



The Inaugural - Gender and Sexual Equity Symposium

Hosted by the Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities (OEIC)

Program

Thursday, October 29, 2026

KPU Surrey, Conference Centre, Cedar Building

12:30pm to 4:00pm (Doors at 12:00pm)

Emcee – Drew Dennis

12:00pm - Doors Open - Networking and Lunch

12:30pm - Opening by Elder-in-Residence Lekeyten

12:50pm - Welcome and Opening Remarks - President - Dr. Diane Purvey

1:00pm - Welcome - Vice President - Equity and Inclusive Communities - Dr. Asma Sayed

1:10pm - Introduction of Keynote

1:15pm - Keynote by Sonali (Alyy) Patel: *Dual Exile - Being Queer & South Asian*

2:00pm - Q & A with Keynote Speaker

2:30pm - Health Break

2:45pm - Panel: *Experiencing Trans Joy at KPU*

3:45pm - Closing Remarks

Keynote Speaker

Bio: Sonali (Alyy) Patel is a trailblazing LGBTQ+ activist, award-winning researcher, author, and speaker on diversity and intersectionality. She is one of Canada's most prominent advocates for queer South Asian women. At age 22, Alyy founded the Queer South Asian Women's Network, a thriving Canadian non-profit. She went on to pioneer Canadian research on anti-Brown racism in lesbian communities, with her debut article becoming one of the most cited in the Journal of Lesbian Studies.



In 2023, Alyy was named one of the Top Seven South Asians in Canada for her revolutionary changemaking efforts, and in 2026, she was recognized as a Canadian LGBTQ+ Leader to Be Proud Of. Alyy is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of British Columbia, and the author of the book *Don't Tell My Parents: Queer Diasporic Truths*. She has delivered keynote addresses everywhere from corporate workplaces to Pride Toronto's Dyke March, where she became the first South Asian speaker. With over a decade of speaking, consulting, and community leadership experience, Alyy helps organizations move beyond checkbox diversity toward genuine, intersectional inclusion. Learn more: www.alypatel.com

Keynote Address: *Dual Exile: Being Queer & South Asian*

Description: This talk explores the complexities of living at the intersection of South Asian and lesbian identities in Canada. Drawing from her lived experience alongside her eight years of research on the topic, Alyy examines the dual exclusion many queer South Asian women face: queer rejection within Brown families and anti-Brown racism in queer communities. Using a storytelling approach, Alyy unpacks the realities of navigating identity and belonging amid competing family expectations, challenges Western assumptions about what it means to live authentically, and offers practical ways to better support queer people from collectivist cultures.