

# CROSSING BORDERS

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDENT CONFERENCE ON THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND BORDER ISSUES

## BACKGROUND ON CONFERENCE

Crossing Borders is an interdisciplinary conference for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research on topics in Canadian Studies, American Studies, Indigenous Studies and aspects of cross-border relations. The event is a friendly and engaging introduction to the structure and process of an academic conference and a great opportunity for students to gain public presentation skills while getting to know other Canadian and American students who share their interests. For graduate students, or undergrads thinking about graduate school, a Crossing Borders paper is a great addition to their CV. Crossing Borders is a bridge-building and networking opportunity for students from many different disciplines and from universities in Ontario, New York, and even Saskatchewan. Supportive faculty in Canadian Studies or American Studies programs at different universities promote the program to students each year. Those students whose abstracts are accepted can learn about one another's research, but they also get a chance to compare their experiences of studies in different programs and universities, and their lives in different regions and countries. This is the 'experiential

learning' component of a student conference that is incredibly valuable.

Crossing Borders originated under the aegis of the Golden Horseshoe Educational Alliance, a consortium of universities from both sides of the border that met annually (and usually more often) to discuss Canadian Studies and Canadian-American studies. GHEA was created under the leadership of representatives from the Canadian Consulate in Buffalo (most notably Kerry Mitchell, Dan Kolundzic and Dayle Cotter). The conference was held to provide a visible manifestation of the GHEA relationship. From the beginning it was intended to be a student conference, although there were some faculty panels at the first few events. The first conference was held in the mid-1990s. The conference alternates between host universities in Canada and the U.S. Brock University has been the most frequent venue on the Canadian side, although it was held at University of Toronto one year, while Wilfrid Laurier University has also hosted. Crossing Borders was hosted at Niagara University in 2017, at Brock in 2015 and 2018, and at UB in 2014. The conference will be held at Brock in 2020.