



Julie Perkins, LaunchPad Brantford program coordinator
Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford campus
iperkins@wlu.ca

Beth Gurney, Associate Director, Communications and Public
Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford campus
bgurney@wlu.ca

NOV 23, 2020 | 100-20

LaunchPad Brantford doubles down on support for local entrepreneurs, launches pitch competition

BRANTFORD – LaunchPad Brantford, Wilfrid Laurier University’s business incubator program on the Brantford campus, has been reimaged and reinvented to meet the unique demands of the local community. The renewed program will offer free programming for entrepreneurs, provide access to mentorship opportunities, and continue the successful Community Changemakers program.

Through consultations with stakeholders, [LaunchPad Brantford](#) transformed its vision and modified its program delivery to focus on the needs of aspiring entrepreneurs in the Brantford, Brant and Six Nations communities.

“We want to make Launchpad Brantford suitable for and in-sync with the Brantford community, students and alumni,” says Julie Perkins, LaunchPad program coordinator.

LaunchPad Brantford is offering a [range of resources](#), including webinars, programs and mentorship, to help current and aspiring business owners bring their ideas to life by launching and scaling their start-ups. The programs are open to current students, alumni as well as to community members who have no formal affiliation with the university.

The LaunchPad Brantford program is built on the idea of “beyond tech,” allowing entrepreneurs to focus on their ideas while LaunchPad provides the technological solutions they need to make their vision a reality.

“We want to help entrepreneurs focus on their business or product, not the technology that supports it,” said Perkins. “We want to provide the tools so those who don’t have a technology background can still thrive.”

PITCH COMPETITION

LaunchPad Brantford is set to host an [entrepreneur pitch competition](#) on Dec. 10. Residents within Brantford, Brant and Six Nations communities as well as students and alumni of Laurier’s Brantford campus are eligible to compete and have the chance to earn \$1,000 in seed funding for their idea. Registration for participants closes Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.

Participants also have the opportunity to attend a virtual pitch coaching session on Nov. 24. This session will help competitors learn the elements of a winning pitch, help craft presentation slides, write a pitch and get feedback on an idea and presentation.

Anyone interested in watching can stream the event live on Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. by reserving a ticket on Eventbrite. For more information, visit the [event listing](#) or contact Julie Perkins at launchpadbrantford@wlu.ca.

...more

BUSINESS MENTORSHIP

Entrepreneurs can also access mentorship through LaunchPad. This robust mentorship program allows those starting in business to meet with experienced alumni and community members who volunteer their time to support LaunchPad members and share their professional experience and insights.

This program is supported by Scott Pelton, a long-time supporter and champion of LaunchPad in Brantford. Pelton is LaunchPad Brantford's first volunteer "ACE" (accelerator for community entrepreneurship). This role will be a key support for members, helping participants connect with mentors, ambassadors, community members and resources.

COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKERS

[LaunchPad Brantford](#) has reintroduced its Community Changemaker Challenge, focused on tackling isolation over the holiday season. Participants aim to create a community program that has a positive impact in the Brantford area and will virtually present their ideas to the City of Brantford on Nov. 26, where they have a chance to receive funding.

In the new year, LaunchPad Brantford will offer a multi-week, structured LaunchPad Foundations curriculum for start-ups to help with business skills like customer discover, idea validation, business planning, presenting and more. The foundations curriculum is being supported by Perkins, who has extensive experience coaching and mentoring entrepreneurs.

- 30 -