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## **Laurier appoints David McMurray to new post of Vice-President, Student Affairs**

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University has appointed David McMurray to the new position of Vice-President, Student Affairs, as part of the university's strategy to strengthen its integrated approach to student learning, development and engagement.

McMurray is an award-winning student-services leader who has served as Laurier's Assistant Vice-President, Students Services and Dean of Students since 1997.

The change in position is part of a larger strategic plan to enhance Laurier's innovative approach to student-centred education at a time when enrolment is growing and the university continues to evolve as a multi-campus institution. Key to Laurier's institutional identity is the innovative and intentional integration of its academic/curricular agenda with the co-curricular facets of student learning and development, all with a view to enhancing student engagement and success.

The full multi-campus plan for Student Affairs includes, subject to budget approval, a Dean of Students position at Laurier's Waterloo campus and a Dean of Students position at Laurier's fast-growing Brantford campus. This structure will enable each Dean to dedicate more time directly to their students while the Vice-President, Student Affairs, provides the strategic and administrative leadership to develop and support the very best in student programming across all Laurier campuses.

"Wilfrid Laurier University is renowned for its ability to combine academic excellence with an exceptional student experience," said President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Max Blouw. "As we grow and evolve as a multi-campus institution, our support structure must adapt so that we continue to integrate student learning and development in a holistic way that provides our students with an outstanding, well-rounded education.

"David McMurray has an international reputation for leadership and innovation in this regard," Blouw added. "We are delighted that he will continue to help Laurier inspire lives of leadership and purpose through his knowledge, skill and passion."

McMurray has been a leading figure in student services for more than 30 years. He is a past president of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services and has received its highest award — the Award of Honour — for continuous and outstanding commitment to students. Nominated by the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada, he has also received the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for excellence in higher education, administration and student services. McMurray is currently working with colleagues to develop the international Institute on the Student Experience, offered by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Development. Widely known for his innovative and integrative approach to student services, McMurray is frequently invited to teach and speak on the subject.

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Laurier has grown considerably since McMurray joined the university as Dean of Students in 1997. At that time, Laurier had 5,335 full-time undergraduates and 469 graduate students on one campus. Today, Laurier has 13,194 full-time undergrads and 832 graduate students on four campuses. The Brantford campus alone has grown from 39 students in 1999 to 2,200 students today.

In his new position, McMurray will retain responsibility for many key departments and programs, including Athletics and Recreation, Health Services, Counseling and Performance Services, Learning Services, Career Development and Cooperative Education, Community Service Learning, the Student Leadership Centre, Diversity and Equity, Residential Services, Food and Conference Services, the Laurier One Card program, and town and gown issues, among others.

During his years at Laurier, McMurray has played a lead role in introducing initiatives that enhance student learning by promoting student development and engagement. Examples include the Residence Life program, Learning Communities, Student Leadership Centre, Learning Services and Accessible Learning, Student Athlete Development, Judicial Affairs Council, Community Service Learning, diversity and equity support, and the Co-Curricular Record, an official portfolio of student involvement in volunteer and leadership activities.

Many of these experiential learning initiatives provide students with leadership competencies, personal skills and the opportunity to work with peers, faculty and staff to enhance services, create programming and resolve conflict. Beyond student satisfaction, efforts are currently underway to establish student learning and development outcomes to measure results and to assess student-affairs program priorities.

“I am deeply honoured to serve in this new strategic capacity to enact Laurier’s holistic educational mission and institutional proposition of inspiring lives of leadership and purpose,” McMurray said. “Supporting and challenging students to be the best they can be will continue to be of the highest priority. Of special interest, is the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to more fully integrate the curricular and co-curricular learning and development experience at Laurier. I believe this endeavor will represent a feature signature of this exceptional university.”

McMurray recently worked with Jim Butler, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, and Allison Rawn, Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources, to combine the Office for Student Diversity with the equity programs offered by Human Resources, resulting in a new Diversity & Equity Office that now serves the entire Laurier community.

McMurray is also collaborating with Dr. Deborah MacLatchy, Laurier’s Vice-President: Academic and Provost, and Dr. Lesley Cooper, Acting Vice-President and Principal at Laurier Brantford, to lead the integration of teaching, learning and student development. The aim is to find ways to promote student scholarship and personal development and to align student programs with the university’s core principles and the learning domains of Laurier’s new Academic Plan.

“Our ultimate goal is to create an international benchmark model in higher education for integration and collaboration in academic and student affairs,” McMurray said.