



Kevin Crowley, Director
Communications & Public Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

MARCH 10, 2015 | 043-15

Laurier makes workforce reductions to help address budget challenges

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is reducing its workforce to address serious financial challenges and a projected operating budget deficit.

Twenty-two positions have been eliminated and the work hours for five other positions are being reduced. This number represents about two per cent of the university support staff and management complement. Meetings have been held to inform the employees affected by these changes.

The university acknowledges the difficulty that such decisions cause for those affected. For this reason, we have worked hard to find other less disruptive ways to help achieve the necessary budget goals, including the following:

- Reducing non-salary operating expenditures
- Offering a special voluntary retirement program
- Encouraging staff to take a voluntary reduction in hours, where possible
- Job reductions through attrition (not filling vacant positions), where possible
- Non-renewal of some limited-term contracts
- Additional review and approval of all permanent job openings prior to posting

Like many universities, Laurier expenses continue to rise faster than revenues and the university is facing a number of long-term challenges, including funding and tuition constraints, increased pension costs, ageing infrastructure, and a decline in provincial age demographics that impacts enrolment. Despite efforts in recent years to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, the university is facing a \$25-million deficit in fiscal 2015-16 if no action is taken. Salaries and benefits make up approximately 80 per cent of the university's operating budget, so the university cannot avoid finding some of the savings through workforce reductions.

"We know it is distressing for employees whose jobs have been impacted and we are taking steps to assist them with this difficult transition," said Max Blouw, president and vice-chancellor. "Laurier is facing significant financial challenges and we have a responsibility to make the structural changes necessary to put our university on a sound financial footing. The actions we are taking today have been carefully considered. As difficult as they are, they are intended to ensure that Laurier continues to provide students with a very high-quality academic environment and an excellent post-secondary experience."

... more

Workforce Reductins/Page 2

The positions directly affected by today's announcement represent support staff and management, but there will also be a reduction in faculty positions as the result of a special voluntary retirement program, the non-renewal of some limited-term academic appointments, and a reduction in the number of teaching assignments available to contract academic staff.

The actions announced today are part of a multi-year strategy to place the university on a sustainable financial foundation. As difficult as they are, they are intended to ensure that Laurier continues to provide students with a very high-quality academic environment and an excellent post-secondary experience.

- 30 -