

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



### **Laurier alums donate \$1 million to improve campus environment**

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WATERLOO – The Wilfrid Laurier University Alumni Association (WLAAA) is demonstrating its most significant show of support for the university, pledging \$1 million for four projects over the next five years.

The alumni association will provide \$500,000 to improve a popular sports field and \$200,000 has been earmarked for completion of a library information commons. Another \$125,000 will fund the renovation of and an addition to alumni hall. The remaining \$175,000 will help fund the printing and distribution of a third yearly issue of the magazine Laurier Campus.

“I know I speak for every member of the board when I say we’re all very happy and very proud to be able to make a gift like this,” said WLAAA president Steve Wilkie. “That we’re able to do it is thanks to every alumnus and alumna who supports our affinity programs, and the people – the board members, the volunteers and the staff in alumni relations – who have been involved with the association through the years.”

The association selected the four projects because of the positive effects each will have on the student experience. The renovation of Willison Field, for example, will benefit athletes, whether at the varsity or intramural level.

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The sports field's grass will be replaced with turf, its drainage will be improved and the area will be ringed with grassy berms, creating an amphitheatre-style environment complete with seating areas. Trees will be planted and vine-covered fences will be installed along the street side of the field, improving the area's aesthetics. The parking that is currently along King Street will be relocated toward the centre of the campus.

The project will cost \$1.85 million. Like their alumni counterparts, the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union is contributing \$500,000. The family of former Laurier Chancellor John Cleghorn is contributing \$150,000, with the balance coming from other corporate and individual donors. Willison Field will be renamed Alumni Field to recognize alumni support.

“A gift of this significance from an alumni association of our size represents a very real investment in the future of Laurier and its students,” said Arthur Stephen, vice-president: university advancement. “There are many alumni associations that are larger than ours, that have more members, but there are few that have been more generous.”

A new information commons is opening in the library, providing greater access to an increasing amount of electronic resources for learning. This past September, the university relocated a number of services, including the library's information, reference and circulation desks, along with the information technology helpdesk, writing centre and academic advising, onto the library's main floor. The next phase will focus on creating a technological space that promotes the scholarly use of information resources.

A two-storey addition to alumni hall will provide additional space for growing operations within university advancement, development and alumni relations. The project is estimated to cost \$800,000 and could be completed as early as fall 2007.

The university will begin producing a third annual issue of Laurier Campus this year. Each issue of the magazine is distributed to 46,000 alumni and friends of the university.

The WLAAA is a separately incorporated organization that serves as Laurier alumni's official voice. The role of its board is to research, design, implement and manage programs and services to broaden the alumni base and strengthen ties to the university.