

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
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Laurier appoints first associate vice-president: research

Paul Maxim to focus on expanding university research funding and participation

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WATERLOO – Laurier is taking an important step toward expanding its research activities and graduate programs with the appointment of Paul Maxim as the university's first associate vice-president for research.

Maxim, currently the associate dean, research and operations, in the faculty of social science at the University of Western Ontario, has been very successful in boosting the number of active research grants per faculty member, and the size of those grants.

Building Laurier's graduate programs and research activities are key goals of The Century Plan, Laurier's blueprint for the coming five years. Maxim's appointment is a step toward achieving those goals, says Sue Horton, vice-president: academic at Laurier.

Maxim, who holds a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, has been a professor in the department of sociology at Western since 1981. Initially interested in criminology, his research interests shifted to population economics, particularly the demography of First Nations peoples, socioeconomic integration of immigrants and minorities, and patterns of urban residential segregation. He is also interested in statistics and research methods. In addition to many other publications, Maxim is author of *Quantitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, published by Oxford University Press.

During Maxim's four-year tenure as associate dean, research and operations, in the faculty of social science, the total number of active grants for faculty members increased from 337 to 460 (from 1.8 to 2.2 per faculty member).

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Grant funding research expenditures increased from approximately \$5.4 million to almost \$8.5 million in the same time, and now average slightly more than \$40,000 per faculty member.

“Needless to say, it is the individual researcher and not associate deans who primarily write grant applications and receive research funding,” Maxim says. “However, I do believe that an active program of providing granting workshops, serving as a mentor, informing faculty of funding opportunities, and helping one’s colleagues put together interdisciplinary and collaborative teams helps.”

Horton says Maxim’s colleagues at Western report that “he has been a wonderful mentor. His interpersonal skills are very strong and have been key to success in some aboriginal research initiatives in which he was involved.”

Western administrators, Horton adds, have described Maxim as a good strategic thinker and an ideas person.

“He is a very productive researcher, used to working with large datasets, and working to get outside funding,” says Horton.

Maxim says he was attracted to Laurier because “growing the research and graduate programs here is an opportunity to make a significant impact.”

Maxim says he recognizes that the university has excellent undergraduate programs and that Laurier’s students are “among the best in the country.”

He says he is looking forward to helping Laurier’s faculty, many of whom are young and are eager researchers, develop their skills in obtaining funding.

“I would like to see the percentage of researchers with grants increase significantly,” he says, “and the dollar amounts, too. The participation rate (in funding programs such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) is good for a university in the primarily undergraduate category, around 15–20 percent averaged over all faculties. But it could be 40–50 percent overall, given the quality of faculty here. That’s an obtainable goal.

“I also want to see more interdisciplinary research. Part of my goal is to build teams, not just within Laurier, but with Laurier’s sister institutions, as well.

“We also need to grow the graduate programs – expand the existing ones and add new programs. Graduate training and research go hand in hand. To support that research, you need resources and facilities. The funding for that must come through grants.”

Maxim begins his five-year renewable term on July 1.