

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



Laurier appoints inaugural dean of Faculty of Education

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WATERLOO — Wilfrid Laurier University has appointed Colleen Willard-Holt as the inaugural dean of its Faculty of Education. Willard-Holt's five-year term begins July 1.

An academic with both administrative and classroom experience, Willard-Holt is an associate professor of education at Pennsylvania State University in Harrisburg. She directs the school's initial teacher certification program and coordinates its elementary education program.

In addition to her post-secondary teaching and research accomplishments, Willard-Holt brings to the role of dean more than a decade of experience as a secondary school special education and mathematics teacher and a teacher of gifted students from kindergarten to Grade 12. She will also draw upon her extensive administrative experience in academia and public schools.

"Dr. Willard-Holt spent 10 years as a teacher and an administrator in schools before completing her PhD, and in the 15 years post-PhD she has presented her research extensively in national and international venues, and served in many professional

organizations,” said Sue Horton, Laurier’s vice-president: academic. “This breadth of experience is vital for the position of inaugural dean.”

Willard-Holt is enthusiastic about her role. “Laurier’s Professional Development School structure is an exciting opportunity to collaborate with area schools to provide an excellent education for our candidates and ultimately improve education for children,” she said. “I feel honoured to work with the highly talented and committed faculty and staff at Laurier to expand this program and build it into the pre-eminent teacher education program in Ontario.”

Willard-Holt holds a PhD in educational psychology from Purdue University, a master’s degree in education from Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor’s degree in special education and elementary education from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

She has published in a variety of journals and academic publications and conducted numerous presentations and workshops at national and international conferences.

Willard-Holt held board positions on the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee at Penn State Harrisburg, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the American Association of University Women, as well as many other professional organizations. She has also directed and coordinated numerous school district programs for gifted students.

Willard-Holt succeeds interim dean of education Lynne Hannay, whose term ends in June.

Laurier’s Faculty of Education offers a one-year, full-time consecutive teacher-education program for prospective primary/junior teachers, which connects theory and practice through practica and placements, as well as mentoring activities and continuing education following graduation.