

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier to offer unique Master of Science degree program

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will become the only university in Ontario to offer a Master of Science degree in integrative biology when it launches its new program in September 2007.

While students in standard research programs examine problems from a single sub-discipline of biology, students in this unique program will be expected to approach research questions from a number of different scientific perspectives. Students will develop comprehensive explanations of biological phenomena using, for example, a genetic and development approach or a physiology and evolutionary approach, among many possible combinations.

“The integrative biology master’s degree program is highly innovative, presenting advanced studies that promote critical thinking in biology,” said Dr. Arthur Szabo, dean of Laurier’s Faculty of Science. “This is another great example of the transformation of science at Laurier to develop high quality, contemporary programs in both undergraduate and graduate teaching, and combine them with a vibrant research culture.”

The program will enhance Laurier’s provincial and national presence in the biology community. “It will bring our research to the forefront,” said Dr. Scott Ramsay, assistant biology professor and graduate co-ordinator for the new program. “Graduate students are an engine for research production, which will translate into increased research funding.”

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The two-year, thesis-based research program will prepare graduate students for further research at the PhD level, careers in government or consulting, or professional programs such as medicine or law.

Laurier will admit approximately six students to the program in its first year, and Ramsay expects it to grow to 20 students or more within the next two years.

The approval for this master's degree program by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies comes during a period of unprecedented growth in Laurier's graduate programs. Six new graduate programs are expected to begin in fall 2007, with another seven expected in fall 2008.

“Laurier's growth in graduate programs supports our move towards becoming a comprehensive university, as well our strategic focus on research,” said Joan Norris, dean of graduate studies.

The Master of Science degree in integrative biology represents Laurier's first graduate program in biology, and its fourth graduate program in the Faculty of Science.