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FOR EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

Thousands earn degrees through part-time studies at Laurier

Since Wilfrid Laurier University began offering part-time credit courses in 1962, thousands of people in Waterloo Region and throughout the province have earned their degree that way.

Last year, about 3,900 people took part-time courses at WLU for a total of 7,620 course enrolments.

Cliff Bilyea, the university's director of part-time studies and continuing education, said the students range from business executives to police officers, housewives, insurance agents and factory workers.

And he said their reasons for taking part-time courses vary. Many business people are attracted by the opportunity to upgrade their business credentials. Others are teachers working on graduate programs or people who've decided to finish a degree they started years ago. Yet others are pursuing a personal interest.

Retired and semi-retired people are enjoying a second or third career by taking courses. (The University waives tuition fees for those over age 60.)

The majority attend evening or Saturday lectures on campus but a growing number enroll in the distance education program, Telecollege, which makes use of video programs and cable T.V. The university also offers courses at Mutual Life in Waterloo and the Kitchener public library.

Bilyea said many students who are unsure whether they can succeed at university take one or two courses and then decided to continue. At Laurier,

88 per cent of part-time students complete their courses.

It takes 15 full-credit courses to earn a bachelor of arts degree and six full credits for a business or accounting diploma. Arts I and Arts II certificates are available for those who have completed five credit courses and 10 credit courses respectively.

"Initially, it may seem like a long time to complete a degree," Bilyea said. "But many students feel the time goes more quickly than they expect and they also enjoy the university's social life."

Potential students are reminded that it is not necessary to have completed a Grade 13 honor graduation diploma to be admitted to the university. Those with a Grade 12 diploma and two years' work experience or those aged 21 and over may qualify as adult students.

On Aug. 23, WLU will hold an information night in the Paul Martin Centre on campus. Offered without charge, the session will provide information about courses, and academic and career counselling available, as well as study skills. A campus tour will also be conducted. The session runs from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

More information can be obtained by calling 884-1970 ext. 2447.