

As part of our ongoing support of Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Partners of Canada is proud to bring you the second in a series of features about the new School of Pharmacy at The University of Waterloo.



University of Waterloo's new School of Pharmacy will open in 2008.



# Putting down roots for the future of Pharmacy.

## A medicine garden as a unique way to learn, teach, and reach out to the community.

How do you begin to build a dream? You talk, you think, you “blue sky”. That’s how the University of Waterloo’s new School of Pharmacy began, with a “what if” session between Dr. Jake Thiessen and his team of architects.

During one pivotal discussion, someone from the architecture firm asked Dr. Thiessen what he wanted to accomplish, what his vision was for the school. As they talked about a variety of issues, medicinal plants became a recurring theme -- the fact that 50% of modern medicines have their basis in the plant world.

Within minutes, a unique and exciting idea was born.

“We felt that a Medicine Garden would be a great idea, a place that would showcase these plants, and the discoveries that have sprung from them,” says Dr. Thiessen. “Imagine students being able to see actual growing specimens of the plants that represent the roots of some of today’s most important drugs. We decided to explore the creation of a Medicine Garden that would be unique to our Pharmacy school, a living classroom for students and an attraction for the public.”

The garden will have other important benefits as well. Dr. Thiessen believes that Pharmacy needs to embrace our youth, and try to change what is going on with kids today. He sees the Medicine Garden as a tool that will engage school kids, and help them learn about drugs and how they affect their bodies.

“The medicine garden could plant the seed of interest in Pharmacy, and as the kids get older their interest may become more sophisticated. It’s a wonderful education tool for children.”



Dr. Jake Thiessen

Dr. Thiessen was also inspired by a special invitation that came from a centre that caters to kids.

“I was invited to the Children’s Museum, and they wanted to know what Pharmacy was all about. I mentioned the world of zoopharmacognosy – animals interacting with plants in the wild. For example, when chimpanzees get an infection, they go to a special bush, peel back the bark and suck on the exposed branch, and they get better. Humans were not the first pharmacists.”

Laura Manning, Director of Advancement with the Health Sciences Campus and the School of Pharmacy, and a colleague of Dr. Thiessen says “We probably wouldn’t be limited to Rainforest type plants -- we may focus on indigenous Canadian plants. We also have ideas like living “walls”, and a hydroponic section. Once we put our creativity to work there’s no limit to what we could come up with.”

A medicine garden is just one of the fascinating and innovative aspects envisioned for a school that represents the future of Pharmacy.



## A “First Class” welcome!

The University of Waterloo is pleased to welcome the first 92 students to Canada’s newest pharmacy program. Women make up about 60% of enrolment, and 40% of all students already hold a degree. The students are now deeply immersed in courses including physiology, pharmaceuticals, professional practice, communication skills, metabolism, and computing for pharmacists.

The University of Waterloo offers one of only two co-op pharmacy programs in North America, and students will embark on their first co-op terms in September 2008. More than 800 potential employers have already expressed interest in hiring pharmacy students.

Pictured here is the White Coat Ceremony that took place on January 9th. The ceremony, which welcomes students to the profession, is a tradition in pharmacy and medicine. The white lab coat is symbolic of the tremendous responsibility that pharmacists hold as health care providers, and the ceremony marks their commitment to ethics and integrity. Speakers at the White Coat Ceremony included representatives from the University of Waterloo, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, the Ontario College of Pharmacists, and the Region of Waterloo Pharmacists' Association.

The application window for the next class closed on January 31, 2008. Students interested in applying to the program in 2009 should visit [www.pharmacy.uwaterloo.ca/prospective](http://www.pharmacy.uwaterloo.ca/prospective). Up to 120 students are accepted each year.

*There’s much more to come about the new School of Pharmacy at the University of Waterloo. Next month, read about the School’s co-op program, one of only two in North America.*



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