



Stacey Hannem, Associate Professor
Department of Criminology, Wilfrid Laurier University
519-756-8228 ext. 5785 or shannem@wlu.ca

Beth Gurney, Associate Director
Communications & Public Affairs, Laurier Brantford
519-756-8228 ext. 5753 or bgurney@wlu.ca

JUNE 14, 2016 | 133-16

Laurier conference explores conditions and needs of sex workers in rural Ontario

BRANTFORD – Findings from a pioneering study assessing the needs of sex workers in rural Southern Ontario will be presented at the Let's Talk About Sex Work conference at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus on Monday, June 20. Hosted by REAL (Resources Education Advocacy for Local Sex Workers) – a working group comprised of local social and health service professionals – Laurier, and the Sexual Assault Centre of Brant, the one-day event begins at 9:30 a.m. in room 202 of the Research and Academic Centre West, 150 Dalhousie Street in Brantford.

Lead researcher Stacey Hannem, an associate professor in Laurier's Department of Criminology, will present the findings of this first-ever rural sex worker research project, undertaken in the communities of Brantford and the Counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk. Throughout the course of this Trillium Foundation-funded initiative, Hannem and her research team interviewed 30 sex workers as well as a dozen health and social service providers to gain information about sex work in this cluster of communities. The research was designed to determine: whether or not sex workers are accessing health and social services; to analyze the current conditions in these communities for those in the sex trade; and to determine what improvements can be made.

Following Hannem's research presentation, Alex Tigchelaar, Laurier's inaugural activist-in-residence and a research assistant on the REAL project, will present her perspectives and examine personal, professional and societal attitudes toward sex and sex work. The afternoon will be comprised of two small-group workshops.

"This is an ideal opportunity for anyone who works in the healthcare or social services sector to discuss tools, techniques and resources to better serve clients in the sex-work sector," said Hannem. "However, anyone interested in exploring how we can better create an inclusive community is welcome to join us."

[Event registration, speaker biographies, workshop details](#) and contact information are available online.