



OPIRG *Carleton*

Annual Report 2020-2021

opirgcarleton.org

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About OPIRG Carleton

OPIRG Carleton is a campus-based not-for-profit organization, working to create and sustain student and community-based engagement through research, education, and action on social justice and environmental issues.

OPIRG Carleton uses an anti-oppression framework, consensus-based decision making processes, operates in a non-hierarchical setting, and supports multiple Working Groups that struggle for social change.

OPIRG Carleton was founded in 1980, after a lecture by consumer advocate Ralph Nader. In a referendum in the following year, the majority of Carleton students voted in favour of placing a small levy on their student fees to support OPIRG.

In 1991, Carleton students again voted in support of OPIRG, agreeing to raise the amount of the levy to \$6.30 for full-time students, \$2.10/credit for part-time undergraduates, and \$1.26 for part-time graduates.

In 2009, students once again voted in favour of OPIRG, among other campus groups, to set the levy fee in accordance with the consumer price index. Graduate students voted to increase these fees in 2010. In the 2011-2012 term, levies reached \$3.32 per full full-time semester for undergraduates, and \$3.34 per full-time semester for graduates.

With this levy, all students at Carleton University are automatically members of OPIRG. While the fee is classified as non-refundable, OPIRG Carleton continues to offer refunds to students who object to the organization.

Over the years, OPIRG Carleton has provided students with a dynamic environment in which to apply their knowledge, passions, and energy to address issues of public concern. Many have also benefited from the training and support that OPIRG offers, the real opportunities that build leadership skills and empower students to become socially active.

OPIRG Carleton's office location and the work of our organization is done on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Anishinnabe territory.

Organizational Developments

- In 2020, OPIRG Carleton went virtual as the university shut down over COVID-19 protocols. The organization also experienced a majority of the staff turning over within this year, and many of the staff roles changing or being shared.
- Held a town hall meeting in August 2020 as part of a community consultation regarding the OPIRG Carleton safe(r) safe policy and organizational direction, facilitated by Pascale Diverlus. We've received the reports following the town hall and new staff and board members are committed to new organizational restructuring at OPIRG.
- Pascale has been contracted until the end of 2021 to continue her important work.

Financial Statements

ONTARIO PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP (OPIRG) CARLETON

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the Year End August 31, 2021

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 173,761	\$ 179,365
Accounts Receivable	35,174	1,941
Prepaid Expenses	6,321	6,439
	215,256	187,745
CAPITAL ASSETS	782	1,035
	\$ 216,038	\$ 188,780
LIABILITY		
CURRENT LIABILITY		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 10,853	\$ 18,924
NET ASSETS		
Net Income/Loss	32,642	9,379
Unrestricted	54,529	51,843
Internal Restriction - Special Operating Reserve	118,013	108,634
	205,184	169,856
	\$ 216,037	\$ 188,780

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year End August 31, 2021

	2021	2020
REVENUE		
Student Fees	\$ 225,340	\$ 195,263
Interest	0	0
Other	0	200
	225,340	195,463
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Salaries and Benefits	128,296	115,483
Programming	20,903	30,528
Rent	20,074	19,928
Donations and Bursaries	8,975	7,450
Dues	6,070	3,484
Professional Fees	3,000	0
Insurance	1,867	1,839
Interest and Service Charges	1,851	2,277
Telecommunications	1,200	1,200
Amortization of Capital Assets	253	334
Office Expenses	209	1,645
Advertising and Promotion	0	1,600
Photocopy Expenses	0	316
	192,698	186,084
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 32,642	\$ 9,379

Board of Directors 2020 - 2021

- OPIRG Carleton is governed by a volunteer, non-hierarchical Board of Directors and comes to decisions through consensus. Directors are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting and generally sit for one two-year term.
- The Board of Directors is composed of 5-9 individuals with $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members being Carleton University students. The role of the Board is to offer administrative support to OPIRG's projects and programming, as well as maintaining the vision of the organization and directing its growth.
- The OPIRG Carleton Board of Directors for 2020 were:
 - Fa'Ttima Omran
 - Raye Guo
 - Adriana Mallya
 - Mariam Furre (interim)
 - Mars Ramlogan (interim)
- An election was held in December 2020 and the 2020-2021 board members were voted in:
 - Jeffrey Bradley
 - Jane Crosby
 - Rokšana Hajrizi
 - Minh Hoa Kolié
 - Philippe Parisot

OPIRG Staff 2020-2021

- May 2020, Benjamin Segobaetso resigned as one of the Volunteer, Outreach and Programming Coordinators.
- June 2020, Leyda J. Estrada-Arellano resigned as Administrative and Organizational Development Coordinator.
- July 2020, Oula Hreiche was hired as Administrative and Organizational Development Coordinator.
- In August 2020, Mohammad Akbar's contract as the Chief Electoral Officer was changed to a part time position as Chief Electoral and Corporate Affairs Officer.
- Harar Hall's position as Volunteer, Outreach and Programming Coordinator changed to the Programming Coordinator.
- Gowlene Selvavijayan's position as Outreach and Communication Coordinator changed to Communications Coordinator.
- Andy Crosby remains as the Financial Coordinator.

Bursaries

In 2020-2021, \$4,100 was awarded as bursaries to members of the OPIRG Carleton community.

Six amounts of \$100 for the Name Change Bursary

\$500 First Generation Student Bursary Ahmad Ali

\$500 Caregiver Student Bursary Colleen Hele

\$500 Terry Cottam Student Bursary Meg Lonergan

\$500 Accessibility Student Bursary Maia Wenger

\$500 Undergraduate Student Bursary Sarah Rosario

Two amounts of \$500 for the International Student Bursary to Rushin Sheth and Nasim Omidian Sijani

OPIRG Carleton is excited to see what the research of these individuals leads to, and we hope to hear from them next year for an update on their work. We encourage people to apply for our bursaries, and we make the news of their open-submission status known by posting on our social media (Instagram and Facebook), website, and by postering around campus.

Co-Sponsorships

January 2021 Algonquin 101 Indigenous Knowledge series held by Lynn Gehl

March 2021 Asilu Collective is organizing to support the effort to defunding the SRO program

Annual Donations

January 2021 \$250 donation to Crème De la Crème House of Fame Foundation

February 2021, \$500 donation to Ask an Algonquin event

March 2021 \$1000 donation to Ten Oaks Camp a Thon

April 2021 \$75 to Atelier's Organizing Together During the Pandemic Workshop on April 27th

June 2021 \$200 to Ottawa Black Diaspora Coalition

June 2021 \$800 to Collective Action for Palestine

August 2021 \$1000 to Rural Refugee Rights Network

A donation of \$2500 to the Scholarship Fund to Honour Suha Jarrar's Legacy, a research and advocacy officer at Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq whose sudden passing has greatly impacted her local community and the entire world.

Programming

In February 2021, we hosted *Rooting for Everyone Black?* as part of the Our Own Table series, a monthly programming series focused on creating spaces exclusively led by and made for Black community members. This initiative will help us create a lineup of workshops, learning spaces, creative spaces, organizing spaces, as well as avenues for celebration and collective healing.

In March 2021, we hosted a book club discussion on Afro-futurist and Black Sci Fi literature facilitated by Dr. Grace Gipson.

Biweekly virtual yoga started April 2021 by members of the working group Yoga.Unity.

Also in April, 2021 we hosted *Wellness in a World Unwell*, a therapeutic workshop series tailored for Black, indigenous, disabled, and neurodivergent students and community members who struggle with mental health issues or who are simply seeking to deepen their relationship with their own wellness journey.

Throughout June and July, 2021 we hosted the Transformative Justice Workshop series: *Fumbling towards Possibilities: Transformative Justice 101* and *Exploring the intersections of policy, law & community held justice: Organizational Transformative Justice*.

Annual Programming

In September 2020, we held our annual Rad Frosh, the alternative frosh week of events that was held entirely digital. The three events we hosted were:

In Conversation: Transforming Organizations (Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah x Sharon Nyengweso)

In Conversation: Disability Activism (Lydia X.Z Brown x Sarah Jama),

How to Start a Collective (Facilitated by Harar with speakers Tracy Valcarcel, Hasina, and Celeste)

Moving From Anti-Oppression to Pro-Liberation (facilitated by Timaaj Hassen)

In May 2021, Roots Radio had a temporary host for an episode. The staff and board are optimistic that we will be able to work with a new host to produce regular episodes.

Working Groups

Access To Information-Carleton Working Group

The Access to Information Carleton (ATI) Carleton Working Group uses Access to Information and Freedom of Information legislation to research various issues of public interest. Issues can be related to other WG areas, or determined by OPIRG members. We put the R in OPIRG.

Working Groups

Anakbayan Ottawa Working Group

Our mission is to unite youth from different sectors and communities in the Filipino diaspora in Ottawa in order to advance the struggle for national liberation, democracy and a just and lasting peace in the Philippines. We seek to educate, organize, mobilize Filipino youth on issues that affect the Philippines, as well as here on Turtle Island. Made up of second generation, as well as first and 1.5 generation youth, Anakbayan Ottawa seeks to address systemic issues that oppress the Filipino youth and community through campaigns, community events, and educational workshops and discussions. There is a growing number of Filipino youth migrating into the Ottawa area and Canada over all. Many Filipino organizations have a strong focus on ethnicity, culture and fun. While Anakbayan is also excited to focus on these aspects of our lived experiences, we seek to address the nuances and complexities of being migrants on stolen territory, how migration has been affected by capitalism and imperialism, and what the root causes of our struggles are.

Working Groups

- **Anti-Imperialist Alliance**

AIA aims to build a united response against the tides of war, militarism and neo-fascism brought on by the crisis and decay of US and global monopoly capitalism. In our view the imperative task of our times is to rebuild the peace movement at its base in a range of sectors and build toward powerful mass mobilizations for a decisive shift in Canadian and global politics, away from conflict and militarism, towards peace and disarmament.

Working Groups

Books 2 Prisoners

Books to Prisoners Ottawa shares donated reading materials to incarcerated individuals and promotes social justice campaigns in Canada. We are a volunteer run, donation based group that works with community partnerships locally with provincial institutions at OCDC, William E Hay, Collins Bay, Bath, Port-Cartier, CSC institutions from BC to the Maritimes as well as respond to individuals books requests.

Working Groups

Climate Justice Ottawa

Based in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Anishnabeg territory, Climate Justice Ottawa is part of the climate and environmental justice movement following the lead of the most impacted communities to ensure a liveable climate for future generations. Through empowering communities, we challenge political systems that do not align with an equitable and healthy planet. We participate in the process of reconciliation and decolonization, and support First Nations, Métis and Inuit self-determination. We work in a proactive way towards collectively-defined goals, while understanding the necessity for reactionary mobilization in climate organizing, particularly in the national capital. We have launched a campaign to organize around 350.org's principles for a Just Recovery that creates a better future that prioritizes resilient communities, and are looking to connect with community organizers working on various climate justice/ action initiatives to create a document outlining our shared vision for a Just Recovery in Ottawa.

Working Groups

Herongate Tenant Coalition

HTC is an independent collective which lobbies and campaigns on the behalf of racialized working class across Ottawa and Ontario. We began organizing as a response to the dehumanizing evictions working class people of colour suffered in 2016 & 2018 in Herongate, a racialized, underfunded, and overpoliced neighbourhood in Ottawa South. We work to create neighbourhood power and collective strength in people made vulnerable in Herongate, as well as call out the rampant financialization of housing across Canada. This is an urgent need, especially now in this unprecedented time, wherein so many are unprotected. With millions facing unemployment, landlords unwilling to cancel rent, and local and provincial governments unwilling to help, thousands are facing eviction in Ontario alone, and the need for tenant organizations and resistance is dire.

Working Groups

Indigenous Solidarity Ottawa

ISO, based in unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Territory, is a grassroots organization of settlers who aim to directly support Indigenous Peoples in diverse struggles for justice, sovereignty and decolonization.

Working Groups

Ottawa-Cuba Connections

OCC CU is a solidarity organization which works to promote both an understanding of Cuba today and to build person to person connections (via the Che Brigade) with Cubans.

Working Groups

The Leveller

An online publication covering news, current events, and culture at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, the Ottawa/Gatineau region and the wider world. It is intended to provide readers with a lively portrait of their campus and community and of the events that give it meaning. It is also intended to be a forum for provocative editorializing and lively debate on issues of concern to post-secondary students, staff, and faculty as well as Ottawa residents.

Working Groups

The Millhaven Lifers' Liaison Group

MLLG is an initiative created to provide support, community, and educational collaboration with life-sentenced prisoners at Millhaven maximum security institution in Bath, Ontario. The group visits lifers once per month and is active in the community doing outreach, research, writing, presentations and lobbying. MLLG aims to foster a positive relationship with the Millhaven Lifers' Group (MLG) in order to support their eventual release. We exchange information with the men who are serving life-sentences; share that knowledge with the public through meetings, events and social media; provide the Lifers with hope and encouragement; and, create connections with community-based resources to support our personal development both inside and out.

Working Groups

Yoga.Unity

Yoga.Unity is a series of pay what you can (PWYC) yoga classes for self-identified cis & trans women and non-binary people of color. It is a LGTBQ2IA+ inclusive space. Classes are held online weekly. Besides yoga, we hold workshops & special events which promote healing and serve to strengthen a community of trust and care. Our classes are introductory which permits people of all levels and ages to participate. The term "women of colour" refers to all and any cis or trans woman with a racialized experienced, regardless of "skin colour". Yoga.Unity is a unique space where cis & trans women of colour and non-binary people of colour can come together in collective processes of healing, building solidarity and community

Membership in other Organizations

- **OPIRG Provincial Network**

OPIRG Carleton is a member of the OPIRG Provincial Network, a decentralized body that provides support for, and facilitates collaboration between individual PIRGs in Ontario. The network comprises thirteen autonomous, non-profit, student-funded and directed organizations that conduct research, education and action on social and environmental justice issues. <https://opirg.org>

Thank you

- Thank you for reading our annual report. OPIRG Carleton cannot exist without a community of supporters, volunteers, and workers in which we are incredibly grateful for. We are working hard to continue to meet our mandate while our organization develops and we face the challenges presented by a global public health crisis. We look forward to meeting and working directly with you today to make a better future.
- Be safe and stay healthy,
- The OPIRG Carleton Board and Staff.

