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## Laurier's Brantford campus celebrates grand opening of its first active learning classroom

BRANTFORD – Students and faculty at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus now have access to a state-of-the-art active learning classroom. The space, in use since September, is being feted at an official grand opening October 15 from 11 a.m. until noon. The active learning classroom (ALC) is located at 97 Dalhousie St. in room DAL007.

The addition of an ALC space in Brantford – which adds to the three in place on Laurier's Waterloo campus – is in keeping with the university's goal of creating student-centred learning environments that encourage and facilitate more active and collaborative teaching approaches. The Brantford ALC, with a capacity of 56 students, is furnished with eight tables or 'pods', each outfitted with inputs for personal computers. The room is equipped with whiteboards, huddleboards, and projector-switching capabilities, allowing instructors to share work from students' laptop screens with other students, the entire class, or – thanks to the space's integrated video conferencing equipment – the world.

"The realization of this space is further demonstration of Laurier's commitment to new, innovative ways of teaching," said Kathryn Carter, acting associate vice-president: teaching and learning at Laurier.

The ALC is available for use by every program at Laurier's Brantford campus. Laurier's new Game Design and Development BFAA program has already made use of the space and will continue to host classes in the ALC throughout the first term. Feedback so far has been excellent, and the high demand for the classroom is expected to continue.

"The learning is active and interactive," said Carter of the ALC's significant educational benefits. "Group work is built in by the very nature of the layout of the room. Work is sharable. The professor can direct information or images to everyone's laptop. Students can share out their work so it can be viewed and discussed by the group. There is no obvious front of the room and there is space to move. The classroom becomes a hive of activity."

There is no limit to course material that can benefit from being taught in the ALC. Educational developer Shirley Hall will help faculty consider the best ways to leverage the tools the room offers to encourage interactive learning.

With the ability to Skype in and out of the classroom, the use of ALCs at Laurier has literally made collaborative learning a global experience. In a joint program between the departments of History and Religion & Culture on the Waterloo campus, students collaborated via live video with students in Istanbul, Turkey.

"The whole room can be involved in video conferencing to share ideas," said Carter. "It opens the classroom up to the world."

For more information about Laurier's active learning classrooms, visit [wlu.ca](http://wlu.ca).