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'Appreciative inquiry' co-creator to help launch Laurier-hosted Flourishing Enterprise Institute

WATERLOO – **Appreciative inquiry**, an approach that focuses on enhancing strengths rather than fixing weaknesses, has become a cornerstone of organizational development and management. The co-creator of appreciative inquiry, [David Cooperrider](#), is the opening keynote speaker at the founding forum for the [Flourishing Enterprise Institute](#) (FEI), a new applied research network hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University's [Viessmann Centre for Engagement and Research in Sustainability \(VERiS\)](#).

The public keynote, titled "**Toward Full-Spectrum Flourishing**," will take place from **9:30-10:30 a.m.** on **Thursday, Aug. 15** at the **Accelerator Centre Auditorium** in Waterloo and will be simulcast online.

"Many organizations are making incremental improvements focused on corporate sustainability, but despite the progress, even leading organizations are rarely engaging in the kind of deep, systemic change that meaningful progress demands," said [Manuel Riemer](#), a Laurier professor of psychology and director of VERiS. "As an expert in how organizations can flourish, Dr. Cooperrider will help set the tone for examining how organizations can practically contribute to a thriving planet."

Cooperrider is a professor and honorary chair of the [David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry](#).

"By partnering with VERiS, we are beginning to transition from a voluntary network of researchers and practitioners into a formal institute and global community of practice," said **Randy Sa'd**, FEI co-founder and acting executive director. "We are shifting focus from the concept of sustainability, which is widely misused and misunderstood, toward flourishing as a more ambitious goal for the future of humanity."

The FEI aims to become a global network of applied research nodes which develop and mobilize practical knowledge and innovative solutions to help organizations transition toward a flourishing future. The institute is an evolution of the [Strongly Sustainable Business Models Group](#) (SSBMG), which has been hosted at Toronto's OCAD University since 2012. Through Laurier's Veissmann Centre for Engagement and Research in Sustainability, the FEI received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Following the public keynote, the two-and-a-half day founding forum will bring together SSBMG leaders and a variety of future-focused organization leaders to lay the FEI's foundations through an open, co-creative process. Cooperrider is expected to participate in a significant portion of the forum. The FEI development steering committee includes individuals from a variety of institutions, including Sa'd, Riemer and [Barry Colbert](#), a Laurier associate professor who focuses on business and sustainability.

The Cooperrider keynote event will take place at the Accelerator Centre Auditorium, 295 Hagey Boulevard, Waterloo. A limited number of tickets to attend in person are available for \$10. A **virtual session** is also available free of charge. To register for either, visit [Eventbrite](#).