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Laurier Faculty of Education dean appointed to second term

WATERLOO – The Board of Governors of Wilfrid Laurier University has appointed Colleen Willard-Holt, dean of the Faculty of Education, to a second five-year term. Willard-Holt's second term will run from Aug. 1, 2014 to July 31, 2019, following an administrative leave from Aug. 1, 2013 to July 31, 2014. During her leave, Associate Professor Dawn Buzza will serve as acting dean.

"I am very pleased that Dr. Willard-Holt has been reappointed with such strong support from both our internal community as well as our external partners," said Deborah MacLatchy, Laurier's vice-president: academic and provost. "Colleen brings a strong commitment to the Faculty of Education, its students and Laurier, and I look forward to working with her during her second term."

During her first term, Willard-Holt led the development of the Faculty of Education's first strategic plan, which aligns with Laurier's academic plan. She also played a leadership role in supporting enrolment growth within the faculty through the addition of the junior-intermediate division and the minor in education, and in further developing the faculty's successful professional development school model, which is unique in Ontario.

Willard-Holt's vision for the faculty includes continuing to integrate 21st century learning skills into the curriculum, exploring opportunities for strategic expansion and development, and generating support for its proposed Institute for Teaching, Educational Research, Scholarly Excellence and Creative Thinking (InTERSECT), a project that will connect students, researchers, teachers from the community and parents to provide unique and supplemental educational opportunities for children.

In addition to her internal activities, Willard-Holt regularly consults with government on issues relating to teacher education, both provincially and nationally. She is chair of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education and serves on the executive of the Association of Canadian Deans of Education.

"I'm thrilled to be continuing at Laurier, a place that is so full of potential," said Willard-Holt. "The Faculty of Education is a dynamic and forward-thinking group of colleagues with many ideas for modernizing teacher education. That makes it a very exciting place to work."

Willard-Holt received her PhD in Educational Psychology from Purdue University, Indiana. Prior to earning her PhD, Willard-Holt taught high school special education, high school mathematics and gifted education. Her areas of research include gifted children with disabilities, implications of neuroscience research for classroom teachers, multiple intelligences, international experiences for teachers and pre-service teacher education.

Dawn Buzza is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education. Holding a PhD in Instructional Psychology and an MA in Education (Counselling) from Simon Fraser University, Buzza's research interests include child and adolescent development and self-regulated learning. She has served as associate dean of the Faculty of Education and is currently co-president of the Canadian Association for Education Psychology.