

LU worth almost \$304 M annually to city: Woodsworth

BY BILL BRADLEY

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Where would we be as a city without Laurentian University?

Try losing \$303,927,900 per year in total budget, including economic multiplier effect, said Judith Woodsworth, president of Laurentian University. She was the keynote speaker at Bryston's On The Park earlier this week at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

She asked attendees to consider the fact that 37,000 people would not have graduated from the university since it opened in 1960.

One third of LU graduates are still here, helping to enrich this community's business, arts and cultural communities, she added.

Laurentian's 393 full-time faculty members not only buy houses in the city but also volunteer on community boards and even donate money to local causes, said

Woodsworth.

"When I came here I did hear people say the university was a drain on the taxpayer. But, I can tell you, producing an educated workforce has enhanced the economy and life of the whole region," she said.

Higher education does lead to jobs. Statistics from 2004 indicate that six months after graduation 95 per cent of Laurentian graduates were employed.

Laurentian leads all other Canadian universities in the growth rate of its research funding. This June, the first doctorate student will graduate.

"His research is in analyzing the effects of aluminum on human health, specifically on Type 2 diabetes. There is a lot of metal in our environment here so his research is timely," said Woodsworth. Next year, the first student of the medical school will graduate.

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