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Laurier receives ministry approval for three new programs

BRANTFORD – The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has approved three new programs to begin in fall 2013 at Wilfrid Laurier University.

A Bachelor of Social Work program and a Master of Arts in Social Justice and Community Engagement will be offered at Laurier's Brantford campus, and a Master of Arts in Community Music will be offered at Laurier's Waterloo campus.

"We are very pleased to have received approval for these new programs," said Deborah MacLatchy, vice-president: academic and provost. "Laurier is focused on providing high-quality academic programming that gives our students integrated and engaged learning opportunities, and these programs will continue to do just that."

The four-year full-time Bachelor of Social Work program follows the standards and guidelines of the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) and aims to educate students for generalist social work practice in Canada. The program will offer a unique focus on Aboriginal issues, and includes an examination of the cultural exchanges between Canada's colonial processes and First Nations people. The program will include field placements in third and fourth year, and community service-learning throughout the program.

The MA in Social Justice and Community Engagement will foster students' abilities to investigate and understand the root causes of injustice including class, poverty, racism, gender discrimination and a lack of due process that marginalize people and communities. The program includes coursework, a community placement and a major research project that will see students develop the skills to facilitate community capacity development, local-level innovation, sustainability and democratic renewal.

The MA in Community Music is a part-time, interdisciplinary program that balances theory and practice for the development of leadership skills in community music. The program is designed to attract community leaders who are or plan to be engaged in creating or making music in schools, places of worship, ensembles, private studios and elsewhere. The program will typically be completed one course per term, while simultaneously serving in an applied community service placement and conducting a major research project.

All three of these new programs continue to build on Laurier's strength in integrated and engaged learning, with community placements and community service-learning. Through these opportunities, meaningful community placements are combined with traditional classroom learning to better prepare students for the workplace and to develop strong ties to the local communities.