

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



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### **WLU business students take the lid off the SkyDome**

*Waterloo, Ont. (March 14)* — About 200 business students from Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo are going to peel the roof off the SkyDome, examine its operations, and see if they can fit at least another 15 events a year into it.

For the students, the week-long case on the SkyDome, beginning March 14, will count for 10 per cent of the final mark in each of four courses. For SkyDome, it will count for something too — some creative ideas that could be put to use.

Lesley Chefero, vice-president: people for the SkyDome, says, "We are looking forward to the business strategies and recommendations that arise from 200 bright, enthusiastic, fresh minds, and their arm's length perspective.

"This is a unique way to support the academic community as well as uncover some brilliant insights into maintaining our industry leadership," she adds.

The third-year students will be making recommendations on how the SkyDome can increase the number of events it hosts to 250 or more a year from 235 while maintaining its quality of service.

Gordon McDougall, the WLU professor of business who revised the case for the competition, says, "This will be a really different challenge for the students." He adds that the subject of Integrated Case Week often involves businesses facing a particular problem such as shrinking markets, increased competition, or changing regulations.

The SkyDome has been named "Stadium of the Year" by one of the entertainment industry's most respected trade magazines for the last four years and consistently receives positive satisfaction ratings from more than 95 per cent of its guests and promoters.

In expanding the SkyDome's calendar, the primary issues confronting the students — and the SkyDome itself — are the time it takes to convert the facility from one type of event to another and the demanding workload employees already carry.

*(More)*

The students will learn the subject of the case — kept a closely guarded secret — only when they receive a copy of the 52-page case at 6:30 a.m. on Monday, March 14. At that time, they'll be bused from the campus to the SkyDome in Toronto where they will have a two-hour briefing with its officials.

The case will totally absorb the students' efforts for the five days. In teams of five or six, the students will work day and night to prepare, by 2 p.m. Thursday, their written recommendations and, later, a 30-minute presentation.

Huddled over the case in private meeting rooms, they will struggle with group dynamics, time management, and stress. Many will live on pizza that week. Some will sleep; others won't.

By 7:15 a.m. on Friday, March 19, the students and their recommendations must demonstrate spit and polish in a 30-minute presentation before a panel of judges. And beginning at 1:15 p.m., the top five teams will make their presentation before SkyDome officials and other industry executives.

McDougall says the competition, used for almost 20 years, is one of the ways Laurier effectively bridges the classroom and the business world. "The experience is valuable for students because they're confronted with an actual business situation with all its complexities. It stretches them to use their full potential.

"The students know that their recommendations must pass the scrutiny of experienced business executives," McDougall adds.

In the past, students have tackled cases involving companies such as General Motors of Canada Ltd., NCR Canada Ltd., ATS Inc. of Kitchener, Hervé Pomerleau Inc. of Montreal, Waterloo Microsystems Ltd., and Chateau des Charmes Wines Ltd. of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Laurier's School of Business and Economics offers the largest co-op program for business and economics students in Ontario, a unique master's program in business economics and, beginning this fall, Canada's only one-year MBA program.

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**Note: Media should use Gate 3 (northeast side) to enter the SkyDome. Students will use Gate 7.  
To receive a copy of the case, identify yourself to Julia Ann Easley or Jane Osborne.**