

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier hosts conference on science and politics in policy-making** *Brantford campus's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference draws presenters from an array of disciplines*

**For Immediate Release**

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BRANTFORD – An interdisciplinary conference at the Brantford campus of Wilfrid Laurier University will investigate the tension between science and politics in the making of public policy. Laurier Brantford will host Science, Values and Public Policy from April 3 to 5.

Academics from across North America will gather to discuss the often-controversial relationship between science and politics. They'll explore the analytical approaches and key themes of the debate, deliberate what constitutes good science, compare how different nations view biotechnology, and consider whether politics should take precedence over science.

"Recent events from Kyoto to Walkerton have demonstrated that the relationship between science and policy-making continues to be controversial," says Stephen Haller, professor and conference organizer. "New legislation on endangered species, as one example, was subjected to extended debate over who should decide which species are designated as being at risk – politicians or scientists."

William Leiss, one of Canada's foremost researchers in policy, environment and risk, will deliver the keynote address, entitled Kyoto Kerfuffle and the Citizen's Dilemma: Figuring Out What to Believe About Climate Change, at 1 p.m. on Friday. Leiss is with the faculty of management at the University of Calgary and holds a research chair in risk communications, funded by both the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Laurier Brantford's Brenda Murphy and Holly Dolan, of the University of Victoria, will deliver Risky Landscapes: How Could This Happen in Canada? at 9 a.m. on Saturday. Murphy's research focuses on the nature of risk within modern society, particularly the risks that result from the interaction between society and the natural world. She is co-author of a research project on the Walkerton e-coli water crisis. Dolan's research interests include environmental, ecosystem and population health; environmental change and human response, adjustment and adaptation; determinants of vulnerability; and risks and disasters.

The conference will conclude with a panel discussion on the values and facts in environmental policy at 1:45 p.m. on Saturday.

This is Laurier Brantford's third annual interdisciplinary conference. For more information, please visit [www.wlu.ca/~wwwbrant/pages/conference](http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwbrant/pages/conference).