

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier officially opens \$11.4-million science research centre**

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is today celebrating the opening of a new facility designed to advance the quality and quantity of research in science. The Laurier Science Research Centre was built to provide greatly needed space for current and future research initiatives within Laurier’s faculty of science.

The 43,000-square-foot facility houses an array of research programs involving Laurier’s six science departments: biology, chemistry, kinesiology and physical education, mathematics, physics and computer science, and psychology. It was designed to accommodate research areas, both individual and collaborative, that have led to a significantly higher level of research intensity in the faculty and its departments.

“As Laurier’s first dean of science, I am very pleased to see us achieve this important milestone in the development of our research culture,” said Art Szabo, dean of science. “Given our smaller size in the Canadian university system, we are making important innovations in the areas where we concentrate our energies. Our new science research centre will allow Laurier’s scientists to make even more significant contributions.”

Some of the unique features included in the Laurier Science Research Centre are:

- a room shielded against radio frequencies, where psychologist Todd Ferretti can measure brainwave activity of subjects receiving visual stimuli from a computer monitor,
- a soundproof chamber where psychologist Jeffery Jones can perform experiments in auditory cognition,

– more –

- a real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machine, used by biologist Robin Slawson in the genetic analysis of pathogenic microorganisms, a type of forensic microbiology,
- biophysical instrumentation that permits biochemist Masoud Jelokhani-Niaraki to monitor minute electronic currents in isolated cells,
- optotracking equipment, designed by Waterloo-based Northern Digital to measure biomechanical and human movements, that allows Stephen Perry in kinesiology and physical education to monitor muscular and joint motion in athletes and the elderly, and
- a server room to house the high-performance computer system, linked by fibre optics to 10 other institutions in southwestern Ontario, as part of the Shared Hierarchical Academic Research Computing Network (SHARCNET).

The research centre cost \$11.4 million. The federal government provided \$4.3 million through the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). The Ontario government also provided financial support.

“Preserving our research talent and strengthening our capacity to innovate are two priorities of our government,” said Andrew Telegdi, MP for Kitchener-Waterloo. “The centre reflects Wilfrid Laurier’s research productivity in science as being world class. It will help preserve our region’s intellectual capital and contribute to the creation of jobs and increased productivity.”

“This new facility will enable researchers to perform their cutting-edge work right here in Waterloo,” said Eliot Phillipson, president and CEO of the CFI. “The Laurier Science Research Centre is an impressive example of the type of partnerships that are essential to ensure Canada’s success in the knowledge-based economy. This facility represents what the CFI is all about: providing the tools to institutions and researchers so that they can do the leading edge research that will benefit all Canadians.”

The CFI is an independent corporation created in 1997 by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI’s mandate is to strengthen the ability of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that will benefit Canadians.

Other dignitaries joining Telegdi, Phillipson and Szabo for the opening include John Milloy, MPP for Kitchener-Waterloo; Herb Epp, mayor of the City of Waterloo; Robert G. Rosehart, Laurier president and vice-chancellor; David Peirson, associate dean of science; and Barbara Hopewell of Zeidler Partnership Architects.