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MARCH 3, 2015 | 039-15

## Laurier partners with the University of Ghana

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will be expanding its international education opportunities for students thanks to a new project in partnership with the University of Ghana (UG).

Laurier recently received over \$400,000 in funding through the Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships program to initiate the “Laurier-Ghana Partnership for Human Rights and Social Justice,” a project that will build on the university’s existing partnerships in Ghana. The project will be led by **Robert Ame** and **Andrew Robinson**, faculty members in Laurier’s Human Rights & Human Diversity program. It will see eight graduate students from Laurier study in Ghana and eight graduate students from UG spend a term at Laurier, with a Ghanaian student completing a fully funded PhD in Social Work at Laurier. There will also be internship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

“Since 2012, Laurier has been sending six to eight undergraduate students from Human Rights and Human Diversity and Global Studies for summer internships with nonprofits in Ghana,” said Robinson, an associate professor of Human Rights and Human Diversity. “Not only have the students’ experiences been personally transformative, they have also shared what they have learned by making presentations in classes and at conferences. This funding will ensure that this valuable program can continue.”

Ame believes the recent funding will enhance Laurier’s existing work with UG, which has seen four Ghanaian doctoral students spend semesters at Laurier, two of which are now faculty members at their university.

“The partnership is a unique approach to contributing to teaching capacity at Ghanaian universities as the students start their program in Ghana, spend a semester at Laurier, and return to Ghana to complete their studies,” said Ame, an associate professor of Human Rights and Criminology. “This funding will greatly deepen collaborations between Laurier and the University of Ghana and contribute immensely towards Laurier’s internationalization programs.”

Participants in the partnership will be drawn from academic programs with a focus on social justice and human rights, such as Criminology, Social Work, History, Cultural Analysis and Social Theory and Global Studies, and will develop intercultural competence through instruction and experience. In addition to strengthening teaching capacity, the opportunities for UG graduate students will help to develop the university’s new PhD program in Social Work. Laurier graduate students, meanwhile, will gain access to on-the-ground research opportunities on human rights and social justice issues in Ghana.

“Leveraging existing initiatives and partnerships to capture new opportunities is a key driver for Laurier’s internationalization strategy,” said **Ben Yang**, director of Global Engagement at Laurier. “The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships program has come at the right time for us. Opportunities do favour those who are ready to embrace them.”

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## Ghana partnership/Page 2

The students taking part in this new program will earn a certificate in intercultural effectiveness and participate in a workshop on leadership in an international context, which will help to strengthen their intercultural leadership skills. They will also have the opportunity to take part in conferences and events run through the Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa, a Laurier-based research centre.

"Laurier is very pleased to receive funding for our partnership with the University of Ghana through the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships," said **Deborah MacLatchy**, Laurier vice-president: Academic and provost. "This is a long-standing partnership that has benefited both Laurier and UG students. Our excellent track record of supporting the development of truly global citizens through this ongoing relationship will be enhanced through this national scholarship program."

The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships program is the result of a partnership between the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Community Foundations of Canada and the Rideau Hall Foundation. Made possible through funding from the Government of Canada, provincial governments and the private sector, this initiative is intended to lay the foundation for the next generation of entrepreneurs, public servants, community leaders and academics with innovative minds and a sense of commitment to Canada and the Commonwealth.

- 30 -