

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier Brantford seeks \$3.6 million to support continued growth

For Immediate Release

**September 22, 2005
63-05**

**Contact: Dr. Bruce Arai
Acting Dean, Laurier Brantford
(519) 756-8228 ext. 5702**

**or Sherri Gaertner
Associate Director, Development, Laurier Brantford
(519) 756-8228 ext. 5748**

BRANTFORD – Wilfrid Laurier University is today launching a fundraising campaign that is crucial to its efforts to educate students and revitalize Brantford’s downtown. With assistance from the mayor of Brantford, Laurier hopes to raise \$3.6 million in the next six months.

The amount sought will allow the university to undertake three renovation and/or construction projects worth \$16.75 million, which are essential to Laurier Brantford’s continued growth and success. Enrolment has now reached 1,400 students and existing facilities can accommodate up to 1,600, but the university hopes 2,500 Laurier students will eventually live and study in Brantford.

“Although we’ve grown at a faster rate than most Ontario universities in a very short time, we have not yet reached the point where Brantford has the kind of campus it deserves,” said Bruce Arai, acting dean of Laurier Brantford. “Laurier Brantford needs to maintain its vibrant growth – reaching a critical mass of at least 2,000 to 2,500 students – to ensure it can continue to provide a comprehensive mix of programming, residence life and lifestyle experiences that will attract high-quality students, staff and faculty.”

The \$3.6 million will help develop three buildings on what is becoming known as the Heritage Block, bordered by Dalhousie, George, Darling and Charlotte streets. Laurier Brantford already has two buildings on the block: The Post House Residence and a student centre built on the site of the former Wyatt, Purcell and Stillman Building.

– more –

The historic Wilkes House will eventually provide a much-needed athletic, recreation and residence space. The campaign will contribute \$1 million to the \$4.4-million renovation cost. The residence portion is to be completed later this fall, and the athletic and recreation component should open in February.

A multi-storey building on Dalhousie will house an academic centre with food service, university bookstore, and additional residence and academic space, as well as an adjacent parking lot. The campaign will generate \$2.35 million of the \$12-million building cost.

A faculty house, also on Dalhousie, will offer office space and adjacent parking. The \$250,000 renovation costs will come from the campaign.

Brantford Mayor Mike Hancock has accepted a leadership role in the campaign with Laurier president Bob Rosehart. “Laurier Brantford has proven its value to our city and the region, both in terms of educating our young people and helping revitalize our downtown,” said the mayor. “It is my extreme pleasure to support this effort to secure the university’s future success in our community.”

A recent study commissioned by the Grand Valley Educational Society has amply demonstrated the economic impact of having Laurier in Brantford’s downtown. It estimates the university generates up to \$27 million annually. And it concludes that greater economic and revitalizing benefits will accrue as post-secondary continues to grow in terms of physical space and student enrolment.

The \$3.6 million represents one-third of the \$10 million Laurier Brantford anticipates raising during the university’s centennial campaign. Laurier is in the preliminary planning stages of a campaign that will seek to raise in the region of \$100 million to mark its 100-year anniversary in 2011.

To learn more about Laurier Brantford’s Heritage Block campaign, please visit www.wlu.ca/documents/8736/Heritage_Block_Campaign.pdf. Anyone seeking further information can also contact Sherri Gaertner, associate director of development for Laurier Brantford, at (519) 756-8228 ext. 5748.