



Canadian Association
of Physicists

Association canadienne
des physiciens et physiciennes

555 King Edward Ave., 3rd floor
555, ave. King Edward, 3^e étage
Ottawa ON K1N 7N5

T. : 613-562-5614 |
info@cap.ca | www.cap.ca |

2021 April 13

Closure of Physics Programs at Laurentian University

The Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP) strongly objects to the recently announced closures of academic programs at Laurentian University, particularly the closure of the physics programs. We stand in solidarity with CAP members and all faculty, students and staff at Laurentian, and we call for the Companies' Creditors Arrangements Act (CCAA) closure decisions to be overturned.

Laurentian University's value as an institution with an established history of supporting English, French and Indigenous communities is undeniable. Like all other Canadian universities, the university Senate is responsible for academic programs. The restructuring process enacted under the CCAA is inappropriate, and has not been conducted in a collegial manner ([see statement](#) by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)).

The physics department at Laurentian has been involved in world-class research through its partnership with the SNOLAB facility in Sudbury where ground-breaking experiments led to new insights about the Standard Model of particle physics and the 2015 Nobel prize in physics being awarded to the SNO Director Arthur McDonald. Laurentian's physics faculty members are leading a new generation of cutting-edge experiments to investigate neutrinos and the nature of dark matter. This has made the department a hub for researchers from around the world and has given students unique research and networking opportunities.

For the last 18 years, the Department has hosted a Radiation Therapy program delivered jointly with the Michener Institute at the University Health Network. This partnership, unique for a physics department in Canada, has had the mandate of training and placing radiation therapists in Northern Ontario, particularly at the Northeast Cancer Centre in Sudbury but also at the Cancer Centres located in Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay.

The large number of undergraduate and graduate students that have benefited from the physics department programs despite its small size is a testament to the high quality of the teaching and research being conducted there. Furthermore, faculty researchers in physics have attracted around 9 million dollars in NSERC research funding over the last ten years, which accounts for more than 20% of the total NSERC funding awarded to Laurentian researchers. The department has celebrated and supported diversity and inclusion in physics by hosting one of the few women to hold a Canada Research Chair in physics.

CAP Statement re Closure of Physics Programs at Laurentian Univ.
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Physics is a core part of all STEM programs. The closure of physics programs at Laurentian is particularly egregious, given its spectacular track record of research contributions and learning opportunities for students. This will undermine the quality of physics research and teaching in Canada and internationally. We condemn this short-sighted decision in the strongest possible terms and ask the provincial government to step in and correct the situation immediately.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Thompson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

CAP President

Robert I. Thompson, PhD, P.Phys
Associate Vice-President (Research)
Executive Director, Research Services
University of Calgary

Tel. (403) 220-4552