

NEWS RELEASE



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Laurier presents *Women and Political Leadership: A Centennial Journey Unfinished*

WATERLOO – As part of its centennial celebrations, Wilfrid Laurier University is hosting a plenary panel discussion of women’s progress and inability to truly “break the glass-ceiling” of political representation since gaining the federal franchise nearly 100 years ago.

Titled *Women and Political Leadership: A Centennial Journey Unfinished*, the event takes place Wednesday, May 18 from 3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. in the university’s Senate and Board Chamber on the Waterloo campus.

After the recent 2011 federal election, women MPs now make up 25 per cent of Canada’s federal Parliament. But despite reaching this milestone they have not reached a level of parity and have been stuck at around the 20 per cent mark for almost 20 years. While one federal party leader (Elizabeth May of the Green Party) has been elected, neither the government nor the major opposition parties in the House have women leaders. Only three women are leaders at the provincial/territorial level, with only one achieving this position via election.

Members of the media, the public and the Laurier community are invited to join us in a plenary panel discussion of this important topic.

The event features contributions from the Honourable Sheila Copps, a former MPP and federal MP, cabinet minister and deputy prime minister; Brenda Halloran, mayor of Waterloo, Ontario; and Sylvia Bashevkin from the University of Toronto, author of *Opening Doors Wider: Women’s Political Engagement in Canada* and *Women, Politics and Power*.

A reception and informal discussion will continue after the plenary event in the Aird Recital Hall reception area from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.