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## Laurier BBA students compete to propose IKEA Canada's next big sustainability push in first-ever competition

WATERLOO – For the first time ever, over 150 Wilfrid Laurier University second-year students at the Lazaridis School of Business & Economics will compete in the **IKEA Sustainability Challenge**, a competition sponsored by IKEA Canada to find groundbreaking ideas to integrate sustainability with the IKEA brand.

This is the first year for the partnership between IKEA Canada and the Lazaridis School of Business & Economics. The competition will not only challenge students to investigate sustainability issues as an integral principle of business practices but will also inspire new ideas at IKEA.

"Fresh perspectives always bring new ideas, so we are confident that the students will further energize our work to have a positive impact on people and the planet through our business," said **Brendan Seale**, Sustainability Manager for IKEA Canada. "We're thankful to build a relationship with a fantastic university like Laurier and have an opportunity to position IKEA Canada as a top employer."

The competition challenges Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students to develop an idea that will help integrate sustainability into IKEA Canada's brand and products. Recently, the students teamed up in teams of three to five, and submitted a proposal for judging in the first phase of the competition. The top-ranking teams were then invited to IKEA Burlington for a store tour and to pick up any items that would be useful in the presentation of their idea.

"The challenge was created both to instill in our students how important sustainability is to the success of a business, and to enhance the immersive nature of the second year of our BBA program," said **Laura Allan**, assistant professor in the Lazaridis School, who initiated this competition. "We have incredibly engaged students that really do want to live lives of leadership and purpose. This challenge and the partnership with IKEA fit perfectly towards that goal."

On Nov. 23, the top teams will submit short videos demonstrating their ideas, which will be shared with sustainability influencers in the Waterloo Region and Greater Toronto Area, who will then select the top five teams to move on to the finals.

The final presentations will be made to a panel of judges, including representatives from IKEA, on **Friday, Nov. 27 from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** on Laurier's Waterloo campus in the Senate Board & Chamber. The winning team will have the opportunity to work with IKEA on their proposal and discuss their sustainability idea with senior executives at IKEA Canada. They will also be flown to an IKEA-owned wind farm and each team member will have an opportunity to interview for a co-op or internship position at IKEA Canada.

The event is open to the media. Journalists specializing in business and sustainability are invited to be a part of the judging panel. Please RSVP to Richia McCutcheon at [rmccutcheon@wlu.ca](mailto:rmccutcheon@wlu.ca).