

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier Brantford celebrates grand opening of Odeon building *Partnership of Laurier, Mohawk College and City of Brantford fuels downtown renewal*

For Immediate Release

October 13, 2004
76-04

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BRANTFORD – The Brantford campus of Wilfrid Laurier University continues to expand in the downtown core with the grand opening of the Odeon building on Friday, October 15 at 2:30 p.m.

The Odeon reconstruction project was made possible through the partnership of Wilfrid Laurier University, Mohawk College of Applied Arts & Technology, and the City of Brantford. The \$2.4 million initiative was financed using \$1.3 million from Laurier, \$600,000 from a City of Brantford grant, and \$500,000 from Mohawk College in return for office space and access to classrooms.

“Laurier Brantford is excited to be partners with Mohawk College and the City of Brantford in a project that will enhance our educational capabilities and continue to revitalize Brantford’s downtown,” said Leo Groarke, dean of Laurier Brantford. “The Odeon building is a cooperatively developed project with multiple levels of direct and indirect community-based support.”

The Odeon will accommodate classes for over 600 Laurier and Mohawk College students, with four large lecture theatres, two medium-sized classrooms and one computer lab. Also, the Laurier Brantford building will host administrative and faculty offices, along with a common lounge for students, faculty and staff.

Laurier Brantford is holding classes in this building as well as the Carnegie building and Grand River Hall. Mohawk College is running its general arts and science program, and its post-graduate public relations program in the new Odeon building. All classrooms in the Odeon have multimedia capabilities.

Speaking at the opening will be Robert Rosehart, Laurier president, MaryLynn West-Moynes, Mohawk College president, and Brantford mayor Mike Hancock. Dave Levac, the member of provincial parliament for Brant, will host the event.

“This collaborative project will benefit the entire Brantford community through the continued revitalization of Brantford’s downtown core,” said Levac. “With the reconstruction of the Odeon, Laurier Brantford and Mohawk College will be able to attract even more students to our community.”

Built in 1957 as a movie theatre and vacant since 1998, Laurier acquired the building from Vicano Construction. Peter Vicano, owner of Vicano Construction, brought forth the unique and innovative concept of converting the Odeon into a 20,000-square-foot academic facility. Throughout the reconstruction, Vicano has worked closely with Mohawk and Laurier to construct a building that meets all the needed specifications.

The Odeon will accommodate Laurier Brantford’s booming student population, which has significantly grown from its first class of 39 students in 1999 to an expected 950 students this year. Applications to Laurier Brantford are up 30 per cent this year, compared with a post-double cohort drop of 25 to 35 per cent at other campuses across the province.

Laurier Brantford offers a selection of liberal arts programs including criminology, contemporary studies, education and organizational leadership. For more information about Laurier Brantford visit <http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwbrant>.