



Pamela Cant, Assistant Vice-President
Human Resources and Equity, Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 4880 or pcant@wlu.ca

Lori Chalmers Morrison, Associate Director
Communications, Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3067 or lchalmersmorrison@wlu.ca

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Laurier to participate in federal pilot awards program to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in research

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University has been selected as one of 17 post-secondary institutions to participate in a Government of Canada pilot program to increase equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research. The [Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada awards program](#) will help institutions take concrete steps to advance equity, diversity and inclusion across disciplines.

The pilot program was announced in Toronto on Aug. 15, 2019, by federal Minister of Science and Sport **Kirsty Duncan** and federal Minister of Finance **Bill Morneau**. Under the program, government agencies will provide support and guidance in helping institutions develop their action plans. Laurier previously secured a federal [EDI Institutional Capacity-Building Grant](#), which can be used in part to support work associated with the program.

“We’re very pleased Laurier was chosen to be one of the first institutions to address EDI in research with the support of the federal government,” said [Deborah MacLatchy](#), Laurier’s president and vice-chancellor. “Our [Laurier Strategy: 2019-2024](#) underlines the value of fostering a thriving, inclusive community with a strong intellectual climate. This initiative aligns perfectly with our goals.”

In addition to the pilot program and the capacity-building grants, a foundational [charter](#) is part of Dimensions. Laurier was among the first institutions to sign the charter when it hosted the national launch of Dimensions in May 2019. Nearly 90 Canadian institutions have since signed on.

“For all researchers to have a chance at contributing to our understanding of the world, we need to address the barriers that may be preventing their ideas from coming to the fore and being fairly considered,” said [Jonathan Newman](#), Laurier’s vice-president: research. “Laurier has prioritized enhancing EDI as an essential component of future success, including in research excellence. This program will help us make concrete progress.”

The first phase of the program, which lasts two years, focuses on creating a plan for identifying and addressing systemic barriers experienced by members of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. It includes performing a thorough self-assessment informed by research, followed by developing an action plan with goals based on the barriers and opportunities identified in the self-assessment.

Participating institutions can then apply for awards recognizing institutions that have made significant steps toward inclusion and equity for underrepresented groups in research from the undergraduate-student to senior-faculty level. The government may develop additional levels of awards in the future.

“Because there are specific deliverables associated with the pilot program, we expect it to result in meaningful change,” said **Pamela Cant**, Laurier’s assistant vice-president: human resources and equity. “Laurier is fully committed to action on EDI and this program will help us create a framework for that action.”

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Laurier is in the process of hiring a senior advisor in equity, diversity and inclusion, who will lead the university's work on the Dimensions awards program. Laurier's self-assessment team will include student, staff and faculty representatives.

Learn More

- [Dimensions Pilot Program](#) (NSERC)

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