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First cohort of teachers to graduate from Laurier's mental health certificate program

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will graduate its first cohort in the Faculty of Education's certificate in mental health on **May 2**. The **Mental Health Issues in the Classroom** certificate is tailored to teachers and education administrators and fills a void in teacher training in student mental health.

The certificate, offered in partnership with Laurier's Office of Continuing Studies, helps teachers gain theoretical and practical knowledge to understand, identify and work with students with mental health issues. Launched in January 2014, the certificate has been well received by the community, with participation from 12 different school boards from around southwestern Ontario.

"Mental health concerns in classrooms are ever-growing and it's becoming crucial for teachers to know about mental health and how to address these issues in a classroom setting," said **Colleen Willard-Holt**, dean of Laurier's Faculty of Education. "These 16 graduates of the Mental Health in the Classroom certificate program are the first wave of teachers who embraced this challenge and now have a toolkit for their work with students. They will be leaders in their schools."

The certificate consists of seven interactive training sessions that address a variety of mental health issues: Introduction to Mental Health Issues in the Classroom; Depression and Other Mood Disorders; Anxiety Disorders; Self-Harm and Suicidality; Body Image and Eating Disorders; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Substance Use and Dependence; and Disruptive Behaviour Disorders and Psychotic Disorders in the Classroom.

The **May 2** ceremony will be held in the **Hawk's Nest**, on **Laurier's Waterloo campus**. Opening remarks begin at **4:30 p.m.** with a certificate presentation scheduled for **4:45 p.m.** and a reception following. For more information about the Mental Health Issues in the Classroom certificate, visit www.wlu.ca/continuingstudies

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