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Laurier launches Canada's first mobile e-learning pilot for MBA students

RIM and Rogers Communications join university as technology partners

WATERLOO – The Laurier School of Business & Economics has engaged its 100 full-time Waterloo MBA students in an innovative one-year mobile e-learning pilot, which kicked off this month. Laurier is working with Research In Motion (RIM) and Rogers Communications Inc. (RCI) to bring this mobile e-learning project to MBA students. No other business school in Canada has taken on a program of this scope or breadth at the MBA level.

The Laurier MBA BlackBerry pilot is designed to revolutionize the way the school's MBA program approaches learning both in and out of the classroom. Students will be armed with a BlackBerry® Curve™ 8900 smartphone from Rogers. The aim of the project is to prepare Laurier's MBA students for the business world by providing them with the latest mobile learning applications, to extend their access to a multimedia-rich education beyond the walls of the classroom, and to provide tools for collaboration between MBA teammates.

“By working with RIM and Rogers Communications, our partners of choice for this pilot, we are challenging the boundaries of the traditional learning environment,” said Ginny Dybenko, Laurier's dean of business and economics.

Students involved in the Laurier pilot program will use their BlackBerry smartphones for more than just the standard voice, text and email applications. Laurier students and faculty members will communicate using enriched content such as video, voice notes and pictures, as well as the latest collaboration tools. Faculty will “push” content to their students' smartphones, and will have access to metrics that will help them gauge which content is being accessed.

Anticipated benefits from the project include improved sharing of educational content, easier access to learning materials so students can be more productive with their time, enhanced MBA team experiences and a better understanding of how content is used by students.

A number of research studies will be conducted throughout the year-long pilot. In addition, the Laurier MBA students will be challenged to find new uses for the applications and handsets provided.

“Business schools around the world are interested in mobile learning and we are committed to maintaining leadership in e-learning through programs like the Laurier MBA BlackBerry pilot,” said Kim Morouney, associate dean of business and pilot leader. “This is an opportunity to extend what other schools have done and really take mobile learning to that next level of integration and communication.”

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