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For immediate release

Georgian College connects to global grid of research and education networks

BARRIE- Georgian College has officially connected to ORION, the latest of Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology to sign on to Ontario's advanced Research and Education (R&E) network.

"This is a huge advancement for the College and for our students," said Georgian President and CEO, Brian Tamblyn. "This new connectivity greatly enhances our ability to deliver advanced educational programs, especially our numerous on-site degree programs. We will now be able to work more easily and more quickly with our partner institutions elsewhere in the province. This is a further step in our commitment to bring a full range of educational opportunities to residents of our catchment area."

ORION is Ontario's next generation network, dedicated entirely to research and education, and the province's gateway to global networks, including Canada's CA*net 4, Internet2 in the U.S., GEANT in Europe and APAN in Asia.

As such, Georgian joins a global family of connected institutions, including all of Ontario's universities, most colleges of applied arts and technology, several teaching hospitals, research institutions and special research projects.

College faculty and students can now peer directly with colleagues at institutions throughout Ontario, across Canada and around the world at significantly higher bandwidth, within a province-wide network that is part of Ontario's "cyber infrastructure."

"We are extremely pleased to see Georgian joining ORION," said network President/CEO Phil Baker. "Our purpose is to link researchers, educators and learners to one another to colleagues here at home and around the world, and that includes the wonderful facilities, talent and resources here at Georgian College."

Through ORION, Georgian gains vastly enhanced access to major databases, online academic and research resources and digital libraries from around the world. The college can also participate fully in advanced videoconferencing, distributed computational modeling and visualization resources and simulation capabilities.

Among the first College program areas to make use of the network is Georgian's Engineering Technology department.

Robert Emptage, Dean of Engineering Technology, said the ORION connection will prove invaluable to students in such programs as the Bachelor of Science (Mechanical Engineering – Automotive Option) program offered at the Barrie Campus in partnership with the University of Windsor.

"This will allow state-of-the-art video conferencing, permitting students in Barrie to connect with faculty in Windsor for some of their classes and tutorials, and vice versa," Emptage said.

Georgian's growing role in engineering research will also benefit from ORION. Researchers involved in such fields as tribology and metal forming will be able to send data to partner institutions such as the University of Windsor and the University of Waterloo for analysis.

"We have huge volumes of data that would take forever to analyze on machines here. With ORION, we can send that information to our partner institutions such as Waterloo and Windsor, where they can crunch the numbers and send us back results," said Emptage.

ORION's speed is 100 to 1000 times faster than everyday networks used to inter-connect computers in businesses, schools, and homes, able to transmit the equivalent of 1.5 data CDs every second.

"Teaching and learning are being transformed as new instructional and learning technologies and resources become available. High-capacity networks are essential to next-generation classrooms, labs, music rooms and learning facilities," said Baker. "That's why it is so critical for Georgian and all of Ontario's postsecondary institutions to be connected to a shared networked infrastructure."

The college became officially connected after obtaining optical fibre to link up to ORION's Point of Presence (PoP) in Barrie, hosted by the Simcoe County Broadband Network, one of ORION's 22 PoPs throughout the province, in an optical network infrastructure that spans 4,200 kilometers, one of the largest Research and Education networks in the world.

About Georgian College

Strategically located in the tourism and recreational heartland of Ontario, Georgian College has three main campuses in Barrie, Orillia and Owen Sound, as well as four regional campuses. Georgian serves more than 7,000 full-time and 28,000 part-time students and employs more than 1,650 full and part-time staff.

About ORION

ORANO owns and operates the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION), which is Ontario's leading-edge research and education telecommunications network. ORION connects Ontario's universities, colleges, medical and other public research facilities, and a number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks.

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