

**For Immediate Release
February 17, 2009 | 12-09**

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Canadian consul visits Laurier to discuss business and academic opportunities in China's booming southwest region

WATERLOO – Shawn Steil, consul and senior trade commissioner at the Canadian Consulate in Chongqing, China, will visit the Brantford and Waterloo campuses of Wilfrid Laurier University February 24 and 25 to discuss business and academic opportunities for Canadians in the booming southwest region of China.

“Chongqing and the southwest represent the next frontier of Chinese development and emerging opportunities for Canada,” said Steil, who helped Laurier establish an office in Chongqing in 2007.

The public is invited to hear Steil speak at Laurier's Brantford campus on Tuesday, February 24, starting at 3:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Building lounge; and at Laurier's Waterloo campus on Wednesday, February 25, starting at 4:30 p.m. in the Paul Martin Centre.

Steil's visit will include meetings with local business leaders in Waterloo Region and Brantford to discuss business synergies and partnership opportunities in the southwest provinces of Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou.

At Laurier, he will meet with university president Dr. Max Blouw and representatives from various Laurier departments that are pursuing opportunities in China. Steil will discuss the significance of Laurier's Chongqing office, which serves as a central support for the university's academic initiatives in China. “By looking beyond the traditional coastal areas of China and establishing an office in Chongqing, Laurier is strategically positioned for the next wave of China's development,” Steil said.

Chongqing is the largest of China's southwestern provinces. With a population of 37 million, it is home to the country's largest automotive manufacturing sector and 50 universities and colleges. Through its office in Chongqing, Laurier has 16 Chinese university partners and has established collaborative relationships with government and the private sector. The university has also completed two academic missions to China.

“Our China office allows us to strengthen the international elements of Laurier's research and academic programs and develop strategic partnerships,” said Dr. Paul Maxim, Laurier's associate vice-president: research.

Steil joined Canada's federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 2002 and has served as consul and senior trade commissioner in Chongqing since 2006.