

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



City representatives welcome Laurier social work students to Kitchener and give tours of the downtown

For Immediate Release

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WATERLOO – City of Kitchener councillor Christina Weylie welcomed Laurier masters of social work (MSW) students to the community and honoured the faculty's new building during the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work (FSW)'s orientation and walking tour of downtown Kitchener on Thursday.

"The mayor and council are delighted that you are here," said Weylie in her opening remarks at the former St. Jerome's high school. "We hope that all will have a productive and rewarding time in this new use of an historic building."

Faculty of social work dean Dr. Lesley Cooper emphasized the strong ties between the FSW and the city – noting the benefits of the school's proximity to indigenous and grass roots organizations, social programs and counselling centres. "It's all here," she explained. "Our campus is the community of Kitchener."

More than 120 students experienced their new campus first hand as City of Kitchener staff and masters of social work student association (MSWA) representatives guided groups through the main streets of the downtown. Tour guides pointed out not only the agencies, outreach programs and services of the downtown area, but also the future developments,

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cultural events, stores and restaurants that students will enjoy as part of their university experience.

“It’s a chance for students to get to know their community and ask questions about the MSW program, the city and the agencies,” Cooper said of the tour, adding that students will have placements at many of the agencies as part of their program. “Our staff is already working collaboratively with the agencies; they have absolutely welcomed us here.”

As part of the afternoon tour, Cooper thanked Kitchener mayor Carl Zehr for his personal dedication to this project with an artist’s sketch of the FSW building.

In addition to its ties with Kitchener’s social agencies, the school hopes to link with the greater Kitchener community by making their auditorium and community meeting room available for public use.

The opening remarks and student tour marked the first of a number of FSW opening celebrations this month, which include a **public open house on September 28th at 3:45 p.m.** where members of the community are invited to tour the newly renovated facility.

The Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work welcomed 128 MSW students this year, including its first intake of 18 students from across Canada into its new aboriginal program, highlighted by the facility’s unique circle room.

Since 1966, Wilfrid Laurier University’s faculty of social work has been considered one of Canada’s best graduate schools for social work professionals, receiving the maximum seven-year accreditation period by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) for four consecutive terms. The school offers full- and part-time MSW programs, as well as a PhD program. Programs are geared toward training students in advanced practice in individuals, families and groups and advanced practice in community, policy, planning and organizations. The school’s international practicum program provides students with worldwide placement opportunities.

The new Duke Street facility houses seven classrooms, two computer labs, a 2,000 square foot library, an interview-viewing room, a large conference/lecture hall, community meeting space, student lounges, a spiritual room and a café.

BACKGROUND

Wilfrid Laurier
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LYLE S. HALLMAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK ORIENTATION

September 7, 2006

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Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work program background

Programs

Masters of Social Work (MSW): Laurier offers a two-year, full-time MSW program for students with a four-year bachelor's degree, and a one-year, full-time advanced standing program for students with a Bachelor of Social Work. We also offer the equivalent programs on a part-time basis.

Aboriginal Field of Study: Laurier offers a new one-year advanced standing MSW aboriginal field of study program, which fully and dramatically roots itself within the Aboriginal worldview and has as its goal the development of social work practitioners who can seek empowerment for Aboriginal populations so that they can meet the needs that they have identified for themselves.

PhD Program: Since 1987, Laurier's FSW has offered a PhD program that provides students with opportunities for advanced scholarship and professional growth, and prepares graduates for leadership roles in fields such as higher education, research and specialized practice in government or private human service organizations.

Continuing Education: The FSW offers continuing education programs to meet the ongoing needs of its alumni, other social workers and social service workers and human service professionals. Because social work as a profession has so many networks with other disciplines, a number of FSW's programs will serve a variety of human service professionals including health care providers, educators, clergy and others.

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Enrolment -The FSW has 300 students currently enrolled, including 128 incoming students for 2006: 5 PhD students and 123 MSW students - 18 of whom will be attending the new MSW aboriginal field of study. There are 20 full-time faculty, as well as a number of part-time faculty and a new librarian.

Program Goals - As one of the modern helping disciplines, social work fulfills a strategic function in the field of social services. The social work profession is concerned with the wide range of human and environmental factors, and processes that influence social functioning in contemporary life. It seeks to alleviate and prevent personal and social problems experienced by individuals, families, groups and communities, and to contribute to constructive institutional change and development.

The education program of the faculty is designed to prepare specially qualified personnel for the many forms of direct clinical and community practice, and for the related professional functions of policy development, planning, administration and research. In all of these areas there is a growing demand, in both governmental and voluntary sectors, for social workers who possess advanced, theoretical knowledge and specialized practice competence.

Practicum - The practicum component constitutes approximately fifty percent (50%) of the MSW program. Its purpose is to provide the student with the opportunity to practice and integrate advanced level social work values, knowledge and skills including the development of a professional "self" and professional identity as a social worker. Emphasis is placed on the experience of direct social work practice with disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations. The practicum is conceptualized as an educational experience rather than a work term. That is, it is a graded course with an agency based MSW instructor assigned to teach each student. The practicum workload is controlled to facilitate this emphasis on learning.

International Practicum - The international practicum was developed by the Faculty of Social Work in the early 1990s as an innovative approach to providing students and Faculty with an opportunity to advance their knowledge and theory of social work in an international context, while encouraging the sharing of ideas among social work students, schools and practitioners around the world.