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Symposium on student housing issues to be held at Laurier

A symposium on student housing issues that will draw its participants from across Ontario will be held at Wilfrid Laurier University on Saturday, Nov. 18.

Attending will be about 100 representatives of city councils, municipal planning departments, student associations, university housing offices, neighbourhood associations, landlords, the building industry and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

From Toronto, participants will include representatives from the City of Toronto's planning and development department, the University of Toronto, the Ontario Federation of Students and the University of Toronto's Students' Administrative Council.

The symposium, called "A Step Towards Neighbourhood Unity," has been organized by a committee with members from the student unions at both WLU and UW, the City of Waterloo, the MacGregor Neighbourhood Association and the office of Waterloo North MPP Herb Epp.

The committee was formed after the province passed legislation to strike down municipal bylaws limiting the number of unrelated persons living in a single family home.

Brian Trushinski, a City of Waterloo policy planner and symposium chairperson, said the event is a positive step in dealing with student housing concerns.

"We believe that drawing together all of those involved in student housing matters will provide a forum to exchange ideas and develop practical, action-oriented solutions.

"Those solutions won't come from any one participant group. It will be in working collectively that university communities make strides in addressing student housing issues."

The symposium will include a full day of workshops which will report back to a closing plenary. Registrants have been asked to return a questionnaire to identify the issues of greatest concern to them and the initiatives now in place in their municipalities to address those concerns.

- 30 -

Note: The workshops will be closed to the media but the plenary sessions will be open.