

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



New technology for traditional industry tests business students *Integrated case exercise asks students to recommend growth strategy for Amvic Inc.*

For Immediate Release

March 23, 2006
25-06

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WATERLOO – A company that manufactures insulated concrete forms (ICF) for residential and commercial construction is asking 391 business students at Wilfrid Laurier University for help increasing awareness of company product in a post-Katrina construction market.

Amvic Inc., which manufactures ICFs for building walls and floors, is the subject of the latest integrated case exercise (ICE) organized by the Laurier school of business and economics (SBE). All third-year core courses in the bachelor of business administration (BBA) program are cancelled for the next eight days as 80 teams of four or five students focus all they've learned on analyzing the Amvic building system and its market.

“The really interesting thing about this case involves what this new and emerging technology will mean to a very traditional building industry,” said Carmel Branston, the Laurier instructor who wrote the case. “The students are going to have to consider all aspects of business – from finance and operations to marketing and HR – to determine how Amvic can best grow and how the company can best manage growth.”

The students received the case today and the best analysis and proposal will be selected by Friday, March 31. The case asks students to recommend a growth strategy for a product that is more energy efficient and stronger than traditional options, but relatively unknown to builders and homeowners.

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The company believes that the recent destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina will have builders and homeowners in that region and others considering alternatives to traditional construction materials and techniques. One concrete home in Pass Christian, Mississippi, remained standing at the centre of a neighbourhood otherwise decimated by Katrina.

Each team has only five days to prepare and submit a written report on its analysis and recommendations to an internal board of SBE faculty on Tuesday, March 28. They present their proposal to one of 16 internal boards on Thursday and a semifinal round of presentations takes place on Friday morning.

The four top teams will present to an external board, whose members include executives from Amvic, on Friday from 1 to 3:30 p.m., with the winner announced at 4 p.m. The external-board presentations and award ceremony will take place in room 1220 of the SBE building.

With more than 3,600 students enrolled in its programs and 110 full-time faculty members, Laurier's SBE is one of Canada's largest and most innovative business schools, with campuses in Waterloo and Toronto. Visit www.wlu.ca/sbe for further information.