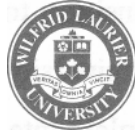


# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



**Contact: Julia Ann Easley**  
**WLU Information Officer**  
**(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070**

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### **Laurier to respond to OCUA funding proposals at public hearing**

*Waterloo (Oct. 6)* — Wilfrid Laurier University will outline its position on three proposed models for funding Ontario universities at a public hearing at the Waterloo Inn on the afternoon of Wednesday, Oct. 12.

The hearing is one of 22 being held across the province by the Ontario Council on University Affairs. The government advisory body was asked by the Minister of Education and Training to review university funding and in August it released a background paper outlining three possible models for changing the current system.

The university will base its presentation to the hearing on a written brief prepared in consultation with representatives of the faculty association, staff association, students' union, and board of governors.

In that submission to the council, the university expresses its support of the council's goals in choosing a funding model — to increase accessibility, to enhance co-operation among universities, and to increase efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and accountability in providing postsecondary education.

However, the university rejects one of the three models and indicates its acceptance of the other two only with modifications.

Instead, it encourages the council to develop alternatives based on submissions at the hearings and to do so in light of several important factors: federal funding for postsecondary education is expected to decline, links between universities and colleges are growing stronger, and funding arrangements in other provinces are evolving in different directions.

*(More)*

It also expresses disappointment that additional money will not be available to assist the universities in making the major transition to a new funding system.

In responding to the proposals, the university states its commitment to autonomy and accountability, and its belief in the complementary nature of teaching and research, scholarship, and creativity activity.

Of the three options, the university favors the "enrolment sensitive" system. It would provide funding for fixed costs and additional dollars related to actual enrolment. As well, the formula for funding each student based on the cost of providing their program (for example, science or arts) would be adjusted to reflect current costs.

The university considers it to be the most desirable model if the relative funding for programs of study is adjusted for fairness among institutions, and if the base and enrolment components of the grants reflect true costs.

The present funding system provides operating grants based on enrolment trends and leaves universities free to define their own mix of teaching and research.

Under the "modified corridor" proposal, the current system would be modified in an attempt to redress funding inequities among the universities. Laurier's support of this model would be conditional on the magnitude of the proposed adjustment of existing inequities and of the proposed financial incentives to increase accessibility.

Under the "purchase of service" model, the government would identify the services it wishes to purchase in the areas of teaching, research, and community service and then contract with the universities for specific services in those areas.

Rejecting the model as "bureaucratically cumbersome and expensive," the brief says it is wrong to assume that a centralized planning system can be more effective than the market place or regulated competition in achieving the desired goals. "We also find the concept of an omnipotent and all-knowing centralized authority quite offensive. . . .

"Government would, in that case, be setting the agenda for teaching and research in hitherto autonomous institutions," says the brief. "We believe this is not desirable, not feasible and a serious attack on academic and intellectual freedom."