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Laurier to welcome two-year Bachelor of Education cohort

WATERLOO – Laurier will welcome the first cohort of students for the two-year Bachelor of Education program this September. The extended program will provide new teachers with more practical experience in the classroom and will equip them with additional expertise to meet the growing needs of students.

The Ontario government, in partnership with the Ontario College of Teachers, required all Bachelor of Education programs to be extended to two-years as part of the new Ontario government's plan to build a prosperous and fair society.

The changes require teacher education candidates (TECs) to spend 80 days in a classroom setting, up from 40, and will reduce enrolment by 50 per cent.

"The two-year program enables us to prepare new teachers in even more powerful ways to address the diverse needs of learners in the 21st century," said **Dawn Buzza**, associate dean of the Faculty of Education.

Laurier's new program will provide TECs with 200 days of classroom experience (well exceeding the 80 days required by government) across four semesters in two different schools. It will also allow TECs to participate in an alternative placement, which may be an international classroom placement, at the end of their first year.

Existing specialist qualifications in English, science, French, music, health and physical education, math, geography and history will continue to be offered for Junior/Intermediate candidates; however, for all TECs there will be added emphasis on literacy, mathematics, special education and assessment of student learning.

The new curriculum stresses the importance of both foundational concepts and integrating instruction across subjects. It will also prioritize an understanding of diverse learning strengths and needs. Additional courses will focus on mental health, English language learners, Aboriginal studies, equity and diversity, and self-regulated learning.

The program will end with a Laurier Professional Placement, a 10-week school placement where TECs will be mentored by a partner teacher and gain professional level experience in collaborative planning and teaching alongside experienced teachers.

About Laurier's Faculty of Education

Laurier's Faculty of Education fosters excellence in teacher education and scholarship through inquiry, reflection and collaborative sustained partnerships in learning. Graduates of the Bachelor of Education program will be qualified to teach the Ontario curriculum within the Primary/Junior division (kindergarten to Grade 6) or the Junior/Intermediate division (Grade 4 to Grade 10). Laurier's program is unique because of the extent and richness of TECs' practical experiences, made possible through the Faculty of Education's ongoing school district partnerships.