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Contact:

Jacqui Tam, Director: Public Affairs and Publications
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3786 or jtam@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Associate Director : News & Editorial
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

Laurier to keep 50-metre pool open on day-to-day basis to allow more time to raise repair funds

WATERLOO – In light of substantial fund-raising efforts by the swimming communities in Kitchener-Waterloo and the apparent interest of municipal councils in offering support, Wilfrid Laurier University will keep its 50-metre swimming pool open on a day-to-day basis as long as it remains safe.

The university had previously announced that its aging pool, which has been used by community aquatic groups for 35 years, would close permanently Aug. 31, 2008, due to the need for significant and costly repairs. In response to community concern, the university extended the deadline to Dec. 31.

“Laurier has subsidized community use of an excellent aquatic facility for many years and we recognize the central role it plays for competitive swimming in this region,” said Laurier president Dr. Max Blouw. “We are encouraged by the community’s commitment to aquatics programs and we will keep the Laurier pool open for as long as we can to give the community and local municipalities more time to raise all of the funds necessary to repair the facility.”

However, Dr. Blouw stressed that the pool’s status will be subject to daily evaluation until the funds are secured to make significant repairs.

“Safety is our first priority,” he said. “The pool is currently safe to operate, but we will continually monitor the situation. If necessary, we will close the pool on short notice.”

Laurier will continue its contribution by paying operating costs — approximately \$300,000 per year — to run its pool if the estimated \$2.2 million in capital funds for the interim repairs is forthcoming.

Once the university receives confirmation that the capital repairs will be fully funded, it will undertake the repairs at a time that is most convenient to pool users.

The Laurier pool is the only 50-metre pool in Waterloo Region and is used by many community groups, including the Region of Waterloo Swim Club (ROW), the KW Synchronized Swim Club, the Waterloo Regional Synchronized Swim Club, and the KW Water Polo Club, high schools, elementary schools, and Special Olympics athletes.