



NEW centre - university CENTRE

LAURIER
Institute for Water Science

It's all about water

New centre is truly interconnected, interdisciplinary



The focus of the institute is on research in three interconnected water-related disciplines: hydrological sciences, ecological and biogeochemical sciences, and public policy and management.

The LAURIER INSTITUTE for WATER SCIENCE, a new Type A (university-wide) research centre that will help Laurier researchers focus on some of the most pressing environmental problems we face, was approved by Senate on May 29, 2008.

"The focus of the institute," according to the centre's proposal to Senate, "is on research in three interconnected water-related disciplines: hydrological sciences, ecological and biogeochemical sciences, and public policy and management. By drawing on existing research strengths at Laurier, the institute has the potential to address issues central to Canadians and the global community, including: competition for water access (e.g., human consumption, agriculture, industry, transportation); effects of changing climate on water resources; sustainability of healthy aquatic and coastal ecosystems; and development of regulations and policy related to water use."

The research centre came about when Mike English, Rich Petrone and Bill Quinton, all of Geography and Environmental Studies, and all members of the Cold Regions Research Centre, began talking about creating a water science program, either undergraduate or graduate, to help train the next generation of water scientists.

"You look at the recent flooding in the Saguenay region of Quebec, the contaminated water in Walkerton, the dropping Great Lakes water levels, and you add in the uncertainty of climate change...we wanted to address those issues through training," Quinton said.

"We thought we could start with an undergraduate program and then create a research centre. But it's gone the other way," added Petrone.

The catalyst for the research centre came when they met with Deborah MacLatchy, the new dean of science.

"She wanted to start something," said Quinton, "and when she talked, she spoke about things that could have come out of our mouths," including a new centre that would be heavily interdisciplinary.

"Politics, health, economics...water is a bigger issue than a small number of researchers in the Cold Regions Research Centre can handle," Quinton added.

"We next met with her and Paul Maxim (associate vice-president of research) and then issued a university wide invitation" to anybody who might be interested, Petrone said.

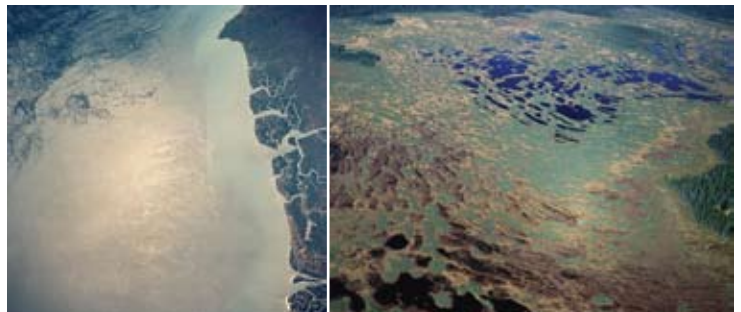
But it wasn't until a second meeting was held that "we realized the large number of people here doing water stuff."

The plan, at this point, is to create a physical centre, possibly in a university-owned building on Lodge Street. "We don't want a centre on paper only," Petrone said. "We want a physical entity, a real centre people can identify with."

Two Canada Foundation for Innovation grant proposals have been submitted. One would help refurbish the building and buy the equipment that would "bring our capacity for analysis up to the next level," while the second (as part of a regional initiative) could permit the purchase of mobile laboratories.

"It won't be just a monitoring lab," said Quinton. "We have to not just monitor, but develop better means of prediction. We will focus on fundamental research, the interaction between the biotic and abiotic. The mobile labs will support that."

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researcher PROFILE

Spiritual Reflection in theory and practice

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prayer for them. That shows the difference between theory and practice.”

O'Connor has received several grants over the years, including a \$30,000 Lilly Theological Research Grant from The Association of Theological Schools for his work on theological reflection in pastoral care and counselling.

While O'Connor is an active teacher and researcher, first and foremost he considers himself a practitioner.

“It's all about interacting with people, talking to them, trying to help,” he says. “I want my research to be practically helpful. That's a big passion of mine.”

O'Connor is particularly concerned that mental health practitioners – psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists and counsellors – don't forget that clients and patients are not just the sum of their diagnoses. “You're more than a label from the DSM IV,” he says, referring to the bible of the mental health industry, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

“Human beauty is a lot more complicated than that. Don't get married to a theory. There are a lot of situations it doesn't cover. And don't lose respect for the mystery of the human person.”



It's all about water

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The Institute for Water Research members have a broad range of expertise in Canada's northern cold regions, including the boreal forest, and also in the Great Lakes region of Ontario.

Among the areas LIWS researchers expect to examine are the competition for water access within Canada, the effects of changing climate on water resources, and the sustainability of healthy aquatic and coastal ecosystems.

“This will be a unique centre,” Quinton said. “We will be looking at the ecological and hydrological aspects of water, energy flows and mass flows, to see how the system changes with different inputs.”

“We have the opportunity here,” said Petrone, “to be one of the main things Laurier is identified with.”

Researchers associated with the centre are clustered around three themes:

Theme 1, the Hydrological Sciences, includes researchers from the Geography Department/Cold Regions Research Centre; **Theme 2**, the Ecological and Biogeochemical Sciences Group, is made up primarily of researchers from the Chemistry and Biology departments; and **Theme 3**, Public Policy and Management, includes faculty from Geography and Economics.

IT Services for our Laurier clients

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The **Computer and Network Security Group** is responsible for the security of Laurier's digital information and digital information systems. Our services include maintenance of an Internet port filtering router, maintenance of an Internet intrusion prevention system, security awareness training for staff and faculty, security incident response and network vulnerability scanning.

Currently, members of ITS, as a part of the Information Communication Technologies (ICT) Review Committee, are evaluating RFPs submitted by multiple vendors for Laurier's new e-mail and calendaring system. At this time we are evaluating submitted proposals and we are in the process of scoring the proposals and selecting finalists whom we are planning to invite to campus for a presentation.

We hope that this short article will help our readers to appreciate the scope of ITS' operations as well as the challenges we face. This article may also conjure up some thoughts about what we should be doing for the Laurier research community; if you have any suggestions or thoughts, please write a short email to agadomski@wlu.ca.

ITS looks forward to continuing ITS support to the research community and branching out ITS assistance in any direction needed.