

## New Graduate Curriculum to Address Skills Shortage in the Mineral Exploration Industry

Sudbury (Ontario) – The Mineral Exploration Research Centre (MERC), Laurentian University, in conjunction with the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI) announced a new graduate curriculum in mineral exploration today. The announcement was made jointly by Dr. Michael Leshner, Chair of the Department of Earth Sciences at Laurentian University and by Dr. Peter Kaiser, Founding Executive Director of CEMI.

“The main thrust of the new curriculum is to respond to the human resources needs of the Canada’s exploration and mining industry,” said Dr. Leshner. Citing a 2005 report released by the Mining Training and Adjustment Council, Dr. Leshner noted that the mining industry could lose up to forty percent of its workforce in the next ten years and that a major factor in this projected shortage is fewer young people entering mining careers.

The new curriculum is jointly funded by CEMI and Natural Resources Canada through their targeted Geoscience Program and will be administered through MERC and delivered through the Department of Earth Sciences at Laurentian University and other Ontario Universities.

“Ensuring a sustained base of highly qualified persons for the mining industry and mineral sector research is a major priority for CEMI,” added Dr. Kaiser. “Innovative educational programming such as this goes to the very heart of the problem, and we are very grateful to the Governments of Ontario and Canada for supporting this important initiative.”

The key objective of this initiative is to increase the number of graduate geoscience students in Ontario universities by offering higher quality programs with excellent career prospects in the mining sector, government, and research. Specifically, a curriculum of graduate courses will be offered by a network of nine universities from across Ontario. Participating universities will play host to one or more graduate courses and students from all participating universities will converge at that university for the duration of the course.

Participating universities include Carleton, Lakehead, Laurentian, McMaster, Ottawa, Queen’s, Toronto,

Waterloo, Western, and Windsor.

Dr. Harold Gibson Professor and Director of the Mineral Exploration Research Centre (MERC) played a leading role in developing the new initiative. He pointed out that “The intent of the new curriculum is to bring together the best teaching expertise and the best earth sciences graduate students in Ontario to create synergies and foster research excellence. A similar approach to graduate-level teaching has been very successful in Australia.”

Courses are offered to Masters as well as PhD candidates. The first course coordinated by Dr Harold Gibson (LU) focused on Mineral Exploration in Volcanic Terranes and was held in Septemeber, 2006 in Noranda Quebec and New Mexico, and the second course coordinated by Dr Steve Piercey (LU) focused on Exploration Geochemistry and was held in December 2006 at Laurentian University. The third course coordinated by Dr Mark Hannington (UO) focused on Exploration for Hydrothermal Ore Deposits and was in February 2007 at the University of Ottawa. Follow-up modular courses include Structural, Tectonics and Mineral Exploration, Exploration Geophysics, and Exploration for Magmatic Ore Deposits.

“An added feature is that these courses will be offered concurrently to industry personnel for skills upgrading and continuous learning on a cost recovery basis. Other courses will be developed specifically for industry upgrading tailored to specific needs and on demand,” commented Dr. Kaiser.

The initiative will be jointly administered by the Mineral Exploration Research Centre (MERC) and the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI).

CEMI is a new mineral sector research corporation in Northern Ontario, led jointly by industry and Laurentian University in collaboration with regional, national, and international R&D partners.

Shannon Katary  
Research and Communications Officer  
skatary@laurentian.ca  
(705) 675-1151 ext 1329