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## Laurier professor offers aspiring game designers expert advice at Toronto convention

TORONTO – Established and budding game designers alike will gather from **August 19 to 21** for **ProtoTO**, an event that's been dubbed Toronto's first-ever board game prototype convention. In addition to hearing from a panel of established designers and playtesting their games, attendees will also have the opportunity to book an appointment with Wilfrid Laurier University's resident game design expert, **Scott Nicholson**, who will discuss designers' ideas and challenges, offering feedback and advice.

"All registered designers will have exclusive access to speak with Scott about a design problem during Office Hours with Dr. Nicholson," said event organizer Pam Walls. "Scott will be in attendance at ProtoTO throughout the weekend and available to answers any questions about the Laurier program or about game design in general. If you're looking for him, just keep your eyes peeled for the white lab coat."

Nicholson is a professor and director of the Honours Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts program in **Game Design and Development** at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford Campus. The program is designed to help students learn how to design tabletop and digital games to address real-world needs, with emphasis on how to motivate and engage players using a combination of game mechanisms and storytelling. Students learn to make digital game prototypes through a series of courses taught by partner institution, Conestoga College. Throughout their time in the program, Nicholson's students work with the **Brantford Games Network lab** (BGNlab) on community-focused design projects and game jams. For their capstone project, students partner with an organization to create a game with real-world outcomes and work with Laurier's startup incubator **Launchpad** to explore the potential markets for their game.

Nicholson is a familiar figure in the board gaming world. From 2005 to 2010 he was the host of *Board Games with Scott*, the first board game series on YouTube. He is the designer of two board games: *Tulipmania 1637* and *Going, Going, Gone*. His research focuses on using live-action games, such as escape rooms and simulations, for education and training.

"I'm really looking forward to meeting the designers at ProtoTO and discussing their ideas and challenges," said Nicholson. "The value of feedback and playtesting for a prototype game can not be overstated. This weekend will be a great resource for not only the designers who attend, but can help those thinking about making a game to experience the critical playtesting process. I hope this weekend will turn some players into future designers."

ProtoTO was started by a group of tabletop game designers who wanted to create a multi-day board game playtesting event in Toronto after recognizing that most protospiele and other events geared towards designers take place in the United States. ProtoTO kicks off on Friday, August 19 at 5:30 p.m. at Board Again Games, located at 2111 Dundas St. W, Toronto. Tickets are available [online](#). To register for a media pass, email [info@protoTO.ca](mailto:info@protoTO.ca) or call 416.708.4062.