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WLU Press to integrate with Laurier Library

Integration will preserve the WLU Press while supporting the development of a new Culture and Learning Commons at Wilfrid Laurier University

WATERLOO – WLU Press will be integrated into the administrative structure of the Wilfrid Laurier University Library, it was announced today. The change was approved by the university late last week, with the transition to the new organizational structure to begin immediately as details of the implementation are worked out.

“I am very pleased that this integration will allow us to preserve this important feature of the Laurier community and its intellectual and cultural heritage,” said Deborah MacLatchy, the university’s vice-president: academic and provost. “The change follows a number of similar mergers at major Canadian and American universities and is in harmony with Laurier’s integrated and collaborative approach to scholarship and learning. I am confident that we have found the best way forward in terms of both fiscal responsibility and preserving and cementing Laurier’s tradition of cultural and scholarly leadership.”

Under the new structure, the director of the WLU Press will report to the university librarian, with the Press becoming an integral part of a new vision for a Library Cultural and Learning Commons, along with the parallel goal of developing a financially sustainable press without subsidy from the university, given the challenging fiscal times. A growing number of North American institutions have undertaken library-press integrations as a response to a rapidly changing and increasingly open scholarly ecosystem. These institutions include the University of Alberta, MIT, Stanford, Purdue, and the University of Michigan, among others.

“This is an incredible opportunity to help us to realize the vision of a Culture and Learning Commons at Laurier,” said Gohar Ashoughian, Laurier’s university librarian. “Our ultimate goal – articulated in the Library Strategic Plan – is for an environment that connects research, learning and cultural engagement.”

The integration of the WLU Press with the Laurier Library followed a proposal prepared by a committee led by Ashoughian; Donna Kotsopoulos, associate vice-president: Research (acting); and Brian Henderson, director of the WLU Press. The proposal involved significant research and drew on consultations with Laurier administrators and team members as well as library and university press administrators at major institutions in Canada and the United States.

“WLU Press has a long and valued reputation at our institution, nationally and beyond,” said Kotsopoulos. “It is renowned across Canada, and I am excited to see the possibilities for the Press going forward.”

“Partnering with the Library will enhance our mutual abilities to pursue new models of scholarly communication, engage with the challenges of the digital information environment, and support the research enterprise through the publication process,” said Henderson. “We will continue to publish books in our areas of strength, tightly focusing our list to most effectively engage with both the scholarly community and the marketplace, while actively pursuing innovative approaches to publishing and new partnerships.”