

NEWS RELEASE

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Atlantic Destinies project to foster international student exchanges

A consortium, whose Canadian partners are Wilfrid Laurier University, the Universite de Sherbrooke, the Chamber of Commerce of Kitchener and Waterloo and the Chambre de Commerce de la Region Sherbrookoise, has been selected under the Canada-European Community Program for Co-operation in Higher Education and Training to take part in a new program - Atlantic Destinies - that will forge links between Canadian and European higher-education and training institutions.

The Laurier/Sherbrooke consortium's proposal was one of six selected by Human Resources Development Canada/Foreign Affairs and the European Commission's Education, Training and Youth Directorate from 56 proposals submitted. The Canadian component of the consortium is eligible to receive up to \$160,000 over three years.

In essence, the proposal "is about increasing the number of students who can study abroad," says Denis Leclerc, the director and international liaison officer of Laurier International. Laurier already participates in numerous exchange programs with universities in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and Spain.

Under the Atlantic Destinies program, Laurier is committed to sending 20 students to Europe for five or six months of study in the Fall of 1997 and another 20 in the Fall of 1998.

Participating Laurier students - likely third- or fourth-year business or economics students, or graduate business students - would be registered at Laurier but would take courses - for credit at Laurier - at either Groupe Ecole Superieure de Commerce de Poitiers in France, Universitat Osnabruck in Germany, Universidad de Navarra in Spain, or Vaxjo University in Sweden.

Bursaries of \$1,500 to \$2,000 would cover the students' transportation and some other costs, such as health insurance.

The Chambers of Commerce, including the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de la Vienne, are involved because part of the program involves securing short-term internships for visiting students in local industries.

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Laurier students "get an experience abroad credited at Laurier," says Leclerc, but Laurier will also benefit from an infusion of European students. As many European students will study and work in Canada as Canadians study and work in Europe.

The program will likely mean that new courses, such as Canadian-European Business, will need to be developed, Leclerc says. And because most of the courses Laurier students will take in Europe will not be taught in English, the program will also likely foster increased demand for language courses at Laurier.

The first year of the program will be spent on developing programs in Canadian-European business, determining student eligibility, and faculty and information exchanges between the consortium partners.