

## Here is what Candidates have to say on Gender Issues and Sexual Assault on Campus

### Candidate

### Jamie- Running for Prez



What do they believe is at the heart of sexual assault issues on campus?

In 1<sup>st</sup> year, many students take their new found freedom to an extreme, losing themselves in the process. In the midst of rez mayhem & binge drinking, they can lose sense of what's acceptable & what's not. We need to combat these attitudes in 1<sup>st</sup> year—before students arrive to campus—changing their intention of what their university experience will be, & by prompting them to critically challenge the mass media. I think by promoting a culture of learning, critical thought & open-mindedness on campus we can begin to address some of the root causes of sexual assault.

### Aaron- running for VP External



At the heart of sexual assault issues on campus is a culture in which the notion sexual assault is very shallow & the male culture of not seeking consent is dominant. Most importantly it is a male problem.

What would they do to make Dalhousie safer for trans\* students?

As VPSL I've already helped take steps to create a safer space for all students: involving Venus Envy in O-Week instead of the XXX Sex Hypnotist. We also set up a yurt during O-week to provide a 24/7 safe space for all 1st years. There is still much work to be done. I would look forward to working with the DWC and Dal-Out to identify appropriate avenues for creating these spaces. The one specific initiative that jumps to mind is the need for anti-oppression training for DSU Council and staff.

Part of my platform is to run campaigns, something the DSU currently doesn't do. These could include anti homophobia and trans awareness campaigns. Creating an accepting space can start from the culture practised in the DSU and can be spread through the membership through promotion, outreach, workshops etc. An other practical thing that could be done is to create more gender neutral washrooms.

Do you identify as a feminist?

This would require a bigger discussion than what can be captured in a short paragraph.

I identify as a feminist. Learning about gendered power imbalances & challenging my own patriarchy is a continuous process. I'm committed to representing feminist ideals at the DSU. I'm humbled when I learn of a new feminist perspective or power relation. It motivates me to reflect & challenge myself & others. As a feminist means I try to understand oppression & actively challenging it. I'm a member of the Boy's Club & am trained in anti oppression practises.

How will they ensure all genders are represented in decision making processes of the DSU?

We must consistently keep in mind that our institutions of power have been designed by white men. Many of our contemporary social problems are rooted in a power-based, highly masculine mindset towards decision making. We need to experiment/explore approaches that empower feminine energies. My approach to leadership has always been as inclusive & diverse & welcoming as possible. Through an ongoing process of engagement, consultation & collaboration we can create an environment in which all perspectives are properly heard & valued (with emphasis on those that are often marginalized).

Changing the culture within the DSU. Address how it hinders certain genders from participating. To get all people to participate, the DSU has to take on issues that matter to them. I think that running campaigns is a direct response to grievances expressed & involves diverse people/groups in outreach. It helps ensure that people are empowered to participate in the DSU. Affirmative action policies/practice could be used within the DSU. It is important to recognize that certain groups as Dal are underprivileged & deserve special representation or outreach.

What's their gender grade?

# A

Actions speak louder than words & Jamie's actions rock. In a DSU role where most plan parties he made progressive strides on Campus. Words still speak & not identifying as a feminist is why that 'A' isn't a 'A+'.

# A

Aaron knows the issues, has listened to concerns & we know his heart's in it. His plethora of experience at Dal speaks for itself. We're waiting on the '+' until we see what he's capable at the executive level.

## Gavin- Running for VP Student Life



It's tricky to identify one root cause, but a lack of education on gender issues is a big player. In high school I accidentally signed up for a feminist literature class. As a naive teen I assumed it would be bra-burning dictators yelling at me... I was very wrong. Before that I hadn't identified as a feminist but that class opened my eyes to some pretty drastic inequities, that aren't talked about. I'm not sure it would be effective to propose all students take a gender class, but perhaps making information more accessible & shared would help?

## Sarah- Running for Prez



I cannot claim to be an expert, but my first instinct is that alcohol & consent are huge factors. Many students are not educated about "enthusiastic consent", & I do believe that people still feel social pressures to not push back when pressured. When excessive alcohol & binge-drinking come into the picture, the idea of consent often goes out the window & aggression often comes into the picture. Of course, these are just my personal thoughts, but I would be interested in learning more and see what the DSU could do to help.

To be completely honest, I can't say I've addressed it. Perhaps working towards more gender-neutral washrooms like most residences have? But beyond this, if you have any suggestions I'd really appreciate to hear them.

Again, I am not going to claim that I know what the silver bullet is, but I think it would be imperative to work with the DWC so that I, & the DSU, could better understand what we can do to support trans\* students. DSU has the ability to do is pressure the University for gender-neutral washrooms in new buildings, as the President sits on most, if not all, building committees. I am no expert, and if there are things that we could be doing and ways that we could be helping, I would be extremely interested.

Absolutely. When I try to explain to my friends that do not identify as feminists, I ask them one question to start: Do you believe in women's rights, or equity? 100% answer yes, and to me that's what a feminist is. It's not about reversing traditional gender roles, and men working solely in the domestic sphere, but rather equity in treatment, and equal opportunities for everyone.

I'm a feminist; it's about equality & sexuality. Women still don't hold proportional seats in most major decision-making jobs. More women are attending post-secondary, but there is chauvinism, sexism, & inequality. I feel it's important to push back. In my job I found a lot of ways where it subtly presented itself. As a woman representing students at the federal level, I had to prove myself through my work more than male delegates. Nothing explicitly said, but a feeling that politics was a man's world. Women have the right to dress however they want, talk about sex & masturbation, & not feel like they have to be reserved & protect themselves because of society. There are many double-standards when it comes to sexuality. ----->

As I highlight in my platform, I think it's both arrogant and naive to believe that one student can make Dalhousie perfect. Which is why I plan on having open meetings to ALL students (regardless of gender, sexual identification, race, etc) to pitch ideas for new events, improving old events, or just to share something awesome. So to answer more directly, all students have opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, because if I'm elected I'm not working for myself, I'm working for everyone else.

The number one way to work towards this is making sure that all Council seats are filled. This is a perennial problem, but the DSU needs to take a hands on approach into making sure this happens, not just letting it slide by week after week. And of course, seeking feedback and having constant open dialogue.

It's important to support, celebrate, & experience women's sexuality. I really found it hard to put this into words; it's more of having an internal feeling and drive to make a difference.

# A-

Gavin's a feminist with a foothold on gender issues. Does he have an the answer to gender issues on campus? No. Is he committed to consulting community ensuring inclusivity? Yes. He's got our vote

# A-

Sarah knows first hand what issues affect women as students and as their representative, she has progressive views around consent, sexuality and feminism. It would be great to see some concrete ways to bring her beliefs into progressive DSU action!

## Alyssa- Running for VP Internal



The culture & lack of awareness. We need to cultivate an accepting & safe culture at Dal by helping to get organizations like the DWC & others; holding events & campaigns to promote this issue. Reinstating "o-week" instead of "frosh week" & promoting assault awareness throughout o-week, as well as continuously throughout the year to not just 1<sup>st</sup> years, everyone. Creating the sentiment that "that's not the way we do things as Dal students" - along the lines of the "don't be that guy" campaign out west. Let's bring that here!

## Martin- Running for Senate Rep



I believe that a misunderstanding of what consent means is at the heart of sexual assault issues on campus.

It's about awareness. Groups like DalOUT & DWC need to be more present on campus & I want to help. As VPI, it's my responsibility to help societies; these are important groups that could help cultivate a more accepting culture at Dal. Encouraging implementation of gender neutral restrooms, like on the main floor of the McCain wherever possible. And being there to listen. As VPI, this is the number 1 important thing- listening to individual students & group concerns and doing whatever I can to assist them.

If elected to serve as your student representative, I would support any initiatives or programs that would, in the opinion of LGBTQA groups, improve the lives of trans\* members of the Dalhousie community.

Indeed. Simply put, to me it means equality and respect. I wish I had taken more QWST courses so I could express this more eloquently!

I understand that as a male, I have enjoyed freedom from certain types of discrimination in my life. I also understand that gender inequality is a problem today and that women are underrepresented in many careers due to sexism in those fields. I don't identify as a feminist, but I agree with many of their goals.

Consult regularly with groups like the DWC, DalOUT, etc & make sure they are aware of what is going on. Keeping better contact with the LGBTQ DSU rep. Actually utilize the Diversity Committee (which I would co-chair) & meet regularly to not only plan events, but talk and listen to each other, find out what the issues are, and talk about how to fix them. I feel like I've been harping on this lately, but the diversity committee is a great opportunity to bring a rep from various societies and groups on campus and get together and talk about these issues.

I would remain in contact with, and solicit opinions from, groups dedicated to gender equality on campus such as the Dalhousie Women's Centre and Dal Allies.

# B+

Alyssa's a feminist, she knows about the sexual assault & gender issues on campus & who to talk to about them. Her answers are in the right boxes, but they're still in the box; we'd like to see a little more ingenuity if Alyssa is elected.

# B

Martin isn't highly versed in gender issues, but he's supportive of initiatives to end sexual assault & gender discrimination. Mix that with awareness of his male privilege and we'd say we've got a pretty good Senate Rep on our hands.