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Applications to Laurier

up 16 per cent over last year

First choice applications from high school students hoping to attend Wilfrid Laurier University have risen by 16 per cent this year, compared with a year ago.

First choice applications across the province are up 1.3 per cent.

The latest figures from the provincial applications centre show that 2,462 students named Laurier as their first choice of university. Laurier's first choice increase in applications is the largest in the province.

When all choices are totalled, there are 7,757 Grade 13 students who mentioned Laurier as one of their three choices. Only a few more than 1,200 first year places will be open, however, for all wishing to enter the freshman year this fall.

The increase marks the 10th year in a row that first choice applications have increased. Since 1976, the increase amounts to 247 per cent.

Total applications have increased from 2,357 in 1976 to this year's total of 7,757.

Arthur Stephen, director of institutional relations, said there are a great many reasons for the success of the university over the past decade.

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"There has been extremely positive word of mouth endorsement of our academic offerings and about Laurier in general," he said.

"Another factor has been the enthusiastic acceptance of our co-op and internship options," he said. "These options have been particularly well received in the high schools.

Valerie Clark, senior liaison officer, said new recruitment materials were used in the high schools this year, including a new admissions handbook and a newly updated recruitment film. She said they had received a positive reception in the schools.

As well, the liaison officers kept up a brisk pace in visiting the province's high schools. During a 10-week period in the fall, WLU liaison officers met 12,700 high school students, an increase of about 1,300 from the year before.

"We tell the students they should visit the universities in which they have an interest," Ms. Clark said. "The visits that the students made to Laurier led to some very happy experiences. They liked what they saw."

The continuing success of Laurier in attracting students has not been without its repercussions, however. The pressure of many more students wanting to enrol at the University has led to an increase in admission requirements.

Where once a 60 per cent average in the required Grade 13 courses was the norm, Laurier last fall demanded 70 per cent for arts and science, economics and music, 73 per cent for honors computing, and 76.5 per cent for honors business administration.

George Granger, associate registrar for admissions, said there is a good possibility that there could be an increase in these requirements, particularly in arts and science and business this fall.

"The pressure from those wanting to enter Laurier is increasing," Granger said, "but I think there is a determination to keep the school to about its present overall size, despite all those wanting a Laurier education."