

## **The W. Garfield Weston Foundation appoints new Executive Director**

TORONTO, Feb. 7, 2020 - The Board of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Lara O'Donnell as Executive Director of the Foundation effective February 3, 2020.

"We're delighted that Lara is joining us to support our family's foundation as we plan for the future," said Tamara Rebanks, Chair. "This is a time of strategic growth for us and we're confident that Lara's professional and personal strengths will help us to realize our vision of improving the well-being of Canadians."

Dr. O'Donnell joins the Foundation most recently from the Canadian technology scale-up Element AI, where she was the Director of Research Partnerships and responsible for the design and execution of the research partnership strategy. Previous to that, Dr. O'Donnell has held leadership roles within the Canadian research and innovation ecosystem. She was a Senior Director of Research at CIFAR (formerly the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research) an organization dedicated to creating transformative knowledge by convening interdisciplinary teams of scholars, and Director of the Accelerate and Elevate programs at Mitacs, building bridges between academia and industry.

"I am honoured and appreciative to the Board of Directors for the opportunity to collaborate with the Weston family and build upon the important work of their foundation," said Dr. O'Donnell. "Private philanthropy has a critical role to play in accelerating research and finding creative solutions for the challenges facing Canadians today. I am thrilled to join the exceptional team at The W. Garfield Weston Foundation."

Dr. O'Donnell studied the mechanisms involved in sensing and repairing DNA during her postdoctoral research at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute and investigated the processes of cell division during her Ph.D. at McGill University. She earned her BSc. in Biology from McMaster University.

### **About The W. Garfield Weston Foundation**

For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has pursued its mission to enhance and enrich the lives of Canadians. With a focus on health and landscapes, the Foundation aims to catalyze inquiry and innovation to bring about long-term change. Now in its sixth decade, the Foundation continues to collaborate with Canadian charities to further world-class research, explore new ideas, and create tangible benefits for the communities in which it works.

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