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Laurier mini-conference to highlight students' community-based research

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University students who have had a chance to participate in an intensive, eight-month research project in partnership with local community organizations will present their research findings at a mini-conference on **Tuesday, April 25**.

The upper-year undergraduate students, from Laurier's **Waterloo** and **Brantford** campuses, are participants in the **Student-Community Research Partnerships for Social Justice and Wellbeing (SCRJ)** internship program.

Run by Laurier's **Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action (CCRLA)** in partnership with the **Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group (LSPiRG)**, the for-credit internship allows students to develop and implement a community research project.

"Students say they gain a much deeper appreciation for the complexity involved in doing community-based research and the various challenges that can arise," said CCRLA Associate Director Sue Weare. "It opens their eyes to the reality of social issues and often motivates them to become more engaged in their community."

Participating community organizations suggest a research question, then students develop a proposal, seek approvals, and implement it, said Weare. The program also includes robust training and mentorship provided by CCRLA staff, faculty, and a research supervisor, normally a PhD student.

This is the third year the program has run. Four teams of student researchers, comprising a total of 18 students from a variety of academic programs, will present their projects:

- A review of a proposed research approach to explore how researchers can be allies as they work on HIV prevention among Indigenous people in Waterloo Region, in partnership with the **AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA)**.
- A study of how social service workers and agencies are responding to the needs of young people who have to take care of family members with exceptional needs, in partnership with the **Young Carers Project** in Waterloo Region.
- A study of how faith leaders in Brant County are responding to disclosures of intimate partner violence, in partnership with **Brant Response Against Violence Everywhere (BRAVE)**.
- A study interviewing adults with developmental disabilities and direct support professionals to examine individual-level indicators of holistic support in the field of developmental services, in partnership with Waterloo Region-based **Christian Horizons**.

All community partners have indicated the students' research will have a direct impact on their work, as has happened in previous years, said Weare. One partner, for instance, is already using the indicators students have come up with in their internal evaluations. Another is using the students' research findings in their program development.

The mini-conference is free and open to the public, and takes place at Laurier's **Paul Martin Centre** on the Waterloo campus from 2-5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 25. [Registration](#) is required. Laurier students interested in next year's 1.0-credit program can submit applications until **April 30**. For more information, contact Sue Weare at sweare@wlu.ca or 519.884.0710 x3494.