Date: Oct 23, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for Laurier Sustainability Office's Commonwell LEAF Program Application-Food Security Expansion Pilot

On behalf of PEGASUS Institute, I am writing to express our strong support for Laurier's Sustainability Office's funding application to the Commonwell LEAF Program for the proposed *Food Security Seasonal Expansion Pilot*.

PEGASUS Institute is a Canadian registered charity dedicated to advancing peace, global health, equity, justice, and environmental sustainability. Through education, collaboration, research, and community engagement, we work with academic institutions, community organizations, and diverse partners to promote health and well-being, foster inclusion, and build stronger, more equitable communities. Through our *Stronger Together* program, PEGASUS Institute supports newcomers by creating opportunities to build social connections, develop practical skills, participate in community activities, and foster a sense of belonging as they settle into their new communities.

We value our connection with Wilfrid Laurier University and are proud to collaborate with Laurier's Sustainability Office on initiatives that connect environmental sustainability with community engagement and well-being. This relationship is strengthened by the longstanding academic and community connections of PEGASUS Institute members with Laurier. Dr. Neil Arya, Chair of PEGASUS Institute, served as an Adjunct Professor and Scholar-in-Residence at Laurier. Rahima Khushi, a current Laurier student, collaborates on the *Stronger Together* program, while Sonaina Chopra, a former Laurier student who serves as the administrative, program, and communications officer for Stronger Together program. These connections reflect the collaborative nature of our work and our commitment to building meaningful partnerships between the university and the broader community.

We support the proposed *Food Security Seasonal Expansion Pilot* because it aligns with our commitment to newcomer inclusion, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. This pilot will allow access to a refurbished greenhouse, planting materials, and growing resources would create valuable opportunities for newcomers and participating families in our *Stronger Together* program to engage in hands-on growing activities, learn sustainable growing practices, develop practical skills, and build connections with others. Extending the growing season from early spring through late fall would provide more consistent opportunities for participation, learning, and engagement throughout the year.

PEGASUS Institute
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Charitable Registration Number: 79634 0743 RR0001

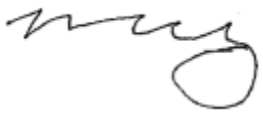
We are particularly supportive of Laurier Sustainability's *Campus as a Living Lab* approach, which encourages experiential learning, collaboration, and practical action on sustainability challenges. Through this partnership, PEGASUS Institute can contribute by helping connect participating families with planting materials and program support, while the improved greenhouse infrastructure would provide a more suitable space for seasonal growing, learning, and community engagement.

We believe this initiative will strengthen collaboration between the university and community partners while promoting environmental awareness, social inclusion, and family well-being. We are pleased to support Laurier's Sustainability Office in advancing this initiative and believe it has the potential to create meaningful benefits for participating newcomers and the broader community.

We strongly endorse this funding application and respectfully encourage the Commonwell LEAF Program Committee to support the *Food Security Seasonal Expansion Pilot*.

Thank you for considering this application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



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