accommodations infrastructure undoubtedly creates more opportunities for disabled students to participate and succeed in postsecondary education. Yet, the construction of disability as an individual deficit places onus on individuals and empathetic others to learn about and seek out resources to support disabled community members' legal entitlements.

The work of self-advocacy and of navigating systems designed without disability in mind adds to the already onerous day-to-day work of living with disability, which includes managing embodied symptoms as well as environmental and attitudinal barriers. The accommodation model requires that disabled students, faculty, and staff disclose disabilities, adding cognitive and emotional burdens as we weigh the pros and cons of accessing supports in environments that "valorize perfection and stigmatize anything that hints at intellectual (or physical) weakness," as Jay T. Dolmage writes in the landmark 2017 publication *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education.*

Furthermore, conditional reimbursement systems require upfront payment for medical documentation to support accommodation requests and for some types of assistive technology, creating both financial burden and risk. These kinds of accommodation-related taxes on personal resources are easily taken for granted when disability is framed as an individual problem. When disability is re-framed to highlight physical, social, attitudinal, and organizational barriers, best practices for supporting access can be re-imagined as well.

Access as Universal Design

Accommodations represent a dominant framework for access, but they are not the only option. In a 2018 report titled "Landscape of Accessibility and Accommodation in Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities," the student-led advocacy organization NEADS (National Educational Association of Disabled Students) advocates for the adoption of a universal design model that is flexible, dynamic, and collaborative, fosters positive relationships, upholds academic rigour, and is tailored to account for the complexities of postsecondary student life.

Universal design upholds the principle that what is necessary for some can benefit many. Designed in part to address accommodation needs, it can also support international students, first-generation students, and many others. Since universal design focuses on the environment rather than the person, it can equally benefit disabled students, faculty, and staff in postsecondary environments.

In an addendum to *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education,* Dolmage offers a comprehensive list of "places to start:" everyday universal design practices that educators can adopt in different areas of their pedagogy and practice. These topics include:

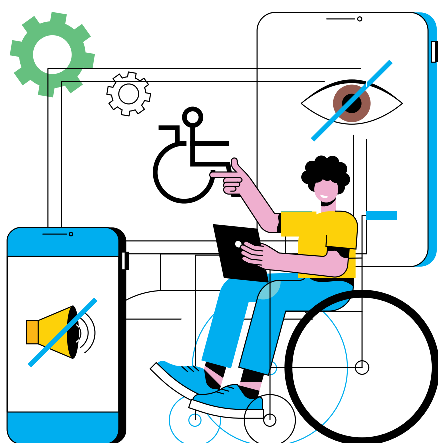
- Design of lectures and presentations
- Questions and discussions
- Group work, collaboration, and in-class activities
- Large assignments
- Tests and exams
- One-on-one with students
- Laboratory settings
- General suggestions

In all of these areas, universal design can be used to develop more creative and inclusive practices to engage with *all* students. These universal design recommendations can also benefit faculty and create ways to innovate and change teaching methods to better suit their own abilities.

Access as Collaborative Pedagogy

The accommodations approach frames access as something educators do for students. As a professor teaching undergraduate students, I am learning that access is more art than science; it's a practice that students, faculty, and staff

> Universal design can be used to develop more creative and inclusive practices to engage with *all* students.



evolve together. Through efforts to share access-related labour with my students, I am recognizing the collective benefits of creating inclusive pedagogy.

Several years ago, I taught a Deaf student. Their American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters requested that I post comprehensive lecture notes ahead of classes so that they could prepare (i.e., learn new vocabulary). Years later, this practice I adopted to support one student's access continues to benefit me and all my students. I am better prepared for classes myself when I commit to posting my lecture slides ahead of class. Students with diverse abilities, language skills, and learning styles appreciate this practice as well.

In the fall of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift to remote learning, I advocated for funding to caption recorded lectures. Captions are essential for students with hearing loss, but they can also benefit students with different learning styles and language skills. The practice of captioning recorded content required extra resources: I learned new technology, hired support, and recorded lectures well in advance. At midterm, I polled students to gauge whether the effort was worth it. Many students responded that the captions were extremely helpful—and most of these students did not identify as disabled. The captions supported students who were studying in busy home environments and were better able to focus when they could see the visual text on screen. For others, captions provided a helpful memory aid.

On returning to in-person learning last year, I kept up two other practices I had adopted during the pandemic: using a lapel microphone and taking a 10-minute break every hour. At the end of last term, a student approached me to share that she had no idea how her hearing loss was affecting her learning until she experienced lectures delivered with a microphone. I've received feedback that consistently scheduled breaks help students plan to self-accommodate their needs for conditions ranging from pain to challenges with attention. I've even come to recognize ways that regular breaks help my own neurodivergent brain manage classroom responsibilities more efficiently.

Small changes such as these cost little and benefit many. For disabled and non-disabled community members alike, access features can help create more equitable access, including—and perhaps especially—for many students who would never know to ask.

Access as Collective Responsibility

When disability is understood as group identity shared by historically marginalized populations, the need to accept collective responsibility for culture change and barrier removal becomes clear. Training can help community members in different staff positions better understand how to address ableism, discrimination, and microaggressions in their roles.

The Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee report recommends training for employee groups including:

- Disability services staff, who can learn to recognize the social and emotional impacts of barriers, and procedures for reporting barriers or seeking recourse.
- Educators, who can learn to create accessible course content and collaborate with librarians to procure course materials that are available in accessible formats.
- Administrators and senior leadership, who can learn about organizational barriers, such as the time and training educators and staff need to provide accessible content and services.

Accepting collective responsibility for access is a core principle of current disability justice organizing.

When disability is understood as group identity shared by historically marginalized populations, the need to accept collective responsibility for culture change and barrier removal becomes clear.

Many of us are equipped with the ingenuity to guide change.

However, as OCUFA outlined in the 2021 *Response to the Initial Recommendations for the Development of Proposed Postsecondary Accessibility Standards,* appropriate funding is required to compensate university employees' contributions to access work.

Access as Institutional Responsibility

So long as institutional systems are designed without a full range of human diversity in mind, access and inclusion will require retroactive work.

Responsibility for upholding equity frequently falls to the very people who confront exclusionary barriers and allies who choose to dedicate precious time and resources in solidarity. Until institutions recognize and take seriously their responsibility to make meaningful systemic and cultural change, the time and energy access work requires will continue to exacerbate inequities.

Access as "Crip Wisdom" (aka Disabled Knowledge)

Unlike women, transgender and gender non-conforming people, racialized people and minoritized ethnic or religious groups, disabled people are seldom thought of as a historically marginalized community.

A burgeoning disability justice movement emphasizes the transformative potential in attending to, learning from, and following the leadership of "those most impacted"—people whose shared experience of intersectional marginalization under oppressive and exclusionary systems generates deep experiential knowledge.

Amid the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many people struggled to cope with sudden isolation and disruptions to access and routine. During this time, disabled people with varied experiences shared tips for survival: how to stay connected socially from home, how to support sick loved ones, education on virus transmission, tips for navigating healthcare and insurance, and tools for assessing the quality of publicly available scientific information. On campus, crip wisdom was prepared to inform everything from slowing down to prioritize wellness, to best practices for accessible and sustainable distance learning.

Importantly, crip wisdom extends well beyond the pandemic and virtual classrooms. Disabled people possess highly specialized knowledge about barriers, discrimination, and exclusion. Many of us are equipped with the ingenuity to guide change. Institutions that are genuinely committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion must hire people with lived experience and pay them for their expertise. While paid employment is an important first step, no change will occur without follow-through on our recommendations. Tokenistic inclusion (i.e., including people from equity-seeking groups but not honouring our contributions) does more harm than good.

Access as Culture Change for Collective Liberation

Disabled bodies and minds confront ableism in academic culture every day. Meeting times are planned and changed on short notice, allowed to carry on beyond scheduled timeframes, or to go on for hours without breaks; funding applications, and submissions and revisions for publications demand rapid turnaround time; and workflows and efficiencies take precedence over embodied needs. These norms of academic culture affect inequities and exclusion for disabled community members and many more people.

Adapting and developing practices that ensure no body or mind is left behind must become the standard. Policies that discourage blatant discrimination and place onus on individuals to pursue recourse set a low bar for equity and inclusion. A genuine commitment to changing campus culture to promote equitable access and meaningful inclusion will take work and resources, and those efforts stand to benefit us all. AM

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MISSING CURRICULUM: Why we need to teach postsecondary students about HIV/AIDS resistance

Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa

How connected are young activists to the history and current landscape of HIV/AIDS research and lived experiences? How can faculty bridge the knowledge gap? As a doctoral student, Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa received the 2021-2022 OCUFA Henry Mandelbaum Graduate Fellowship for Excellence in Social Sciences, Humanities, or Arts.

What's your first memory of HIV/AIDS?

I asked this question while conducting in-depth interviews for my dissertation research, *From Racial Hauntings to Wonderous Echoes: Towards a Collective Memory of HIV/AIDS Resistance.* The main goal of my dissertation was to help combat the historical erasure, or whitewashing, of Queer and Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (QTBIPOC) activists from mainstream remembrances of HIV/AIDS resistance within and around the city colonially known as Toronto (Tkaronto). I formulated this goal with the desire to help their present-day counterparts better connect with the city's rich and ongoing history of intersectional HIV/AIDS activism. My project builds on a long tradition of QTBIPOC activist-scholarship within and beyond the city.

For my research, I interviewed 60 racialized and Indigenous folx aged 18–35 about what they felt they knew about local histories of HIV/AIDS resistance. By "local" I meant those within the densely populated region colonially known as Central Southern Ontario, and the adjoining subregions therein: the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area and Tri-Cities-Guelph. Research participants identified as either activists, advocates, or organizers, and were all engaged in at least one of the following forms of gender and sexuality resistance: feminist, HIV/AIDS, queer, sex worker, and trans.

The opening question

To ease into our discussions about HIV/AIDS politics, I asked participants the opening question: *What's your first memory of HIV/AIDS?* To my surprise, nearly every participant responded with a negative story about their sexual education from prekindergarten (PK) to Grade 12. Across these stories, HIV (which was almost always conflated with AIDS) was consistently framed as the ultimate consequence of engaging in sex and other "deviant" or "risky" behaviours, such as drug use. Folx were also told, to quote one participant, Aida (she/her), "that AIDS is something that happens in Africa, for some reason," in which "Africa" was conceptualized based of the west's anti-Black and colonial fictionalization of the continent as poor, premodern, and homogenous.

These two lessons combined led most participants in my study to believe, in the earlier years of their life, that they would never, nor could ever, contract HIV. HIV/AIDS was, for them, something that happened to *those people, out there,* who either did extremely dangerous things that they would never do, or who lived in unknown and unimaginable worlds.

Almost all participants felt that the misconceptions of their youth had carried into their adulthood more-or-less unchallenged. In the case of those living with HIV (N=27), this held true up until the moment of their diagnosis (and sometimes, afterwards). For those not living with HIV (N=33), their youthful misconceptions about the disease never really went away–even when their intellectual knowledge of HIV/AIDS had grown and evolved.

Evaluating HIV/AIDS education

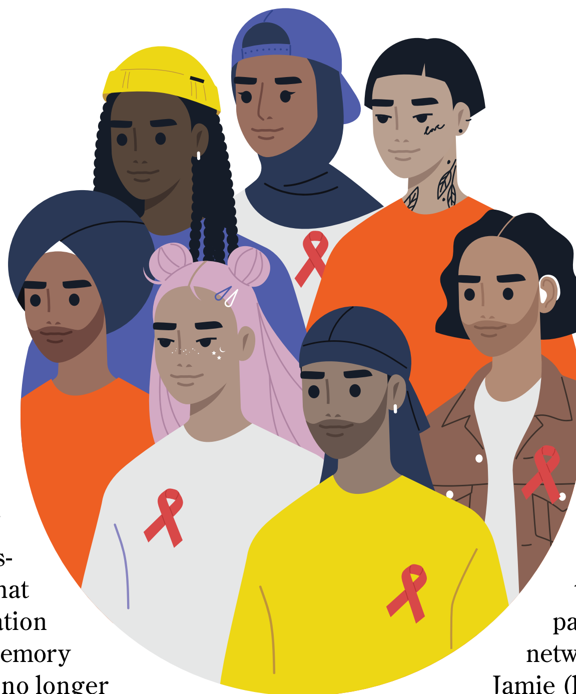
These findings did not entirely surprise me. I am a gender nonbinary queer woman of colour community organizer within Central Southern Ontario who, like my participants, is between the ages of 18–35. At the onset of my dissertation research, I had begun to suspect that my peers (i.e., other younger racialized and Indigenous folx engaged in gender and sexuality resistance) had little to no knowledge of the histories of HIV/AIDS activism that precede us. My hunch got stronger in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic when QTBIPOC were leading community responses to the global crisis across Central Southern Ontario, yet appeared to draw few, if any, connections between this work and the work that our elders did in response to the AIDS pandemic–something seasoned AIDS activists encouraged us to do.

I couldn't blame my peers for this. I had been entirely ignorant of the ongoing significance of HIV/AIDS resistance until my chance introduction to the topic in 2016 when, in the first year of my PhD program, I took a graduate course in the sociology of health. The instructor, a seasoned AIDS activist, introduced me to the AIDS Activist History Project.

> I also wanted to explore what could be done to rectify the situation and to move towards a collective memory in which QTBIPOC activists are no longer forgotten.

I learned early on in my program that Toronto-based responses to HIV/AIDS have played a fundamental role in shaping not only local sites of contemporary HIV activism, but all present-day gender and sexuality resistance efforts within and around the city. I also learned through my scholarly work writ large that QTBIPOC are generally whitewashed out of (erased or forgotten from) Canadian

histories of gender and sexuality movements. Thus emerged the catalyst for my dissertation research: I wanted to explore whether my hunch was correct and if younger generations of non-white gender and sexuality organizers, advocates, and activists did, in fact, lack a strong historical knowledge or collective memory of local sites of QTBIPOC-led HIV/AIDS resistance. I also wanted to explore what could be done to rectify the situation and to move towards a collective memory in which QTBIPOC activists are no longer forgotten.



As it turns out, my hunch was correct. Of the 60 people who I interviewed, many of whom were living with HIV, only three had a strong connection to and solid sensed knowledge of HIV/AIDS resistance—locally or globally, historically or presently. I was therefore not entirely shocked that participants in my study also continued to struggle with outdated stereotypes and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. If we know little to nothing about the histories of HIV/AIDS resistance that ultimately shape our present-day work, then it stands to reason that we would feel disconnected from HIV/AIDS as an ongoing site of struggle. Similarly, if we are taught from a young age that HIV/AIDS is a personal risk, versus a social issue, then we are less likely to develop a collective memory of the resistances that preceded it.

The effects of disconnection

What did surprise me, however, was the extent to which this sense of disconnect has impacted younger activist generations. It wasn't just that participants tended to know little to nothing about HIV/AIDS resistance, but that the lessons that they—that we—were taught during PK-12 education have remained strong enough within our minds that, even as adults fighting for gender and sexual liberation, we continue to wrestle with the AIDS-phobic myths taught to us in our youth.

There are many things that trouble me about this finding. As a longtime postsecondary educator and a recently graduated postsecondary student, it is clear that there has been a failure of postsecondary education to effectively teach about the sociopolitical realities of HIV/AIDS, past and present. Every participant in my study either had or was pursuing some type of postsecondary degree, many of which were in the liberal arts or helping professions. Yet very few of them were taught about HIV/AIDS resistances, or struggles, within their courses. Most odd about this is that many participants had extensive training in knowledge sites that overlap with HIV/AIDS struggles and resistances, such as feminism, disability studies, queer and trans issues, anti-racism and decolonialization, social work, and even sex work and harm reduction. This oversight also extended to participants' activist and community networks. As phrased by one participant, Jamie (he/him), "We care so deeply about intersectionality and getting everyone included, but when you think of that list of identities, HIV/AIDS is not included." I even talked to a few social workers who discussed the consistent failure of their programs to teach HIV/AIDS as an ongoing and intersectional social issue.

Those who did encounter HIV/AIDS education within postsecondary found it, at best, lackluster.

Those who did encounter HIV/AIDS education within postsecondary found it, at best, lackluster. Many felt that HIV/AIDS, if taught at all, was generally explored as a sidenote within university or college classes, regularly reduced to one fleeting section of a course. In rare instances in which participants were able to take a partial or full course on HIV/AIDS, it was either taught through:

1) a historical lens that positioned HIV/AIDS as an outdated "gay plague" that only really impacted white gay cisgender men in the 1980s, thus obscuring its longstanding impacts on non-white communities;
2) a biomedical lens that posed HIV/AIDS as a treatable illness that, through biomedical interventions, has essentially been cured, thus obscuring the significant economic, colonial, racial, cultural, and geographic barriers to treatment; or
3) a Global Development lens that framed HIV/AIDS as a faraway "African Disease."

All three of these frames made participants feel even more disconnected from HIV/AIDS.

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Developing community knowledge

Critical HIV/AIDS research certainly exists. The problem, it would seem, is that it is not regularly or thoughtfully taught within the postsecondary classroom. The reason for this, I suspect, is the misguided western belief that "AIDS is over," whereby "over" means no longer impacting privileged white people within the global north who have unfiltered and largely unfettered economic and geographic access to HIV biomedical prevention methods and treatment strategies.

Further, much of the critical Canadian research on HIV/AIDS focuses on HIV/AIDS struggles, covering topics like biomedicalization, global distribution, sexuality, and (maybe) harm reduction. HIV/AIDS as a site of resistance, however, is not really discussed. The long and rich history of HIV/AIDS resistance within so-called Canada, and especially within Tkaronto, is undertaught. Moreover, in the few instances in which the topic does enter critical discourses, it is almost always narrated around the historical experiences of white gay cis men. When I asked participants in my study, "What is your first memory of HIV/AIDS?" I began to unravel the wounds that these kinds of silences have had on their—on our—sociological psyches.

In my dissertation research, I set out to cultivate a collective memory of HIV/AIDS that might help younger and future generations of racialized and Indigenous folx engage in gender and sexuality resistance within and around Tkaronto and better relate to the work that our elders did in response to the AIDS pandemic. Something I didn't expect to find is that our first memories of the virus have remained, for all intents and purposes, the anchor of our "activist imaginaries," because postsecondary institutions and activist spaces are doing little to add HIV/AIDS to that "list of identities" that foreground our otherwise critical syllabi.

For me, this oversight boils down to Canada's collective failure and/or refusal to educate youth on the ongoing and deeply racialized histories of HIV/AIDS resistance, especially locally, but also translocally and globally. If my research is any indicator, this failure extends to postsecondary institutions. Indeed, it seems that pedagogical narratives on HIV/AIDS resistance might even constitute "the missing curriculum" of Canadian postsecondary education.

Questions for educators

In not teaching these histories, particularly from the perspectives of QTBIPOC activists, we feed into the idea that they are not relevant, augmenting the false lesson taught to many Canadians during PK–12 education: that HIV/AIDS is not about us. The negative impacts of this lesson are disproportionately felt among non-white gender and sexual minorities, especially those who are Black and Indigenous, who continue to get HIV and die from AIDS at pandemic rates.

Postsecondary educators may not be directly responsible for how PK–12 sexual education programs run, but we are responsible for providing the adults who leave these programs with the critical information that they need to understand the world fully, holistically, and more compassionately. This is the case for liberal arts programs, such as the social sciences and humanities, which pride themselves on their ability to promote ethical "citizenship" within, through, and beyond, the classroom. It is also true for teachers and programs that publish statements against anti-Blackness and settler colonialism, while claiming solidarity with the marginalized and subjugated; whose faculty and students build entire careers upon studying social in/justice. Finally, it is essential for postsecondary programs like social work, critical psychology, and other social-justice therapy degrees that are shaping the minds and hearts of the providers who will one day work with and support those living with HIV or AIDS.

The negative impacts of this lesson are disproportionately felt among non-white gender and sexual minorities, especially those who are Black and Indigenous, who continue to get HIV and die from AIDS at pandemic rates.

With this, I invite you to ask yourself: what is your first memory of HIV/AIDS? Chances are, it will be a memory mired in stigma, miseducation, and oppressive thinking. Then ask yourself: What, as an educator, have you done to help dispel that myth for your students? What, as a postsecondary student, have you learned to help dispel that myth within the present? What, as a social being, have you continued to hold onto from that first memory? Finally, as an activist, advocate, or organizer, what is at risk if postsecondary schools do not try to rectify the missing curriculum of HIV/AIDS resistance? AM

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