

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Students deliver innovative entrepreneurship program in Grenada

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WATERLOO – A group of six Laurier school of business and economics (SBE) students has returned from a visit to Grenada where the members delivered an interactive entrepreneurship program to students from the small fishing village of Gouyave. The students traveled to Grenada to share their business knowledge and help improve the lives of the residents of this Caribbean island.

The Laurier representatives, members of Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship (ACE) Laurier, returned from their week-long visit on March 1, after delivering a four-day workshop at the local trade school, New Life Organization (NEWLO). The ACE group helped the NEWLO students evaluate their interests and skills, and find opportunities for creating new ventures. The NEWLO students were exposed to technology resources such as the Internet, e-mail, and business planning software, to develop their ideas and prepare a simple business plan.

“In addition to the technical business skills we are passing along to the students, we hope to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in them at a relatively young age,” says Dave Hanley, project leader and first-term president of ACE Laurier. “In an environment that has so few employment opportunities, it is necessary for them to search for their passion and find a way to turn it into a profit.”

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Benjamin, one of the 20 NEWLO students who took part in the entrepreneurship program, enjoyed discovering ways in which he could become an entrepreneur. “I learned that some things I like doing, like drawing and repairing things, can be turned into a business,” he says. “It [the program] helped me not only think about my goal, but also about ways to achieve that same goal.

The Laurier students formed several strategic partnerships in Grenada. During a meeting with representatives of St. George’s University, they agreed to train St. George’s students to deliver entrepreneurship workshops to high school students and to work together to promote entrepreneurship on the island.

The ACE students also met with representatives of the Grenada Development Bank and its small enterprise development unit. The students will assist the bank by providing entrepreneurs with start-up consulting, business planning and long-term monitoring. They will also help integrate ACE’s entrepreneurship workshop into the development unit’s programs.

This was ACE’s second trip to Grenada in recent months. Laurier’s SBE and the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship funded the first trip in December 2002. General Electric Canada and the SBE’s Tamiae Business & Economics Society provided financial assistance for the second.

ACE will now secure funding to help bring two representatives from the Grenada Development Bank to a conference for entrepreneurial educators. The Enterprise Edge Conference, held in conjunction with an ACE Laurier conference for students, will take place in November 2003, in Waterloo.

With more than 3,000 students enrolled in its programs and approximately 90 full-time faculty, Laurier’s SBE, located in Waterloo, Ontario, is one of Canada’s largest and most innovative business schools.