

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



\$4.3-million grant funds expansion of science building/research

Canadian Foundation for Innovation funds \$4.8 million in projects across Laurier

For Immediate Release

January 30, 2002

11-02

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WATERLOO (Ont.) – A \$4.3-million grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) will allow for a significant expansion of the faculty of science at Wilfrid Laurier University and its research activities. Industry Minister Allan Rock today announced four grants to Laurier totaling just under \$4.5 million – the largest of which covers 40 percent of Laurier Science Research Centre.

The CFI Innovation Fund grant for \$4,327,440 will fund part of a four-storey, 55,000-square-foot addition at the west end of the Science Building. The research centre will allow the faculty of science to centralize its existing research projects and expand to meet growing demand.

Laurier will now have the space needed to increase the number of science faculty members from 68 to 80 or 85. The additional faculty, the space freed in the existing facility and the expansion in research capacity will allow the faculty of science to grow by 500 to 750 undergraduate students and 75 to 100 graduate students.

“This is a significant contribution to the faculty’s future plans and we thank CFI for recognizing this investment in the future of science research in Canada,” says Arthur Szabo, dean of the faculty of science. “It allows our existing complement of excellent researchers to undertake lines of inquiry they would not otherwise be able to, and lets us create an atmosphere that will attract other science stars.”

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Since separating from Laurier's larger faculty of arts and science two years ago, the new faculty of science has been developing its research strengths. That development has taken the form of research clusters that encourage academics from different science departments to collaborate on shared research projects.

Seven research clusters have been identified: (1) cognitive and behavioural neuroscience, (2) social and developmental processes, (3) proteomics-biotechnology, (4) photonics, (5) computational sciences, (6) kinesiology and (7) financial mathematics.

To date, CFI has approved 21 Laurier projects and granted just over \$6 million. That figure includes the funds for the science building expansion and three other projects announced today. Those three other projects, worth just under \$450,000, involve:

- \$358,651, to chemistry researcher Masoud Jelokhani-Niaraki, to fund Biophysical Studies of Membrane Proteins: Development of Interdisciplinary Approaches for Understanding the Structure-Function Relationships of Membrane-Interacting Proteins,
- \$60,833, to Sean Doherty in geography and environmental studies, to fund Advanced Technologies for Tracing and Understanding Human Activity-Travel Patterns, and
- \$29,034, to Madhu Kalimipalli and Kiridaran Kanagaretnam in the school of business and economics, to fund Market Risk and Firm Valuation in the New Economy.

"These awards recognize the outstanding contribution of researchers whose work will be of direct benefit to Canadians in a wide range of fields," said David W. Strangway, CFI president and CEO. "These projects were selected following a highly competitive process and will help ensure that researchers and students at Wilfrid Laurier University have access to a world-class research and training environment."

The faculty of science has applied to other funding agencies for further support of its building expansion project. It hopes the province will match the money provided by CFI. The remaining 20 percent of the costs would come from Laurier and/or the private sector.

Construction could start this summer and be completed in 2003.