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WLU makes progress on program to promote healthy gender relations

Wilfrid Laurier University will begin this academic year having made significant strides to promote positive gender relations on the Waterloo campus.

"The panty raids on campus last fall prompted us to review a number of our policies and, where appropriate, changes have been made," WLU president John Weir said. "The university has also undertaken new initiatives and reapplied itself to other efforts which were already under way.

"We want to ensure that the environment at Laurier is comfortable for both men and women, and that we provide a rich academic, cultural, and social experience for all of our students."

Most of the following initiatives were announced by the president in January and are based on the recommendations of a committee he appointed to examine gender relations issues following the panty raids.

* ORIENTATION WEEK, Sept. 3 to 9, has been revised to strengthen both its academic components and those addressing

gender relations issues. The week will include faculty and student discussions of sexual assault and date rape, and campus violence and gender relations; a drama presentation about AIDs, sexual assault, and peer pressure and virginity; and the distribution of a booklet on reducing the risk of sexual assault.

In addition, the annual training program for residence dons, beginning Aug. 26, will provide more in-depth treatment of gender relations issues.

* A HUMAN RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY CO-ORDINATOR, who assumed her position in August, will develop an employment equity program and a model approach to human rights and gender relations programming. She will also conduct seminars and forums on sexism and racism.

* A CULTURAL AFFAIRS CO-ORDINATOR, who assumed her position in August, will help cultural groups plan, organize, and promote their activities and will also propose new events.

* A draft SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY, under review since October 1989, will be brought before the board of governors for approval this fall.

* The university has committed \$75,000 as seed money to establish DAY-CARE SERVICES for use by faculty, staff, and students. A committee has met with local day-care operators to investigate different models. It has also developed a questionnaire and will conduct a needs survey in September.

* A draft STYLE SHEET for language free from gender bias has been written and is now under committee review.

* An advisory committee has been established to ensure the university's PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL portrays Laurier as a vibrant intellectual and cultural community where healthy gender relations exist.

* The university will also allocate \$10,000 and space for a WOMEN'S CENTRE.