

## Wilfrid Laurier University



### **Laurier officially launches Ontario's newest university campus** *Community gets first look at programs, building and student body of Laurier Brantford*

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University held opening ceremonies for Ontario's newest university campus today. Politicians from the three levels of governments joined community supporters and University officials for welcoming remarks, ribbon cutting, and tours to officially open Laurier Brantford.

Though the inaugural group of students has been attending classes in the former Carnegie Library on George Street since mid-September, Laurier officials organized today's opening to introduce Laurier Brantford to the community whose support has been invaluable to establishing the campus.

"The people of Brantford and the surrounding community have helped make Laurier's Brantford campus a reality," said Dr. Robert Rosehart, president and vice-chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University. "What we open today is the result of an extraordinary partnership. Without the efforts and energy of the Grand Valley Education Society (GVES), the City of Brantford, along with a list of groups and individuals too long to mention, Laurier Brantford would not exist today."

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Community support has allowed the GVES to surpass a \$2-million goal long before its fundraising campaign closes in December. Half the money raised is funding endowed scholarships and bursaries while the other half is helping furnish and equip the new campus. Partnerships with the Brantford Public Library, Brantford YMCA and a local caterer allow Laurier Brantford to offer library services, physical activity and food services.

Laurier and Brantford partnered to bring a degree granting education to an area that, until recently, has had to send its students elsewhere. Too often those educated young people did not return.

The campus opened this fall with 140 full and part-time students, most coming from the City of Brantford, County of Brant and surrounding communities. Eighty-five percent of full-time students are attending right out of high school, though a number of seniors are taking courses part-time. Thirty-five of the 40 full-time students are registered in the new General Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Contemporary Studies program while the remainder are enrolled in the first year of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program.

"The BA in Contemporary Studies is, as we expected, proving to be extremely popular, as is the first-year of the BBA," explains Arthur Read, Acting Dean of Laurier Brantford. "We are also seeing a real mix of part-time students who seem to have been waiting for an opportunity to study and are now seizing it."

# Wilfrid Laurier University



Founded 1911

## LAURIER BRANTFORD BACKGROUNDER

### HISTORY OF THE BRANTFORD PROJECT

The people of Brantford had long sought to establish a university in their community when Dr. Robert Rosehart, President and Vice-Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University, read of their interest and initiated a discussion on the possibility of Laurier opening a satellite campus. The initial dialogue led to the signing of a letter of intent by Laurier, the City of Brantford and the Grand Valley Education Society (GVES) on June 29, 1998.

That letter of intent outlined the commitment of the three parties to opening Laurier Brantford by the fall of 1999. Under an agreement signed in October 1998, Laurier was responsible for developing the curriculum and for turning the city's Carnegie Library into the Laurier Brantford campus. The City of Brantford provided the Carnegie Library and a \$1.3-million loan (to be forgiven during Laurier Brantford's first five years of operation) to cover renovation costs. And the GVES set about marshalling community support for the new campus, surpassing a \$2-million fund-raising goal long before the Laurier Brantford Campus Campaign ends in December 1999.

### INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

Laurier Brantford offers a General Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary Studies that is unique among Canadian universities. The program developed by Dr. Rowland Smith, Vice-President: Academic, and Dr. Arthur Read, Acting Dean: Laurier Brantford, includes a two-course core curriculum developed to expose students to a range of events and ideas from a variety of disciplines. *The World in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* presents a multi-disciplinary investigation of selected themes of this century. *Regional Ecosystems: Issues and Responses* examines a regional ecosystem, with emphasis on the integration of several disciplinary approaches to the study of the dynamic features of such a system over time. The three-year BA program is only available in Brantford.

Brantford students can also complete the first year of Laurier's four-year Honours Bachelor of Business Administration before transferring to the main campus in Waterloo. Students enrolled in either the BA or BBA program can register for courses in the following disciplines: anthropology, business, Canadian studies, communication studies, computing, economics, English, French, geography, mathematics, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology and theatre.

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## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Though Laurier Brantford was conceived and developed as a three-way partnership between Wilfrid Laurier University, the City of Brantford and the Grand Valley Education Society, credit for the project's success is shared by a long list of individuals, businesses and community groups (A list of the 47 donors who each contributed more than \$1,000 is included in this package).

Laurier Brantford also benefits from partnerships that allow it to provide important services. An agreement with the Brantford Public Library offers students access to a library resources that are more comprehensive than a new university campus might offer on its own. The student services fees grant access to the physical activities facilities offered by the YM-YWCA. An arrangement with a local catering company provides daily food services. Laurier has already performed an opera at the Sanderson Centre in Brantford, and plans to present other musical and theatre performances. And Laurier is now negotiating an agreement with Brantford Collegiate Institute that would allow high-school students to take up to two university courses in their final year.

## PIONEER STUDENTS

Laurier Brantford's inaugural class includes 40 full-time and 100 part-time students. Close to 85 percent of full-time students have enrolled directly from high school, while the rest are mature students and include a number of seniors. Thirty-five of the full-time students are registered in the new General BA in Contemporary Studies program while the other five are enrolled in the first-year of the BBA program offered on Laurier's Waterloo campus. The part-time students are enrolling in variety of courses, notably psychology, business, sociology and anthropology.

Along with the full range of scholarships and bursaries available to all Laurier students, the 40 full-time students have each received two separate Pioneer Awards – one from Laurier and the other from the Grand Valley Education Society. The two \$500 awards were created to recognize the 'pioneer spirit' of students who enrolled in a new program developed for Ontario's newest university campus.

## THE 'CARNEGIE' CAMPUS

Laurier Brantford is located across from Victoria Park at 73 George Street in a renovated Carnegie Library. Originally opened in 1902, the building boasts a domed rotunda, pillared front entrance, ornate molding and other architectural features. Where possible, Laurier has preserved these features while preparing the building to house a modern university campus. For example, a computer lab was designed in a way that allowed it to retain a refurbished (though inoperable) fireplace.

While the building's exterior remains largely untouched, the interior has been dramatically altered during the \$1.3-million renovation project. The Laurier Brantford campus includes a 30-station computer lab, video-conferencing facility, three seminar/meeting rooms and three lecture halls, two of which are tiered.