

History of a Student-Led Organization

1990 to 2017 by Mason Godden

November
1993

- OPIRG becomes involved in the drafting of Trent's Human Rights Policy.
- Several public discussions take place concerning the contents of the document.
- Policy was adopted amidst Trent University then-President Leonard Connelly's 'academic freedom' policy.
- 'Academic freedom' gave course instructors freedom to share political opinion in their courses.
- Human Rights policy was to outline the rights and privileges of students in this more open academic climate.

- First Women, Health, and the Environment Conference hosted by OPIRG Peterborough.
- Conference meant to "provide a forum to discuss current interests and networking opportunities" amongst different women's health groups across the province.
- Conference was the major project of the Women and Health Project (WHP), an OPRIG working group, during the '96/'97 academic year.

- Divestment Week is hosted by OPIRG Peterborough and Sustainable Trent.
- Called for Trent to divest from the use of fossil fuels and also aimed at bringing attention to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in response to Israel's occupation of Palestine.
- Culminated in a rally at the Gzowski college bus stop on 30 January.
- Certain imagery associated with the campaign caused substantial backlash.



January
26-30, 2015

February
1997

2010
(academic year)

- The fourth "Day of Action" takes place in Toronto.
- Protested the Progressive Conservative's social spending cuts.
- Over 200,000 participants took part in the demonstrations. Later confirmed to be the largest march in Canadian history.
- Members of OPIRG Peterborough and Trent University students are known participants.
- OPIRG/Trent's level of contribution towards organizing the mobilization still unknown; future research in this area shows promising potential.

October 26th, 1996

- The Canadians for Mining Awareness (CMA) OPIRG working groups is formed after the Trent International Studies Department hosts a speaker from an affected mining region.
- Inspired students formed the group in the academic year of 2010 in order to respond to the environmental injustices propagated by large-scale mining projects.
- The purpose of the group was to work in solidarity with national and international communities affected negatively by mining.

The Evolution of Student-Led Campaigns

- * Campaigns can be local, national, or global in nature – not just one 'static' focus.
- * Areas of focus may change, but social and environmental justice is always the focus.
- * Mobilizations have not 'scaled-down'; the focus of a campaign determines the size of the mobilization.

What is OPIRG?

- * A social and environmental justice organization, active in the Peterborough community since 1976.
- * A Trent University student-led levy group.
- * A professional activist group capable of mobilizing local and global-oriented campaigns.

