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Ballard Power CEO named Laurier's Outstanding Business Leader

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WATERLOO — The Laurier School of Business and Economics (LBE) has named the chairman and chief executive officer of Vancouver-based Ballard Power Systems Inc. as its Outstanding Business Leader. Firoz Rasul will receive the award at 4 p.m. on June 9 in the John Aird Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Rasul served as president and CEO of Ballard, which has an international reputation as an innovator in fuel cell technology, from December 1988 until his appointment as chair and CEO in May 1999. Responsible for the strategic planning and overall direction of Ballard's activities, he was chosen as this year's outstanding business leader for his accomplishments in positioning the company on the world stage as a major technological innovator.

"Firoz Rasul is enthusiastic, aggressive, entrepreneurial, ambitious and has a broad vision for Ballard Power. He sees business in terms of a global marketplace and his managerial savvy gives him the ability to succeed on the international stage," said SBE dean Scott Carson. "He embodies all of the qualities and characteristics we try to instill in our business and economics students, which is why we're pleased to be able to honor him."

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Ballard Power Systems Inc. is a world leader in the development, manufacture and marketing of zero-emission fuel cells, having taken its products from research through to international marketing. The company's fuel cells can be used in many industries, including transportation, electricity generation and portable products. Among the company's customers are General Motors, Ford, Honda, Volkswagen and Volvo. Rasul has been instrumental in moving Ballard Power forward, taking the company public in 1993 and positioning it ahead of its rivals.

Before working at Ballard Power, Rasul was vice-president of marketing and sales for MDI Mobile Data International. He is also the president of the Ismaili Council for Canada, the former chairman of the international emergency relief agency Focus Humanitarian Assistance Canada and served as a member of the national committee of the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada.

Rasul has a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Hertsfordshire in the United Kingdom and a master's degree in business administration from McGill University in Montreal.

Laurier's SBE has presented the Outstanding Business Leader Award annually since 1987. The award is given to an individual who demonstrates outstanding leadership qualities in any area of business.