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## Laurier researcher develops fair wage calculator to address gender pay gap

WATERLOO – **Tammy Schirle**, associate professor in Laurier's Economics department, has developed a wage calculator that addresses the issue of the gender pay gap in Ontario, specifically filling a void for small business owners.

The calculator provides employers with a simple tool to estimate the average wages of male and female employees in Ontario that match their workers' characteristics in terms of education, experience, industry and occupation. In cases where employers find their female workers are paid substantially less than Ontario men with similar characteristics, Schirle recommends the employer and employees investigate further to ensure they properly value their female employees' skills.

In Ontario, pay equity legislation is not applied to small business owners, defined as a business with less than 10 employees, in part because it is difficult to conduct the job-to-job comparisons required to assess whether their female employees are paid fairly. Employers interested in ensuring pay equity in their workplace can use this tool.

"Small business owners have long needed a way to easily determine how much to pay their employees – male or female," said Schirle. "This calculator fills that gap."

Schirle's [calculator](#), one of three projects chosen to receive funding by the **Gender Wage Gap Grant Program**, was selected to find a solution to lessen the wage disparity between genders. The program was established by Ontario's Pay Equity Office to maximize the earning potential of Ontario's working women to benefit the economic productivity of the province.

Schirle's calculator, and related wage gap report, advances the mission of [Equal Pay Day](#), celebrated annually to bring attention to the reality that women earn on average 31.5 per cent less than the annual earnings of men. Equal Pay Day for 2015 falls on **April 20**.

"On Equal Pay Day it is important to highlight the work Tammy is doing to address the gender pay gap," said **Deborah MacLatchy**, vice-president: academic and provost and acting vice-president: Research. "Our students will benefit from pay equality when they enter the workforce."

Schirle has been called as a witness for the House of Commons standing committee for the status of women about the economics of gender. She specializes in labour economics and public policy, with a focus on the economics of gender, and also teaches the economics of gender at the undergraduate level.

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