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Laurier showcases graduate student discoveries on newly launched Research Chat podcast

WATERLOO – Graduate and postdoctoral students at Wilfrid Laurier University are sharing their research findings with new audiences thanks to the launch of a podcast called [Research Chat](#). The first season began at the end of last year and will feature Laurier student researchers discussing their novel discoveries in a range of fields, from kinesiology to environmental sciences. The format is conversational and aims to make academic research compelling and approachable for all.

“I believe very strongly that research needs to leave university settings and enter conversations in the wider community in order to have its greatest impact,” said [Laura MacGregor](#), who recently completed her PhD in Human Relations at the Laurier-federated Martin Luther University College.

MacGregor is featured in an upcoming episode of *Research Chat* discussing her PhD dissertation on mothers who advocate for the medical needs of their disabled, non-verbal children. She said she was thrilled to attend workshops about clear-language storytelling and podcasting as part of the *Research Chat* experience.

“Being on the podcast was a wonderful opportunity to learn how to break down my research into meaningful soundbites,” said MacGregor. “As academics, we don’t necessarily learn how to speak to diverse audiences who don’t understand our jargon.”

“Podcasts have become a very important part of the communication toolkit of any scientist and we need to make sure that our graduate students can build that skill and learn to reach broader audiences with their work,” said [Douglas Deutschman](#), associate vice-president and dean of Laurier’s Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS). “I hope our alumni, community partners and the general public get a sense of the rigorous scholarship being done by our graduate students.”

In addition to learning about the work of researchers, *Research Chat* producers want listeners to get to know the researchers themselves and learn about their graduate school experiences.

“I hope *Research Chat* brings out the human element of research in ways that other forms of research communications cannot,” said [Jonathan Newman](#), vice-president: research at Laurier. “Graduate students animate our individual research programs by creating a thriving, engaged intellectual community.”

The Laurier graduate-student population has grown by approximately 75 per cent over the past five years. [Paula Fletcher](#), associate dean of FGPS and a co-executive producer of *Research Chat* with Newman and Deutschman, believes listeners will find the episodes as compelling as she does.

“I work in kinesiology and I’m learning about exciting research in other areas that I didn’t know about,” said Fletcher. “People can listen while they’re walking, cooking or commuting and experience the depth and breadth of graduate studies at Laurier. I’m already looking forward to working with new students in season two.”

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The first episode of *Research Chat*, featuring [Olga Kanj's research on the diversity of corporate board membership in the financial industry](#), is now available for download on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts. Subsequent episodes to be released monthly will focus on topics including physical activity for children living with disabilities and climate change.

Research Chat is a collaboration between the FGPS, Laurier's Office of Research Services and the Laurier Library. It joins a growing suite of [Laurier-produced podcasts](#), including *One Market* hosted by Professor Bruce Gillespie, who [recently won a Minister's Award of Excellence](#) from the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities for his work on the podcast.

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