

# **Alyson E. King, PhD**

**Assistant Professor and Director, Community Development and Policy Studies, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at University of Ontario Institute of Technology**

Oshawa, ON, CA

Developing pathways to a positive educational experience for underrepresented students

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## **Description**

Vulnerable populations, including at-risk students and those living with mental illness, face significant barriers to being productive and successful members of society. Without education and skills, many people end up living in poverty and in poor health, which strains the economy.

Alyson E. King, PhD, Assistant Professor, and Program Director of Community Development and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, examines how supported education can improve opportunities for vulnerable populations. Her research focuses on the experiences of underrepresented university students and adults living with mental illness, and she is developing ways to bolster the learning environment and create engaging learning opportunities.

Not everyone fits into the "cookie cutter" model of education, and too often, vocation is its focus. For youth and adults who might not normally attend post-secondary education, understanding what students have done to be successful in spite of socio-economic and health barriers is key to opening new opportunities. Dr. King also believes greater emphasis must be placed on education that improves the quality of life and community integration for people with mental illness. Through her research, she is advocating for an improved understanding of how students of all ages and backgrounds can develop the skills, independence and hope necessary for a bright future as contributing members of society. Her other research has examined graphic novels and multiliteracies, what it means to be Canadian, and how the Canadian identity is perceived among adults and children.

She joined UOIT in 2004 as an Instructor in the Faculty of Education, and became a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities in 2010, before being appointed Assistant Professor in 2012. Previously, she served as an Instructor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto (U of T) and Trent University.

History repeats itself as Dr. King's inspiration comes from her father's keen interest in the subject. During her Bachelor of Arts in Canadian History & International Relations at U of T, she began focusing on the absence of women's history during the WWII era and beyond. She completed her Master of Arts (on 19th century women teachers in Ontario) and her Doctorate in the History of Education (on the experiences of women students in Ontario universities from 1900-1930) at U of T's OISE.

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## **Industry Expertise**

Education/Learning, Program Development, Research, Women

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## **Topics**

Academic Integrity, Canadian History, Women's History, Literacy in the Knowledge Economy

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## **Affiliations**

Canadian Society for Studies in Higher Education, Canadian Historical Association, Ontario Women's History Network, Canadian History of Education Association

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## **Past Talks**

### **Education Interrupted: Learning Careers of Adults Living with Mental Illness**

European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) Access, Learning Careers and Identities Network Conference

### **Participation and Persistence: An Analysis of Immigrant Visible-Minority Students at UOIT**

ESREA Access, Learning Careers and Identities Network Conference

### **Is Knowledge Power? An Exploration of an Historical Normative Framework for Literacy Policy, Adult Education and the Economy in Canadian Communities**

The University of Warwick Lifelong Learning Annual Conference

### **Keep Stop Start: Assessing a Supported Education Program for Persons Living with Mental Illness**

Hawaii International Conference on Education

### **Supported Adult Literacy Education for Persons Living with Mental Illness: Quality of Life and Social Implications**

Canadian Association for Studies in Adult Education Annual Meeting

### **Helping them Help Themselves: A Case Study of OSSEP**

Grand Rounds

### **Minority Students @ UOIT: A Classroom Perspective on Issues of Retention, Panel Discussion: Current Practices and Future Directions: Supporting Marginalized Students in the Universities**

Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education Annual Meeting

### **The Economy and Beyond: The Benefits of Lifelong Literacy**

Canadian Association for Studies in Adult Education

### **Panel Facilitator and Commentator: New Directions in the History of Indigenous Education/Nouvelles orientations en histoire de l'Éducation autochtone**

Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting

### **Jobs, Professions or Knowledge? Creating a New University in a Time of Political and Economic Conservatism**

Canadian Society for Studies in Higher Education, Annual Meeting

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## **Education**

**University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education**  
PhD History of Higher Education

**University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education**  
MA History of Education

**University of Toronto**  
BA Canadian History & International Relations

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## **Accomplishments**

### **Past Chair, Ontario Women's History Network (OWHN)**

The OWHN is a not-for-profit organization, affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society. Its aim is to encourage the preservation, production, and dissemination of women's history in Ontario, with a special emphasis on the teaching and study of that history. A director of the OWHN since 2008, Dr. King served as Vice-President in 2010 and President from 2011 to 2013.

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