

## Introduction

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In April 2018 the Gender, Sex, and Sexuality conference held its fourth annual conference at St. Lawrence University. This issue of *Theory in Action* highlights the variety of voices, themes, and scholarship presented in response to the conference theme of #Persistence.

The theme of #Persistence was used to think about our own acts of persistence and the impact that larger, social messages about persistence have on our teaching, learning, working lives in rural Northern New York. Certainly, we were responding to nation- and global-wide stories of activists who persist in the face of prejudice and oppression. But it also gave the conference organizers a chance to think about how and why we want this conference to persist. It was our fourth (third consecutive) conference. We all do this work above our regular teaching, scholarship, and service commitments at our respective schools. Although we had invaluable input from the conference's first organizers, it would probably be fair to say that the current organizers had a steep learning curve as we began this three years ago. We needed to ask questions about how and why we planned to persist with the conference: could we sustain it financially? (We had initial start-up support from an association of our four colleges but that start-up money is gone.) Could we sustain it in terms of participants? (The gender studies faculty at each school has been involved all along but could we ask the same people, yet again, to share their work, to bring their students, to spend the time and money necessary?) Could we, should we, sustain it in this form or would our efforts be better spent elsewhere? (We meet for two full days, with no concurrent sessions, and ask everyone to be there for as much of that time as possible to help build shared conversations and community.) The 2018 #Persistence conference gave us resounding yeses to many of those