



Claire Bennett, Sustainability Coordinator
Physical Resources
519-884-0710 ext. 4280 or cbennett@wlu.ca

Lori Chalmers Morrison, Acting Director
Communications & Public Affairs
519-884-0710 ext. 3067 or lchalmersmorrison@wlu.ca

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Laurier cuts carbon emissions by 25 per cent in two years

WATERLOO – When it comes to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, Wilfrid Laurier University is well ahead of its schedule.

Through a variety of sustainability initiatives, Laurier reduced its intensity-based carbon emissions by 15 per cent in 2013. Combined with reductions in 2012, the university has reduced its GHG emissions by a total of 25 per cent in just two years across all of its campuses, already exceeding its five-year goal of 15 per cent. In 2012, the university launched a [Sustainability Action Plan](#), which targeted a 15 per cent reduction of GHG emissions by 2016, using 2009 as a baseline year.

The 25 per cent reduction in GHG emissions also meets the ten-year goal Laurier set in 2009 as part of Sustainable Waterloo Region's Regional Carbon Initiative.

"There aren't too many universities that are vocalizing a commitment to greenhouse gas emissions and there are definitely not many that are holding themselves accountable to a third party," said Claire Bennett, Laurier's sustainability coordinator. "As an institution, we know this progress is very valuable. We know the benefits it can provide in our ability to be an efficient university, to use our resources more wisely."

Laurier has made significant steps forward in reducing its carbon emissions since the creation of its Sustainability Office in 2010. Numerous projects and initiatives have helped promote sustainability on all the university's campuses. Some highlights from 2013 include:

- **Creation of the Mino-Kumik Garden.** The garden, located at the Aboriginal Student Centre on the Waterloo campus, was opened last summer. Its rainwater cistern collects water for ground maintenance, while its rain and butterfly garden helps manage storm water. Classes in the Faculty of Science have used the garden as part of their curriculum, while Kitchener-Waterloo-based nonprofit REEP Green Solutions has used it to hold workshops.
- **Implementation of interdisciplinary course in sustainability.** In the winter of 2013, Laurier began offering a first-year undergraduate course called Perspectives in Sustainability. Students learn from two different guest lecturers each week, one from an academic background and one from a practical background. Students learn how to write a sustainability action plan by creating projects that will be implemented at Laurier in the future. Students will be presenting their project ideas April 2 in the Science Building on the Waterloo campus.
- **Construction of Northdale Community Garden.** Laurier provided space and a greenhouse to Young City Growers, a nonprofit that creates urban agriculture opportunities in Waterloo Region. The space at Laurier's Northdale location has been turned into a community shared agriculture space, growing fruits and vegetables.

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- **Improved water refill stations and campaign to phase out bottled water.** In partnership with the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union, Laurier plans to ban bottled water on all of its campuses in the near future. In preparation, the university installed filtered water refill stations on every floor of its public and academic buildings.

Laurier's sustainability projects for 2014 are already underway as the university looks to set new GHG reduction goals, having already met its previous targets. Among the projects slated for the year are: summer construction of revitalized outdoor spaces on the Waterloo campus, introducing an organics program and secured bike storage on the Brantford campus and increasing the scope and amount of the Sustainability Office's community partnerships.

To view Laurier's full Sustainability Report for 2013, [click here](#).

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