

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Students offer affordable Internet/Web solutions to small business

For Immediate Release

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WATERLOO – Students with the school of business and economics at Wilfrid Laurier University are now offering small and mid-sized businesses across southwestern Ontario an inexpensive way to meet their Internet and Web needs. Working with government agencies and corporate sponsors, the school has just launched the Student Connection Program (SCP).

Six students – five undergraduate and one graduate – will provide Internet training and e-commerce consulting services. The students have just completed a training program developed by Industry Canada. They work part-time while continuing their studies and were selected based on their experience with information technology, academic backgrounds and previous work experience.

“This program has been extremely successful elsewhere, but wasn’t being offered in southwestern Ontario,” says SCP coordinator, Victoria Larke. “Small and medium-size enterprises increase their competitiveness – for a reasonable fee – through effective use of the Internet. The students benefit from the Industry Canada training and the experience.”

SCP’s e-commerce services include Web site evaluation, Web site planning, online promotion and sales strategies. Following a one-on-one e-commerce evaluation, businesses receive a customized report and action plan outlining how they can efficiently integrate e-commerce into their business activities.

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More specifically, the students analyze the business's current information technology environment and business processes, recommend IT solutions to meet specified business goals and objectives, advise the owner on ways to improve or further develop an existing Web site, plan all aspects of developing and launching a site, and train staff on efficient and secure use of the Internet.

The program's Internet training courses range from introductory to advanced levels, and include such topics as computer basics, introduction to the Internet, e-mail, Internet tools, online transactions, and business tools on the Internet. The students also offer Internet training specifically designed for senior citizens. Courses are available in individual or group settings and can be delivered in house or at Laurier.

The SCP provides all services for only \$25 per hour and will customize to meet specific needs.

More information will be available at sessions at the KW Business Enterprise Centre at 7 p.m. on February 13 and 26, and on March 13 and 27. SCP will also hold a session at the Guelph Business Enterprise Centre at 6:30 p.m. on March 19. It will also organize information sessions in communities with sufficient demands.

Human Resources Development Canada funds, while Industry Canada and the Association for Canadian Community Colleges administer, 14 such centres at postsecondary institutions across Canada. Sponsors Bell Canada, VUBIZ.com, Cisco Systems, Business Development Bank of Canada, SourceCAN and ebiz.enable provide hardware, software and consulting services to the program.