



# BRN Research Symposium 2026

March 27, 2026

Alumni Hall, Victoria University  
in the University of Toronto

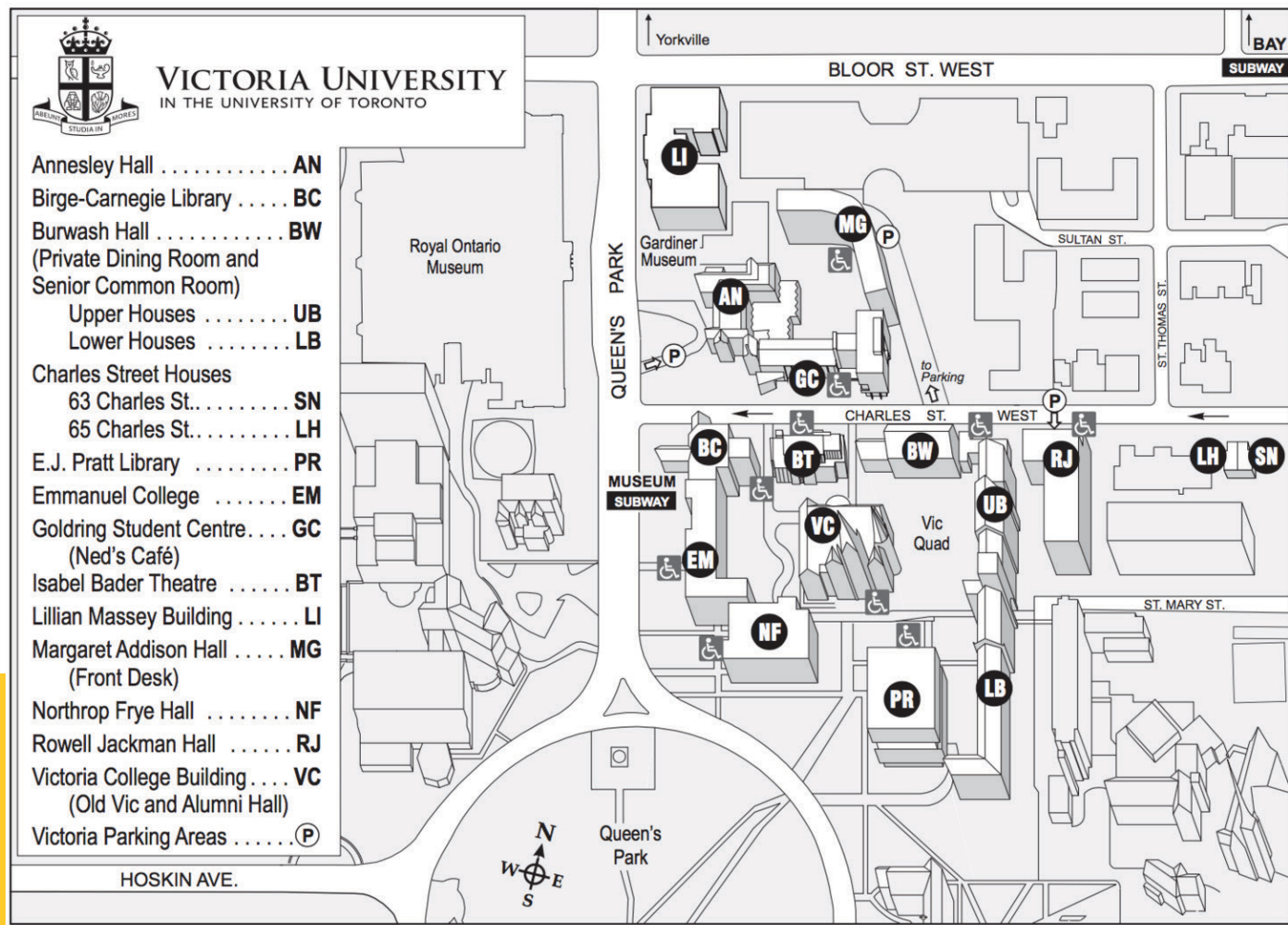


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# Find the Venue

The BRN Research Symposium 2026 will be held at Alumni Hall, located within Victoria College. Using the map below, you'll find it at the centre of Victoria University in the University of Toronto's historic campus.

Just look for VC on the map:



# Symposium Program

<b>9:00 – 9:30 AM</b>	Registration and Light Breakfast	VCFOY1 (First Floor Foyer)
<b>9:30 – 9:45 AM</b>	Opening Remarks  Land Acknowledgement and Blessings: Aina - Nia Ayo'dele	Alumni Hall (VC 112)
<b>9:45 – 10:15 AM</b>	Keynote Address by Beverley Essue	
<b>10:15 – 11:00 AM</b>	A Collective Pause with Suzi Lima	
<b>11:00 - 11:45 AM</b>	Coffee Break and Poster Session	VCFOY1 (First Floor Foyer)
<b>11:45 AM – 12:15 PM</b>	Paper Presentations by Julie-Ann McCausland and Olivia Bernard	Alumni Hall (VC 112)
<b>12:15 – 1:30 PM</b>	Lunch	Alumni Hall (VC 112)  VCFOY1 (First Floor Foyer)
<b>1:30 – 2:00 PM</b>	Fireside Chat with Lauren M. Cramer, Mark V. Campbell and Darren Hamilton	Alumni Hall (VC 112)
<b>2:00 – 2:10 PM</b>	BRN Director Closing Remarks	
<b>2:10 – 3:30 PM</b>	Networking & Reception	Alumni Hall (VC 112)  VCFOY1 (First Floor Foyer)

# Director's Message

Welcome to the BRN Research Symposium 2026!

The year's theme, "Transforming Research into Impact: Strategies, Stories, and Futures," brings together researchers, innovators and practitioners to explore how ideas translate to real-world change.

With a special focus on both research and teaching, we recognize the diverse academic pathways that brought us all into the academy – from community and industry engagement to interdisciplinary research. These experiences innovate curricula, deepen scholarship and, ultimately, strengthen how we prepare the next generation of researchers.

The vision for this symposium was realized last year, under the leadership of Enid Montague. As our first in-person, research-centred event that showcased the work of BRN members to the University of Toronto community, it marked a significant milestone.

The symposium brought the network's work into sharper focus and created a shared experience and presence that affirmed this message:

Your research belongs here. Your teaching belongs here. And together, they shape the future.

Whether you are a regular attendee at our events or joining for the first time, I hope this event leaves you inspired and energized about the possibilities that lie ahead for you and for others.

The BRN is here to help inform and support your academic journey through our programs and opportunities, and by fostering connections you may seek.

Our door is always open.



**R. Cassandra Lord**  
**BRN Director**

# Who We Are

The Black Research Network (BRN) promotes Black research excellence and supports an interdisciplinary community of Black scholars across the University of Toronto.

It fosters collaboration, meaningful engagement and expands funding opportunities to strengthen research and teaching at all career stages.

We were founded as an Institutional Strategic Initiative in 2021. Our mission strongly aligns with the recommendations of the University of Toronto Anti-Black Racism Task Force and The Scarborough Charter.

## To fulfill our mission, we develop and support initiatives that:

- Increase visibility for U of T Black scholars' research accomplishments
- Sustain a cross-divisional, interdisciplinary network of Black scholars
- Facilitate robust research engagements across U of T and internationally

## A look into the BRN

From public health and sport inclusion research to dance studies and environmental justice, members of the BRN are advancing impactful work that connects with communities.

BRN Brilliance Season 2 put research, teaching and collaboration in focus.

**Take a look on BRN News.**





## Keynote Speaker: Beverley Essue

### ● **Beyond Equality: Unpacking the investment potential through a Women and Health lens**

This keynote argues that investing in women and their health is not only a moral and social imperative, but a powerful economic strategy with transformative potential across the life course. Current investments remain inadequate and poorly aligned with women's health needs, limiting gains in gender equality, economic participation, and well-being. The talk demonstrates how purposeful, gender-responsive investment can generate a virtuous cycle of improved health, reduced poverty, and more resilient and inclusive societies. It highlights where existing policy and financing frameworks fall short and identifies practical opportunities to reorient investments in health systems toward women and health as drivers of long-term social and economic value.

## Wellness Session

### ● **A Collective Pause**

This session invites members of the BRN community to pause and reflect amid the demands of research, teaching, learning and professional responsibilities. Aligned with the event theme, it underscores an often-overlooked truth: meaningful impact begins with the well-being of those who create it.

The session starts with a brief reflection on what it means to care for oneself in an academic environment. Participants then take part in a mapping exercise to consider their place in their professional, academic and research journeys.

It concludes with a grounding breathing practice, offering an opportunity to reconnect, release tension and leave feeling centred, clear and ready to continue transforming research into meaningful impact.

**Facilitated by:** Suzi Lima, Associate Professor & Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies, Department of Linguistics and Yoga and Mindfulness facilitator





# Poster Sessions

- Aisha Adamu, Psychology and Neuroscience, Faculty of Arts & Science, **“The Psychological Impact of the Almajiri System in Nigeria: A Comparative Study with the Daara and Madrasa Models in Senegal and Ghana”**
- Anuli Ndubuisi, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), and Glory Ovie (co-researcher), **“Belonging, Becoming and the Doctoral Journey: Immigrant Women Experiences in Canada”**
- Chantel Jeremiah, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts & Science, in collaboration with Womenatthecentre, **“The Amourgynoir Framework: Operationalizing Care, Justice, and Institutional Accountability for Black Women, Girls, Gender-Diverse and Trans Survivors of Gender-Based Violence”**
- Cleopatra Myers, Leadership, Higher, Adult Education, OISE, **“Thriving Through Belonging: Improving Black Student Retention through Faculty Mentorship and Culturally Relevant Supports in Post- Secondary Education”**
- Donel Kadima, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, **“Men’s perspectives on domestic violence within African communities in Canada: A qualitative study”**
- Ezekiel Kennedy-Bissah, Department of Physiology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, **“Dry Skin and Hand Hygiene Practices in a Racially Diverse University Community and Their Implications for Public Health”**
- Gelan Ayana Zewdie, Public Health Sciences, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, **“Haqila: An AI-Enabled Community-Based Disease Surveillance Tool for Early Signal Detection in Low-Resource Settings”**
- Jada Hollingsworth, Department of Physical and Environmental Science, U of T Scarborough, **“Harnessing Functional Diversity to Enhance Soil-Based Ecosystem Services Across Greater Toronto’s Urban Farms”**
- Janise Peters, Institute of Health Policy, Management, and Evaluation, **“The Bias Multiplier: Scaling Racial Inequities in AI-Driven Mental Healthcare”**
- Jennifer Boateng, Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, **“Abnormal glial cell development in the 15q13.3 microdeletion syndrome”**
- Oghenetega Ubor, Social and Health Sciences, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, **“Mapping Anti-Blackness within the Canadian Mpox Response”**
- Tosin Akintunde, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, **“Equity Challenges in Maternal Care: Experiences of Black Women and Birthing Persons Across the Care Continuum”**

## Paper Presentations



### ● **Black Female Students' Experiences in The Toronto Education System**

This research interrogates the persistence of systemic barriers facing Black students in Canada, despite prevailing equity mandates. Through an ethnographic lens, the study explores the intersectional experiences of Black girls in Toronto, identifying a critical disconnect between home socialization and school-based support systems. Bernard's analysis demonstrates that this misalignment significantly impacts academic engagement. To address these systemic gaps, the research outlines evidence-based strategies centred on parental collaboration and the implementation of specialized pedagogical interventions.

**Speaker:** Olivia Bernard, Researcher, U of T Scarborough

## CELEBRATING THE BRN COMMUNITY

Did you know? Bernard received a Black Graduate Scholar Award in 2024 from the Black Research Network and Department of Geography & Planning.

[Learn more about her work.](#)

### ● **From the Margins to the Fields, Making Women Migrant Farm Workers Visible**

This research examines experiences of women-identified migrant farm workers in Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. Using census analysis, policy review, media coverage, migrant justice reports and community engagement, it investigates how gender, race and non-citizen status structure labour conditions, access to care, and invisibility. By documenting labour often uncounted and excluded from policy debates, the research treats visibility as intervention. It informs advocacy, contributes to debates on labour protections and immigration pathways, and advances more equitable futures for women migrant farm workers in Canada.

**Speaker:** Julie-Ann McCausland, PhD Student, Women & Gender Studies Institute



## Fireside Chat

### ● From Sound to Scholarship: Community, Ethics and Practice

University of Toronto scholar-practitioners have the unique ability to synchronize their experiences to bring diverse voices and histories into the classroom and sustain them through curriculum.

This Fireside Chat examines what it means to work as a scholar-practitioner, with a focus on turning research and teaching into meaningful impact.

The conversation highlights how archiving, documenting and producing Black music can empower local communities to preserve and steward their own histories. Emphasis will be placed on responsible, reciprocal approaches to research and learning that are grounded in long-term community relationships. Panelists will discuss how outreach and teaching inform one another, how music shapes pedagogy, and how these practices support and nurture emerging scholars.

#### Panelists:

- Mark V. Campbell, Associate Professor,  
Department of Arts, Culture & Media, U of T Scarborough

- Darren Hamilton, Assistant Professor,  
Music Education, Faculty of Music

#### Moderator:

- Lauren McLeod Cramer, Assistant Professor, Cinema Studies Institute



# Our Sponsor

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Victoria University in the University of Toronto for their generous sponsorship of the BRN Research Symposium 2026.



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**Join us as we promote Black Research Excellence.**



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