



THE ONTARIO RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OPTICAL NETWORK

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For Immediate Release

Shapson takes over as Chair of research network – building Ontario's innovation capacity is a priority

TORONTO – York University's VP of Research and Innovation Stan Shapson takes over as Chair of the Ontario Regional Advanced Network of Ontario (ORANO), as the network transitions from the crucial "build" phase to a major focus on establishing the network's full value as a critical tool for innovation in Ontario's research and education community.

Over the past three years, ORANO and its private sector partners built a globally leading, next generation research and advanced education network across Ontario, with links to innovators across Canada and around the world. The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) consists of 4,200 kilometres of fibre optic cable and sophisticated electronic equipment that links the main campuses of all of Ontario's universities, several teaching hospitals, 19 colleges of applied arts and technology, and other research and learning facilities.

Dr. Ross Paul, President of the University of Windsor, leaves as founding Chair, after having led ORANO over its critical initial phase. He applauded President and CEO Phil Baker and his team for their tremendous accomplishment in building the network. "This was a significant achievement for Ontario and it represents a remarkable feat of engineering and teamwork," he said. "Now the focus must be on encouraging greater use of the network and the development of applications that can take full advantage of ORION's capabilities. That's what ORION is for ... let's get on with it," he said.

The change in leadership occurred at ORANO's board meeting last week, which saw Contact North/Contact Nord President Maxim Jean-Louis elected Vice-Chair, and Brian Desbrien, past-president of Fleming College, elected Treasurer.

"This is a critical new phase in ORION's history," says Shapson, who is certain that ORION will be front and centre in advancing research and learning in Ontario. "We now have a globally leading, sophisticated optical network infrastructure that provides Ontario with a competitive advantage as we move forward in the 21st Century. Ross can take great pride in this achievement. I look forward to working with Phil Baker and the rest of the board to advancing Ontario's innovation agenda."

As noted in ORION's submission to the Ontario Postsecondary Review Panel, "we need to draw upon the collective resources available in all our postsecondary research and education institutions. ORION can help do that, and I see it as our job on the board to help deliver that message, forcefully," says Shapson. "We can't afford to lag behind on this. This is important for our province's economic development and our competitive position in the world."

One Canada's foremost authorities on the use of technology in the field of learning, Shapson is a member of the executive of the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR). Published widely, he has chaired provincial working groups on information technology and co-chaired federal committees on technology and professional development. He is a member of the Governing Council of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and chair of the council's Research Support Committee. Most recently, he led the launch of the innovative Advanced Broadband Enabled Learning (ABEL) program.

Other board members include Anne Sado, President of George Brown College, and Robert Kennedy, Educational Consultant with Apple Canada.

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ABOUT ORION

ORION is owned and operated by the Optical Regional Advanced Network of Ontario (ORANO), a not-for-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors that includes leaders from the fields of education, research and business. The Government of Ontario has been ORION's primary funding partner, with an investment of \$32.3 million. The federal government invested \$3.4 million through CANARIE. Additional private and public sector investments bring the value of ORION to over \$78 million.

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