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Graduate students contribute \$1.1M to Laurier

WATERLOO – The Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) at Wilfrid Laurier University celebrated the renewal of its Graduate Enhancement Fee (GEF) this week, which will see graduate students contribute \$1.1 million to the university over the next five years.

Originally established in 1995, the GEF supports and enhances the graduate student experience. With this new agreement, graduate students will have contributed close to \$3 million to Laurier through the GEF.

“Graduate students are a diverse community with unique needs,” said GSA President Ian Muller. “We recognize that the needs of graduate students are growing and changing, and through the GEF we will be able to be part of addressing those needs in the future.”

Projects funded through the GEF include:

- \$25,000 to renovate the Student Wellness Centre, allowing for a holistic care model with all practitioners in one central location.
- More than \$8,000 for a welcoming and safe environment for children with autism and their parents to help conduct research on autism.
- More than \$4,000 for academic writing workshops, which strengthened students’ critical thinking skills, connected them with writing resources on campus and online, and encouraged dialogue between students about writing strategies and challenges.
- \$2,000 to support the Laurier Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Nest, a peer-mentoring program to support Aboriginal graduate students with the successful transition into and completion of their graduate degrees.

Each year, there is a call for applications to the GEF. Over the past four years, the GEF has received more than 60 applications, with almost half of those receiving funding.

In evaluating applications, the committee looks for projects that show collaboration with other partners and departments on campus and that have an impact on a large percentage of the graduate student population.

“The GSA is a highly valued partner at Laurier and a strong and effective advocate for graduate students,” said Max Blouw, president and vice-chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University. “The association’s support of the Graduate Enhancement Fee reflects a shared commitment to excellence in delivering the graduate student learning experience at Laurier.”

More than 1,550 graduate students are enrolled at Laurier.