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## Service gives Laurier students headstart on career

Lisa Rutherford's job is to recruit personnel for NCR's financial systems division in Waterloo. But when it comes to seeing students from Wilfrid Laurier University, things are often reversed -- they interview her.

Rutherford, a WLU graduate herself, is one of about 250 alumni participating in the university's ASK or Alumni Sharing Knowledge program.

Run by Career Services, the program provides a registry of alumni who can be contacted by Laurier's full- and part-time students and graduates seeking information on career paths and organizations employing the alumni.

Rutherford, who received a bachelor of arts degree in 1985 and a diploma in business in 1986, said the program was instrumental in helping her choose her field and in getting her current job.

"I think it's the most valuable way to find out what you want to do," said the polished woman who, at age 24, is employment manager of a company that has 620 employees.

Career program co-ordinator Anne Stuart said the program, begun in 1983, lists a wide range of fields. They include the insurance industry, education, manufacturing, broadcasting and occupations such as teachers, social workers, financial analysts and marketing executives.

The listings -- by study major, occupation and organization -- include information on the alumni's education, positions, major responsibilities and the types of organizations for which they work.

In her final year, Rutherford didn't know what field she wanted to get into so it was recommended that she use the ASK program. It was through a series of interviews with alumni that she decided against public relations and in favor of personnel.

She said the interviews also gave her an edge when she applied for her current job. "If I hadn't done the interviews, I wouldn't have known how to handle all the questions."

Rutherford said most students who come to see her are doing their diploma in business on a part-time basis. She said they usually spend about 30 minutes together working through a list of questions prepared by the student.

"It doesn't take a lot of time and it helps them out."

She said the selection of a career field based on careful homework can lead to happiness in a graduate's first job. "It never ceases to amaze me how happy I am," said Rutherford, who enjoys meeting people and being in a fast-paced environment.

She has also participated in career days on campus and the preparation of an audio tape on tips for interviews, which is also available through Career Services.

Located in the Student Services building, the ASK program material is available for use Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During the regular academic year, the hours are extended to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays.