

NEWS RELEASE



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Jean Becker appointed Senior Advisor: Aboriginal Initiatives

WATERLOO – Aboriginal Elder Jean Becker has been appointed on a permanent basis to the role of Senior Advisor: Aboriginal Initiatives for Wilfrid Laurier University, overseeing activities related to Aboriginal initiatives at the Waterloo and Brantford campuses and within the Faculty of Social Work in Kitchener.

Becker, an elder-in-residence for the Aboriginal Field of Study in Laurier's Master of Social Work (MSW) program, was appointed to the post last year on an interim basis. Her position has now been made permanent.

"Laurier is building an Aboriginal initiative which will guide us in providing services and developing Aboriginal curriculum across the university," said Becker. "My vision is to create a welcoming space, a welcoming home for Aboriginal students to learn and to grow."

Becker will continue to report to Laurier President Max Blouw and Vice-President: Academic and Provost Deborah MacLatchy.

"Jean has done a terrific job in the position during the past year," said MacLatchy. "She has an enthusiasm for the activities of the position that is infectious and bodes well for achieving our goals to increase the success of Laurier's of Indigenous students, enhance our academic programming, and support diversity."

Laurier's Waterloo campus recently opened an Aboriginal Student Centre at 187 Albert St. designed to serve as a valuable resource for all students, staff and faculty to learn about Aboriginal issues. There is also an Aboriginal Resource Centre in Brantford, and plans are underway to move the office to 111 Darling St. In addition, Brantford's Research and Academic Centre-East will feature a Circle Room/Longhouse for cultural and social activities when it is completed later this year.

Since 2006, Laurier's Faculty of Social Work at 120 Duke St. W. in Kitchener has offered a one-year full-time Master of Social Work-Aboriginal Field of Study (MSW-AFS) program. It also now offers the MSW-AFS program as a part-time option to students in Ontario and New Brunswick. In Brantford, the Indigenous Studies program is offered as part of the Bachelor of Arts options.

The Waterloo and Brantford campuses are hosting Aboriginal Awareness Weeks in March. Events on the Waterloo campus took place March 7 to 11, and are being held March 21 to 25 in Brantford. For more details, go to www.wlu.ca/aboriginalawareness