

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
Sept. 29, 2011 | 135-11

CONTACT

Melissa Ireland, Aboriginal Students Services Coordinator
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 4190 or mireland@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

Laurier hosts First Nations high school students for second annual lacrosse game

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will host about 90 high school students from Six Nations for the second annual High School Friendship Lacrosse Tournament, taking place on Laurier's Waterloo campus October 13.

Six Nations high school students will come to Laurier to tour the campus, meet with Laurier students and members of Laurier's Aboriginal Students' Association, and have a skills training session with professional lacrosse coaches from the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse Team and the Haudenosaunee National Women's Lacrosse Team.

"I am delighted to have the second annual Laurier Lacrosse Day on campus again this year," said Jean Becker, Laurier's senior advisor: Aboriginal initiatives. "This event is organized in partnership with Six Nations community members, not only as an opportunity to introduce their students to our campus, but also as an opportunity to build a stronger, more positive relationship with our closest First Nation community. We invite Laurier staff, faculty and students to join us in what proved to be a fun day of learning last year."

The day begins at 9 a.m. at University Stadium with a traditional opening ceremony by Elder Delmor Jacobs. From there students will break into groups for skill testing and games until noon, where they will listen to guest speakers Crystal Macdonald, who played for Haudenosaunee Nation Women's Lacrosse Team and in 2009 participated in the Federation of International Lacrosse Women's World Cup in Prague, Czech Republic, and Allan Downey, a Laurier PhD candidate in History and a two-time captain of Laurier's men's lacrosse team.

A lacrosse scrimmage and door prizes will take place from 1:45 p.m. until the end of the day at 3 p.m.

The First Nations have been playing lacrosse, also called *baggataway* or *tewaarathon*, for more than 500 years. Lacrosse is an integral part of native culture, and Canada's official national sport.

"Maintained as a central part of Aboriginal cultures for centuries, lacrosse is more than a game; it is regarded as a gift from the Creator and has ceremonial purposes," said Kandice Baptiste, Laurier's Aboriginal students recruitment and retention officer. "In Aboriginal communities lacrosse is introduced early to youth and can be a powerful tool to teach values, build character and help learn a healthy lifestyle. The Laurier Lacrosse Day is meant to give Six Nations high school students an introduction to Laurier with a positive, inviting experience."