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Laurier hosts International Conference on Women in Physics

WATERLOO – Over 200 women physicists from around the globe will be on Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus from Aug. 5-8 as Laurier becomes the first North American institution to host the International Conference for Women in Physics (ICWIP).

Co-hosted by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics and the Canadian Association of Physicists, and locally organized by Laurier's [Centre for Women in Science](#), the conference will bring together an international mix of women physicists from over 50 countries. The ICWIP provides a unique opportunity for women and men in the global physics community to gather and showcase physics research, promote the exchange of ideas and collaborations, and address gender issues in the field.

The conference is held every three years, with the four previous editions taking place in Paris, France; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Seoul, South Korea; and Stellenbosch, South Africa.

"The ICWIP meetings are like no other conference I have ever been to — it is an amazing feeling to be surrounded by women physicists and exchanging ideas, not only about physics, but also about the status of women in the field in different countries, with the goal of building a strong and diverse physics community," said Shohini Ghose, an associate professor of Physics at Laurier and chair of the ICWIP 2014 Local Organizing Committee. "I am thrilled that we can host this here in Waterloo and help promote, inspire and connect physicists around the world."

The conference will open with a public lecture Aug. 5 at 7 p.m. by world-famous astronomer Jill Tarter, whose work inspired the novel and film *Contact* (Jodie Foster's character in the film was largely based on Tarter). Tarter's presentation, which is co-hosted by the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, will take place in Room BA 201 of Laurier's Bricker Academic Building and is open to media and the public.

Among the other speakers presenting at the conference are: Melissa Franklin, who was part of the team that discovered the Higgs boson and is the first woman to receive tenure in Harvard University's Physics department; Patience Mthunzi, the first known person in South Africa to qualify for a PhD in biophotonics; and Tsai-Chien Chiang, a male science columnist and lecturer at Taiwan University who authored *Madam Wu Chien-Shiung: The First Lady of Physics Research*, the biography of famous experimental physicist Wu Chien-Shiung. This year's conference also includes a free panel discussion open to the public called How to Succeed with Physics and features a new initiative called "Share Your Story," which will allow women physicists to share their experiences online in the form of personal stories, longer essays, poems, pictures and videos.

Reza Moridi, Ontario's Minister of Research and Innovation and Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Kitchener-Waterloo MP Peter Braid will be attending the conference's opening reception on Aug. 5 prior Tarter's lecture. More information, including the schedule and a full speakers list can be found at: <http://icwip2014.wlu.ca/index.php>.