

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



SSHRC awards Laurier over \$900,000 in graduate scholarships *Scholarships fund research of women's shelters in K-W and migration of small-town youth*

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Contact: Dr. David Peirson
Interim Dean, Graduate Studies & Research
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3324

or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University students are this year receiving more than \$900,000 in graduate scholarships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Laurier's success rate in obtaining doctoral scholarships is 88 per cent – far above the national average of 55 per cent.

Five Laurier students have earned Canada Graduate Scholarships for doctoral studies, SSHRC's most prestigious and lucrative scholarship, valued at \$105,000 over three years. Two other Laurier students are receiving doctoral fellowships from SSHRC. One is worth \$20,000 over one year and the other is valued at \$40,000 over two years. The students come from the departments of philosophy, psychology, religion and culture and social work.

"Laurier students continue to have remarkable success in securing SSHRC graduate scholarships," says David Peirson, interim dean of graduate studies and research. "These scholarships are significant in developing academic researchers who will undertake important social research that benefits all Canadians."

Nineteen other Laurier students earned SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarships for master's students, valued at \$17,500 over one year. The students come from the departments of English and film studies, geography and environmental studies, history, political science, psychology, religion and culture, social work, and sociology.

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Angela Weber and Marcie McKay are two recipients of the master's scholarships studying in psychology. Weber's research will investigate the perceptions of women entering shelters in the Kitchener-Waterloo region with respect to their knowledge of resources available to them. Her research will ask if they were aware of legal, counselling, spiritual, recreation and housing resources prior to entering the shelter, and will gauge their attitudes and feelings toward the quality and availability of local social services.

The project will help develop programs geared to raising awareness of available services in the region. Results should appeal to government boards responsible for the allocation of funds for social services in the K-W region.

“This project will permit the design of more proactive strategies for dealing with spousal abuse, familial problems and poverty,” says Weber. “The SSHRC scholarship will provide me with financial support throughout my post-graduate education, and as a result will enable me to fully devote my time and energy to my research and studies.”

McKay's research focuses on youth migration from small communities. Her research will include surveys and focus groups involving youth between the ages of 12 and 16 from Glace Bay, a town of about 21,000 in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

“Glace Bay is an economically depressed area with few services, especially for youth,” says McKay, who is from Cape Breton. “Many youth, particularly those who are educated, are moving away, thus ruining the opportunity for new ideas and fresh approaches. This research has the potential to influence changes in policy and social services for youth.”

Her results will provide information on youth-related participation and sense of community that may be useful when examining other small towns and how to foster youth involvement.

SSHRC is an arm's-length federal agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in a variety of different disciplines related to the social sciences and humanities. As a key national research funding agency, SSHRC helps to continually build the human knowledge and skills Canada needs to improve the quality of its social, economic and cultural life. SSHRC's approved base budget for 2004-2005 is \$230 million.