

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Hundreds of Ontario students get a JUMP on university at Laurier
Program exposes Falstaff P.S. students to university life and lets them study new disciplines

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WATERLOO — Some of the youngest university students in Canada will be attending Wilfrid Laurier University this summer. Twenty-four students from Falstaff Public School in Stratford have been enrolled straight out of grade six into a program designed to introduce them to post-secondary education from June 12 to 14.

Over 1100 students from 24 Ontario schools will study at Laurier over the course of the summer as part of the annual Junior University Multi-Disciplinary Preparation (JUMP) program. Now in its seventh year, the series of three-day sessions gives students in grades six through eight an opportunity to attend classes, tour campus and experience university life first hand.

"The students participating in JUMP aren't just visiting a university campus, they're getting the whole experience — from classes to residence life. It's encouraging to see how eagerly they take to the environment," said Glennice Snyder, Laurier's conference services co-ordinator. "Students are being encouraged at much younger ages to think about attending university or college and this program is an excellent way to get them started."

Coming from as far away as Huntsville, groups of 20 to 40 students attend seven classes from a list that includes archaeology, athletics, biology, business, chemistry, computing, fine arts, math, music, political science, psychology, social work and theatre. Topics like archaeology and chemistry — which aren't often found in elementary schools — are among the most popular.

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Aside from learning about how the brains works and about ancient artifacts from Laurier professors and graduate students, JUMP participants spend two nights in residence, eat in the dining hall, use the athletic facilities, and receive diplomas from Laurier deans and administrators at a graduation ceremony on the final day.

JUMP started with eight schools and just 180 students in 1994, and has grown steadily through word of mouth. "Without a doubt, the JUMP program is the best off-campus field trip I've ever been involved it," says Don Oberle, a teacher at Northlake Public School in Waterloo.

Sharon Spier, the staff advisor for Falstaff Public School, can be reached at (519) 271-6618.