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Laurier working toward 'Changemaker Campus' designation

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University has taken the first steps toward earning official recognition for its commitment to social innovation education.

Ashoka U — an initiative of Ashoka, the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs — has deemed 29 universities from around the world "Changemaker Campuses." This designation recognizes the institutions' visions to become global drivers of social change by intentionally transforming educational experience into world-changing experience.

In an effort to be added to the list — which includes such prestigious institutions as Boston College, Brown University, Cornell University, Duke University and the University of Northampton — Laurier has begun the first phase of Ashoka U's selection process, a "360-degree Campus Scan." The campus scan will assess the "changemaking ecosystem" at Laurier and generate new insights and ideas about potential opportunities at the university through feedback from Ashoka U.

"We know that there is activity related to social innovation and social entrepreneurship in every faculty," said Deborah MacLatchy, Laurier provost and acting vice-president: Research. "The Campus Scan is a great opportunity for us to better understand our internal connections to optimize opportunities for our students to make meaningful impacts."

The selection process features two additional phases following the Campus Scan: a site visit and a presentation to a selection panel.

Should Laurier qualify for Ashoka U's "Changemaker Campus" designation, it would join Ryerson University as the second Canadian institution to earn the distinction.

Laurier recently received a \$500,000-grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation to help grow social innovation education on the Waterloo, Brantford and Kitchener campuses. The grant recognized Laurier's social entrepreneurship efforts — including its ground-breaking Arts-based Social Entrepreneurship Option.

Leading the Ashoka U 360-Degree Campus Scan process at Laurier will be the university's "change leaders:" Kathryn Carter, inter-faculty associate dean: academic coordination and Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Laurier Brantford; Michel Dejardins, professor of Religion and Culture and associate dean: Research and Curriculum in the Faculty of Arts and Steven Preece, associate professor of policy in the School of Business and Economics and academic director of the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship.

Joining the change leaders will be a "change team" made up of a mix of faculty, students, staff and community partners from a wide variety of disciplines. The full list of Laurier's Campus Scan members is [available here](#).

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