

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier Brantford offers alternative to discipline-based learning *Curriculum arms students to succeed in changing world and draws international attention*

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**Contact: Dr. Leo Groarke
Dean, Laurier Brantford
(519) 756-8228 ext. 5702**

**or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070**

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University has reaffirmed its commitment to a liberal-arts education. The University senate recently approved motions that finalize the curriculum for Laurier Brantford, a satellite campus offering a general bachelor of arts (BA) in contemporary studies, an honours BA in contemporary studies and the opportunity for students to pursue double majors, minors and options in 13 of the traditional humanities and social sciences.

The three and four-year BAs in contemporary studies offer students a unique alternative to discipline-based programs. Rather than focusing on one area of study (i.e., economics or history), the curriculum draws from multiple disciplines to offer a fuller understanding of today's complex social and personal issues. Students will emerge with the skills required to succeed in a world characterized by constant change, the need for analytical skills, and the capacity to think across conventional categories and synthesize knowledge.

"The skills in question are those needed to succeed in just about any endeavor," says Laurier Brantford dean Leo Groarke. "They include – but are not limited to – the ability to communicate effectively; to locate, understand and assess information; to think critically and solve problems; to undertake and complete tasks and project; and to learn and re-engineer oneself when facing new and unexpected situations."

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Students can also pursue a joint degree that combines contemporary studies with a major, minor or option in one of 13 humanities and social-science programs. Courses offered at Laurier Brantford and/or by distance education will allow students to also earn a designation in anthropology, children's education and development, communication studies, development and international studies, English, geography, history, indigenous studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion and culture, or sociology.

Laurier Brantford's unique curriculum is attracting interest from scholars around the world. In January, Groarke and Rowland Smith, Laurier's vice-president academic, explained the campus's interdisciplinary approach to education at the Association of American Colleges and Universities' 87th Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Smith and Terry Copp, a history professor who helped develop Brantford's curriculum, gave a similar presentation last July during the 13th International Conference on the First-year Experience in Reading, England.

Wilfrid Laurier University opened the satellite campus in the fall of 1999 with 140 full and part-time students. Laurier Brantford was conceived and developed as a three-way partnership between the University, the City of Brantford and the Grand Valley Education Society. The campus is located in a renovated Carnegie library that first opened across from Brantford's Victoria Park in 1902.

For more information on Laurier Brantford and its curriculum, please visit www.wlu.ca/~wwwbrant.