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Founder of Canada's first Indigenous-owned cosmetics company will share her story at Laurier's Open House

WATERLOO – Jenn Harper, the founder of Cheekbone Beauty Cosmetics, Canada's first Indigenous-owned cosmetics company, will share her story of becoming an entrepreneur with current and prospective Indigenous students during Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus [Open House](#).

The event, organized by Laurier's Office of Indigenous Initiatives, will be held at 3 p.m. on Nov. 2 in the Hawk's Nest in the Turret on the third floor of the Fred Nichols Campus Centre. The event is by invitation only, but is open to the media.

"We hope Jenn's story inspires Indigenous students to dream big, just as she did," said Melissa Ireland, director of Indigenous initiatives. "Laurier is a welcoming and supportive community and there are many resources available to help students bring their ideas to life."

Laurier is welcoming hundreds of prospective students and their families to its Waterloo campus [Open House](#) Saturday, Nov. 2 for tours of the campus and opportunities to learn about Laurier's programs and student life. Besides the talk by Harper, there will also be an information session for prospective Indigenous students interested in learning about the supports and services available to them.

When Harper started [Cheekbone Beauty Cosmetics](#) about four years ago, she had a unique vision for the company. She wanted to create cosmetics for real people that could start trends while remaining accessible to those new to using makeup. She wanted her cosmetics to be made in Canada and never tested on animals, and she wanted to give back to Canada's Indigenous community.

Ten per cent of all profits from Cheekbone Beauty Cosmetics go toward [Shannen's Dream](#), a campaign through First Nations Child and Family Caring Society to improve the quality of schools and education for First Nations children across Canada.

In addition to her company's donations, Harper also regularly speaks about Canada's residential school system and the effects of intergenerational trauma on her family and friends. She also speaks about social entrepreneurship and her own journey with high schools, colleges and universities, and business groups and organizations.

Harper's unique business model has attracted attention on *Dragons' Den*, as well as from other investors. One of Harper's goals is to become the first Indigenous woman to create a \$1-billion beauty brand.

Media interested in attending the private talk on Nov. 2 should RSVP to Jessica Duke at jduke@wlu.ca.

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Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation at Laurier

Laurier students interested in starting their own businesses have many options available to them. The [Social Entrepreneurship Option](#), for instance, is designed for undergraduate honours students looking to create sustainable business solutions to complex social issues. Undergraduate business students can also take entrepreneurship-oriented courses toward an [Entrepreneurship Concentration](#).

Students can develop their ideas in the Purpose Lab, through Laurier's [C3 Innovation Labs](#), and the Laurier Community Hub, and create and test prototypes in the Science Maker Lab and Library Makerspace. [LaunchPad](#), Laurier's startup incubator, provides support, mentorship and resources to both traditional enterprises and social ventures. Students also have access to clubs, workshops and competitions designed to help grow their ideas.

Laurier has been named a [Changemaker Campus by Ashoka U](#) for its leadership in social entrepreneurship and social innovation education.

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