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## Laurier professors receive provincial Early Researcher Awards

WATERLOO – The Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation awarded Laurier associate professor of biology Jennifer Baltzer and associate professor of business Laurie Barclay each with a \$100,000 Early Researcher Award. John Milloy, MPP Kitchener Centre and minister of Community and Social Services, announced the awards at the University of Waterloo May 4.

“The research work taking place at Wilfrid Laurier and across the province is important to helping us meet our social, environmental and health challenges while fostering long-term job creation and economic growth,” said Brad Duguid, minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

Laurier provided each professor with a \$50,000 matching award. In addition to the provincial funding awarded to the professors over a five-year term, the province provided Laurier with \$40,000 for indirect research costs to support the projects.

“We are very pleased that Laurie and Jennifer’s innovative research programs are being rewarded by the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation,” said Abby Goodrum, Laurier’s vice-president: research. “Having Early Researcher Award winners from both the Faculty of Science and the School of Business and Economics is a clear example of the valuable research across the disciplines taking place at Laurier.”

Baltzer, associate professor in Laurier’s Biology department and Canada Research Chair in Forests and Global Change, will investigate the impact of climate change and the thaw of the permafrost on Canada’s boreal forest.

By establishing long-term research plots, she will track tree growth, death, and changes in response to environmental change.

“Using this data combined with existing long-term data for these sites, we will develop tools for making predictions about how different forests respond to climate change,” said Baltzer.

Barclay, associate professor in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, will look at the pervasive and costly problem of unfairness in the workplace. She will explore the effectiveness of guided journal writing for people experiencing workplace unfairness.

“My previous research demonstrated that expressive writing can increase employees’ psychological health,” she said.

Her proposed research will investigate whether additional strategies can increase the effectiveness of expressive writing intervention.

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Through the Early Researcher Awards program, the Ontario government is providing \$8.68 million to support 62 researchers and their teams at 19 institutions in nine cities across the province.

The program helps promising, recently appointed Ontario researchers build their research teams of undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, associates, and technicians. The goal of the program is to improve Ontario's ability to attract and retain the best and brightest research talent.

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