



Andrew M. Robinson, Associate Professor  
 Program Coordinator Human Rights & Human Diversity  
 Acting Program Coordinator Law & Society  
 519-756-8228 x 5743 or arobinson@wlu.ca

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

OCT. 4, 2016 | 212-16

## High school students to attend conference at Laurier on human rights and development in Africa

BRANTFORD – Wilfrid Laurier University’s Human Rights and Human Diversity program will host over 200 local high school students for the second annual “Human Rights and Development in Africa” conference October 12.

During the conference, students will hear from keynote speakers and participate in breakout sessions led by five interns who worked in Ghana last summer and three Ghanaian grad students currently studying at Laurier. The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholars program provides funding for Ghanaian graduate students to study at Laurier and for Canadian undergraduate students to spend their summer gaining valuable experience working with organizations in Ghana.

“This conference acts as a way for both Ghanaian and Laurier students to give back to Canada, and the Brantford community, by sharing what they have learned through their experiences,” said Andrew Robinson, associate professor of Laurier’s Human Rights & Human Diversity program and organizer of the event. “This conference is a great example of what Laurier means by ‘inspiring lives of leadership and purpose.’”

Keynote speakers include:

- **LGBT Politics in Africa:** Elizabeth Baisley (BA ‘12), a PhD candidate at Princeton in the Department of Politics, will address LGBT issues in Africa.
- **Reimagining our futures and rethinking development practices:** Kimalee Phillip, a forum program associate with Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), will address some of the ways in which the development discourse has been harmful across the African continent and examples of co-created, community-centered approaches and solutions for sustainability of self and community. Phillip is available for interviews.

Baisley is a Brantford native who graduated from Pauline Johnson High School as well as Laurier’s Human Rights and Human Diversity program. She studies historically marginalized groups with a focus on human rights, identity politics and the politics of marginalization through her PhD program at Princeton University. Currently, her research explores interactions between the tactics and priorities of social justice interest groups in Canada. Baisley has an MA in Political Studies from Queen’s University and has also completed studies at the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies and at the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation.

Phillip is a forum program associate with the Association for Women’s Rights in Development. She is an African-Grenadian educator, organizer, consultant and writer who specializes in the fields of legal studies, workers’ rights, gender-based and sexualized violence, anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogies and organizational development. She holds an MA in Legal Studies from Carleton University and also serves as a senior equality officer with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

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Students from Pauline Johnson High School, Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School (BCI), North Park Collegiate and Vocational School (NPC), Assumption College, and St. Mary's High School in Woodstock will attend the conference.

The conference will be held on Oct. 12 in the Research and Academic Centre - East (RCE) in room 004 on the university's Brantford campus beginning at 9:25 a.m.

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