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TD Bank Group donates \$750,000 to entrepreneurship at Laurier

BRANTFORD – Last year, Wilfrid Laurier University students Eugene Osei and Aliya D’Silva, and friend Stephen Amoah, used Laurier’s LaunchPad program to turn a creative idea into MyCareerCity, a successful company that offers students and recent graduates easy access to job postings, freelance projects and internships for start-ups. Their company has grown from Waterloo into activity in Toronto, Vancouver, New York, Boston and San Francisco.

Now, thanks to a \$750,000 gift from TD Bank Group, LaunchPad will be able to expand to help more students like them. LaunchPad, a new and popular course in entrepreneurship at Laurier, guides students and alumni through the process of creating a successful new business.

The donation will seed the establishment of LaunchPad at Laurier’s Brantford campus and support the existing program in Waterloo. The Waterloo campus, which officially opened LaunchPad in 2011, now has 58 students and alumni working in teams on 40 new ventures. With TD’s funding, Laurier hopes to double the number of participants over next two years.

“LaunchPad is a direct way to help our students build and sustain new start-ups,” said Max Blouw, Laurier president and vice-chancellor. “We intend to offer all Laurier students, from every faculty and campus, the opportunity to develop their business ideas and entrepreneurial skills.”

Today’s contribution brings the bank’s total support for Laurier to nearly \$2 million since 1997.

“By supporting and investing in education, we are not only encouraging the success of our youth but also helping them build on a platform as our nation’s future leaders,” said Frank McKenna, deputy chair, TD Bank Group. “And we are thrilled to work with Wilfrid Laurier University to help reach more students with the LaunchPad program as this will help them reach their potential and give them the confidence to excel in their future endeavors.”

Students in the LaunchPad course have a strategic pathway into their local entrepreneurship community, in addition to numerous connections with government and business. They also have access to new capital, research, technology, commercialization expertise and support services.

“With this gift from TD, Laurier can build on our educational strengths in business management, entrepreneurship, and personal leadership,” said Blouw. “The expansion of LaunchPad will have economic benefits both locally and nationally, and we deeply appreciate TD’s leadership in supporting our vision.”

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About TD Bank Group

The Toronto-Dominion Bank and its subsidiaries are collectively known as TD Bank Group (“TD” or the “Bank”). TD is the sixth largest bank in North America by branches and serves over 22 million customers in three key businesses operating in a number of locations in financial centres around the globe: Canadian Retail, including TD Canada Trust, TD Auto Finance Canada, TD Wealth (Canada), TD Direct Investing, and TD Insurance; U.S. Retail, including TD Bank, America’s Most Convenient Bank, TD Auto Finance U.S., TD Wealth (U.S.) and an investment in TD Ameritrade; and Wholesale Banking, including TD Securities. TD also ranks among the world’s leading online financial services firms, with approximately 8 million active online and mobile customers. TD had CDN\$909 billion in assets on January 31, 2014. The Toronto-Dominion Bank trades under the symbol “TD” on the Toronto and New York Stock Exchanges.

About Wilfrid Laurier University

Established in 1911, Wilfrid Laurier University is a leading Canadian university known for academic excellence and a culture that inspires lives of leadership and purpose. Laurier has a distinct commitment to teaching, research and scholarship, combined with a strong student focus, high levels of student satisfaction and a deep sense of community.

Laurier specializes in arts and social sciences, business and economics, music, science, social work, education and theology. Laurier has more than 19,000 students throughout its campuses in Waterloo, Brantford, Kitchener, and Toronto, Ontario. www.wlu.ca