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Laurier professors write Canada's first introductory astronomy textbook

WATERLOO – Laurier professors Shohini Ghose and Arthur Read have co-authored Canada's first astronomy textbook for first-year students. Previously, no other introductory astronomy textbook was produce for Canadian students or contained content about Canadian contributions to astronomy.

The textbook, titled *ASTRO*, is a Canadian edition of a successful introductory textbook by Dana Backman and Michael Seeds of the United States. It highlights the numerous Canadian contributions to astronomy such as the Canadarm and the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory, as well as many examples of international collaborations in astronomy, including the cutting-edge research at the Large Hadron Collider in Europe. The book also includes a guide to the Canadian night sky and a discussion of Inuit astronomy.

"We're very excited to have a Canadian first," said Ghose, associate professor in the Department of Physics and Computer Science. "The goal of the Canadian edition is to convey the message that modern astronomy has developed over thousands of years through the efforts of scientists from many nations and cultures, and Canada plays an ongoing role in this worldwide cooperative effort.

"By placing the material in a Canadian context and stressing the importance of international cooperation in science, we can keep our students better engaged, informed and interested."

In addition to her role at Laurier, Ghose is an adjunct professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Waterloo, a member of the Guelph-Waterloo Physics Institute and an affiliate member of Perimeter Institute. She is an award-winning physicist who has made important contributions in the areas of nonlinear dynamics, quantum information theory and quantum optics. Ghose has taught introductory astronomy courses at Laurier for the past seven years.

Read has been teaching at Laurier since 1966, and is a professor emeritus in the university's Department of Physics and Computer Science. His research focused on microwave optics and broadband molecular spectroscopy. In 1983, he began his appointment as Laurier's dean of Arts and Science, which culminated in the development of Laurier's Brantford campus in 2000. For the past 10 years he has taught two online introductory astronomy courses.

The book was also co-authored with Vesna Milosevic-Zdjelar of the University of Winnipeg. The Canadian edition will be used in Laurier's introductory astronomy courses starting in the spring 2012 term.

To request a review copy, telephone 1-800-268-2222 or email inquire@nelson.com.

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