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Laurier's #DistractinglyHonest photo-research exhibit addresses sexism in science

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University's Centre for Women in Science (WinS) will open "#DistractinglyHonest: an interactive photo-research exhibit on sexism in science" with a reception Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. in the science building atrium on Laurier's Waterloo campus. This is the second series by award-winning Laurier graduate student Eden Hennessey, following her 2015 exhibit #DistractinglySexist.

"#DistractinglyHonest presents Eden's research about sexism in science in a creative and thought-provoking format," said Shohini Ghose, Laurier Physics & Computer Science professor and director of WinS. "It aims to shine a light on the reality of women's experiences as scientists."

Featuring female scientists and their allies in visually stunning images, the #DistractinglyHonest exhibit highlights the challenges and successes of being a woman in science, while presenting research on sexism in science in a unique and provocative way.

The exhibit includes opportunities for interactive feedback and encourages discussion about the role of gender in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

"#DistractinglyHonest extends the original #DistractinglySexist series by presenting issues faced by women in science, seen from different perspectives," said Hennessey. "Given that students are attracted to Waterloo Region's designation as 'Canada's Silicon Valley,' it is essential that we foster this dialogue in the student body to promote learning beyond the classroom."

Hennessey is the student research coordinator for WinS, and is completing her PhD in Social Psychology with Laurier Associate Professor Mindi Foster. Hennessey's recent research focuses on female Laurier STEM students and their experiences with stereotyping. Her dissertation assesses whether women who confront sexism in STEM perceive and incur greater consequences than other women.

Hennessey's exhibit and research is presented by WinS with funding from Laurier's Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and Laurier's Special Initiatives Fund.

WinS aims to attract women into science, mathematical and quantitative fields, to support and celebrate women's contributions to science and mathematical social sciences, and to address the challenges women still face in higher education and careers in science.

[Members of the public are welcome to attend the exhibit launch and reception.](#) Registration is required. The #DistractinglyHonest and #DistractinglySexist exhibits can also be viewed as part of Laurier's participation in Doors Open Waterloo Region 2016 on Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.