

You're Invited



Get your dance card ready! After a nearly 40-year hiatus, the Conversat is back for Alumni Weekend on June 21. The gala evening will feature the University of Guelph's signature approach to food and entertainment in six venues across campus in celebration of the University's 50th anniversary.

Beginning in 1904, the Conversat was a key social event for faculty, staff, students and friends of the founding colleges. Alumni, friends and neighbours of the University community are invited to join in this year's festivities.

OAC is partnering with the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences to host a "British Invasion" street party in Peter Clark Hall. Travel back in time and around the world to Piccadilly Circus for an iconic London street party complete with British food, a fantastic Beatles tribute band and Union Jacks galore!

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://bit.ly/1IIPQ99>.

CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE

UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

Spring 2014 | www.oac.uoguelph.ca/alumni



John Kenneth Galbraith with Jacqueline Kennedy in India in 1962.

The Economist of Camelot

Arguably the most famous graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College is John Kenneth Galbraith.

Galbraith was born on a farm in Iona Station, Ont. He earned an associate diploma in 1929 and a bachelor of science in agricultural economics in 1931 from OAC. It was during his time on campus that he discovered his talent for the written word, and he used his newfound abilities to start a college newspaper called *The OACIS*, which became quite popular and made him a campus celebrity.

As a student, he also devoted some of his energy to College Royal and he first proposed the event be publicized so that people from the farm community could attend.

He later moved to the United States, earning a PhD in agricultural economics from the University of California and enjoying a distinguished career as a professor of economics at Princeton University and Harvard University. He served as editor of *Fortune* magazine from 1943 to 1948 and began his career in politics by working for the government of U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt during the Second World War.

From there, he went on to further influence both the direction of the American Democratic Party and the thinking of its leaders. He served as an adviser to U.S. presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. He became close friends with Kennedy in particular.

In 1961, Galbraith was appointed ambassador to India, where he served until 1963.

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OAC Boosts Undergraduate and Graduate Enrolment

Agriculture and food programs at the University of Guelph have seen large increases in applications and enrolment, thanks to the Student Liaison Program, which OAC developed in 2010. Here are some recent statistics:

- Over the past five years, undergraduate enrolment in OAC's core programs has increased by about 30 per cent.
- From fall 2012 to fall 2013, OAC saw a 35-per-cent enrolment increase in the bachelor of science in agriculture program.
- Applications were 17 per cent higher in January 2014 than in January 2013.

The OAC Alumni Foundation has chosen to support the Student Liaison Program as a fundraising priority. Brian Little, B.Sc.(Agr.) '72, is leading the project.

For more information, contact Little at brian.littleagr@bell.net or 905-469-0699, or contact Tara Collins, OAC alumni advancement manager, at tcolli02@uoguelph.ca or 519-824-4120, Ext. 56842.



High school students take part in an Environment Reach Ahead Day.

A Tradition of Diversity

The OAC Alumni Association (OAC AA) was founded in 1921 and, over the years, has become a powerful network with members worldwide. The association is built upon a proud history and tradition supported by individuals who understand the importance of staying involved beyond graduation.

The OAC AA fosters lifelong involvement of alumni in the activities of the college and the University through events such as the OAC AA golf tournament, curling bonspiel and Alumni Weekend.

From 2013 to 2014, the executive and president's advisory committee (PAC) engaged in a strategic planning exercise, redesigned events to increase student participation and created a new

event intended to connect students with leaders in their field of expertise. Over dinner and through one-on-one discussion, students will gain new perspectives on career opportunities by connecting with these professionals.

We also worked to recruit PAC members from OAC programs that traditionally have been less involved. The OAC AA, like any successful organization, embraces diversity and inclusion to make the association stronger.

As my term as president comes to an end, I would like to express my gratitude to OAC dean Rob Gordon, the PAC and executive, and the OAC Alumni Foundation for their support. In particular, I want to thank Mark Ostrowski and Linda Hruska. I believe the association and the foundation should continue working together to strengthen their ties.

Angela Tellez Garay, PhD '09
OAC Alumni Association President

Foundation Reaches Milestone

The OAC Alumni Foundation is celebrating a milestone achievement. After 54 years of raising and maintaining funds to support agricultural education and leadership in Ontario, the foundation's investment portfolio has recently surpassed \$3 million. The gain for this past fiscal year exceeded 12 per cent, with an average annual return over the last five years of 7.8 per cent. This is quite an accomplishment during an extended period of global economic uncertainty.

I would like to thank the joint investment committee (JIC) for their hard work and diligence in overseeing the security and growth of our portfolio. Specifically, portfolio managers Bruce Stone, Clay Switzer and Dale Lockie, along with JIC

chair Brian Ellesworth are all to be commended for their dedication.

While the original charter of the foundation specifies an objective of receiving and maintaining funds to support agricultural education in Ontario, our focus has been to support OAC in attracting and developing Ontario's future agri-food leaders. Various scholarships, bursaries and grants fulfill the wishes of donors in this pursuit. In particular, the OAC Alumni Foundation Student Liaison Fund is a very successful initiative that provides operating funds to attract students into OAC's programs.

The foundation's board has embarked on a strategic review process to ensure that we continually adapt our goals and operating principles to reflect the existing and emerging needs of both students and our benefactors. We look forward to sharing our findings with members at the annual general meeting on May 15.

Mark Ostrowski, B.Sc. '79
OAC Alumni Foundation Chair

Change for OAC

The University of Guelph recently announced the extremely difficult decision to consolidate programs delivered at both our Kemptville and Alfred campuses. This decision will result in the eventual closure of all of our academic programs delivered through these campuses by the end of the winter 2015 semester.

This decision was made in order to improve efficiencies, remove program duplication, provide re-investment opportunities in priority areas and establish new delivery approaches consistent with our current level of government funding. It is our hope that through these consolidations we can strengthen and enhance OAC's core programs.

As part of this consolidation plan, the University of Guelph will no longer accept new associate diploma students at either Kemptville or Alfred starting this fall. Currently registered students at both campuses will be able to complete their programs.

Many of the research programs at both campuses will be relocated to Guelph or Ridgeway by the end of 2015. The University is, however, committed to maintaining a research presence in eastern Ontario and expects to identify specific program opportunities in the near future. I also want to note that research programs delivered through the New Liskeard Agricultural



Research Station will remain unaffected for the immediate future.

These decisions were not the result of a single consideration but rather several compounding issues, including our fixed government funding. Mounting inflationary burdens, limited enrolment at both campuses, and rising operation, maintenance and infrastructure costs were also factors in this difficult decision.

As dean of OAC, I have worked passionately to support all of our campuses and enhance our ability to deliver high-quality education, research and service programs that best serve provincial, national and international needs and opportunities. This has been difficult, given massive funding challenges, including a greater than \$10-million budget reduction for the Guelph campus of OAC, which we have implemented over the past five years.

In late 2013, the University of Guelph announced an additional \$2.7-million

budget reduction for the college as part of the institution's \$32.4 million structural deficit expected over the next three years. Given the considerable cuts absorbed by the Guelph campus, during the past five years, additional budget reductions could only be achieved through these new consolidations.

We needed to further improve efficiencies while ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality and highly subscribed educational and research programs. Although difficult and unpopular, these decisions needed to be made to preserve and, where possible, enhance programs that are unique and core to OAC's mission, while also responding to the needs of an evolving agriculture and food sector.

The consolidation will allow us to reinvest in strategic areas that further support Ontario's agriculture and food sector, and will enable essential investments in academic supports and student services.

I hope that our alumni can appreciate some of these challenges and the on-going need to enhance the return on investments made with the government funds we receive. I fully understand that the Kemptville and Alfred campuses have a demonstrated history of strong community support, and that is part of the reason why this decision was so difficult. I truly wish that we had other options.

Robert Gordon
OAC Dean

More information on the consolidation is available on pages 6 and 7.

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As ambassador, he became a confidante to prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and informally advised the Indian government on economic matters.

Over the course of his career, Galbraith spurred national conversation and political debate and became the most-read

author in the history of economics. He authored more than 40 books, one of the most famous being *The Affluent Society*, from which he is credited with coining the phrase "conventional wisdom."

Galbraith received the Presidential Medal of Freedom twice, the Order of Canada, the Padma Vibhushan (India's

second-highest civilian award) and 50 honorary degrees from around the world. He died in 2006 at the age of 97.

Galbraith is remembered as a proponent of 20th-century American liberalism, a lifelong advocate of Keynesian economics and one of the most globally recognized economists of all time.

Out and About with OAC

A collection of photos featuring alumni, students and donors

Thanks to the Class of '93 and the Pletsch family for submitting photos.

To submit photos of your alumni gathering, email Tara Collins at tcoll02@uoguelph.ca.



1 ■ Anita Stewart, University of Guelph food laureate, presents Rene Van Acker, OAC associate dean (external relations), with a \$9,000 donation from Toronto's Buca Osteria & Enoteca and Integrated Digital Media Group Inc. They hosted a one-night fundraiser that brought the Northern Chefs Alliance together to cook a 10-course dinner in support of the Honey Bee Research Centre at the University of Guelph.

2 ■ The Campus d'Alfred floor hockey team at the OAC Winter Games.

3 ■ James Murby, BSA '35 (centre), who passed away in January, was welcomed into the Order of OAC last fall by OAC dean Rob Gordon (far left) and president Alastair Summerlee (second from the right). Murby's daughter Joanne Grant and son Bob Murby are also pictured.

4 ■ Guelph and Kemptville Campus students relax between curling draws at the OAC Winter Games. From left: Jordan Thompson, Julia Thompson, Elliott Armstrong, Tristan Emiry, Jasper Munro, Tim de Groot, Lauren Benoit, Brigette Herrema, Brianna Dracup and Cal Snoddon.



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5 ■ About 45 graduates from the Class of '93 brought their families to the 20th-anniversary reunion in July 2013.

6 ■ Ridgetown Campus students Ricky Boyce and Jessica Small compete in a hockey game at the OAC Winter Games hosted at the Ridgetown Campus in January.

7 ■ The Kemptville Campus volleyball team at the OAC Winter Games.

8 ■ The Pletsch family of Aggies, from left: Don Pletsch, B.Sc.(Agr.) '61 and M.Sc. '66; Prof. Doug Pletsch, ADA '58 and B.Sc.(Agr.) '62; Paul Pletsch, B.Sc.(Agr.) '89; Russ Pletsch, ADA '68 and B.Sc.(Agr.) '73; and Bert Pletsch, ADA '68A. Don, Doug, Russ and Bert are brothers. Doug and Paul are father and son, and Doug was a professor at U of G from 1968 to 2003, spending most of his time in the Department of Rural Extension Studies.

Regional Campus Consolidation

As per the recent announcement made by the University of Guelph, intake to academic programs at our Alfred and Kemptville campuses for the Fall 2014 semester has been suspended. This will result in the eventual closure of all University of Guelph academic programs delivered through the two campuses by the end of the Winter 2015 semester and the suspension of all research activities shortly thereafter.

The full announcement is available at www.uoguelph.ca/oac/consolidation and further information can be found at www.uoguelph.ca/oac/consolidation/frequently-asked-questions.

This announcement has caused some concern among alumni and industry stakeholders, as change always brings the unknown. To help alleviate some of this concern, below is further context on the decision and details about OAC's plans going forward.

Changing Times

There has been a long tradition of regional agricultural education in Ontario. In changing economic times, the University of Guelph and OAC have worked hard to maintain and strengthen this structure.

Since 1997, and especially over the last five years, we have worked hard to grow enrolment through program redevelopment and considerable recruitment activities at both the Alfred and Kemptville campuses. Despite this, enrolment has remained stagnant, which in part makes the cost per student substantially higher at these campuses.

Our fixed government funding and mounting inflationary burdens have placed considerable pressure on our need

for dramatic change. Unfortunately, we can no longer sustain the duplication of programs at multiple campuses and the associated duplication of support costs.

By consolidating our resources dedicated to diploma education in one location, we can reinvest into teaching capacity, academic support and student services in OAC. This will strengthen the quality of our diploma programs and support our need to meet changing regulatory requirements.

The improved efficiencies resulting from the consolidation will also allow us to implement a series of reinvestments in strategic research areas that further support Ontario's agriculture and food sector, including new research appointments in OAC.

“Our intention and efforts are always aimed at growing program enrolments, and OAC plans to educate the same number of students – if not more – in agriculture and food programs.”

Government Consultation

Since the announcement, there have been questions about how the Government of Ontario was involved in this decision.

To confirm, this decision was operational, made by the University of Guelph. The Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAF-MRA), the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and the Office of Francophone Affairs were all made aware of the decision before it was publicly announced.

It is important to note that the province of Ontario, with oversight from

ARIO, owns all of the regional campus buildings, facilities and land.

Another important note is that the government funding OAC receives will not decrease due to the consolidation. If anything, this change allows OAC to better utilize the funds in strategic areas.

Diploma Teaching Remains a Priority

Our mandate is to educate the future generation of agriculture and food leaders and conduct world-renowned research. The decision to consolidate was not an easy one, but is imperative to strengthen our programs.

Diploma education in agriculture remains fundamental to Ontario's economy, and the Ridgetown Campus is the most cost-effective campus to deliver these programs. This campus has grown enrolment and provided enhanced research and service to support Ontario's agriculture and food sectors.

Our intention and efforts are always aimed at growing program enrolments, and OAC plans to educate the same number of students – if not more – in agriculture and food programs. As part of this strategy, Ridgetown Campus will accept more students into its diploma programs.

An interesting fact is that within OAC's associate diploma in agriculture program, 50 per cent of students who applied to the Kemptville Campus for fall 2014 also applied to the Ridgetown Campus for the same program.

French Language Options

To meet its commitment to delivering French-language diploma education, the University has been working closely with OMAF-MRA, MTCU, the Office of Francophone Affairs, Collège Boréal and La Cité. Both Francophone colleges have agreed to develop French language diploma programs similar to the ones no

longer being delivered by the University of Guelph.

Continuing Research in Eastern Ontario

The University will maintain a research presence in eastern Ontario beyond 2015, and it is anticipated that the University will continue to manage some of the field crops research facilities at Alfred, Kemptville and/or Winchester.

OAC researchers located in Guelph and/or Ridgetown will have definitive assignments of responsibility to ensure eastern Ontario research priorities and needs are maintained.

Programs delivered through the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station and Emo Agricultural Research Station will remain unaffected due to this consolidation for the immediate future.

Supporting Alumni

Both the Alfred and Kemptville Campuses have a long and demonstrated history of community support and involvement. Our alumni are obviously affected and disappointed. We are, however, doing our best to answer questions from our alumni.

Our Alumni Affairs and Development team will work with donors of scholarships and awards for Kemptville and Alfred students. Each award and donation will be considered on an award-by-award and donor-by-donor basis, ensuring that all of our donors' intentions are met. This is a detailed and complicated process, with donation rules determined by the Canada Revenue Agency, but we are committed to ensuring that donors' intentions are honoured and that students in agriculture and food programs continue to benefit from the generosity of past, present and future donors.

Alumnus Volunteers at Ridgetown Campus GIS Day



Ridgetown alumnus Mike Wilson displays a GIS farm field map.

Mike Wilson, agronomy services manager at Thompsons and a Ridgetown alumnus, allowed students to hold \$120,000 at Ridgetown Campus's first GIS Day.

Students held a drone plane that Thompsons uses to capture important data for precision agricultural technology applications with progressive farm clients. Drone plane technology is used in many industries and has enhanced the agricultural industry's ability to provide leading edge agronomy advice to producers.

Wilson, a 2002 agriculture diploma graduate, was one of many volunteers to take part in the new event. The open house drew several industry supporters to a mini trade show exhibiting GIS technology and its applications in agriculture, municipalities, the auto industry and beyond.

Wilson has been working in agribusiness since graduation. "I really enjoy the challenges of the four unique seasons of agriculture production and the many clients I get to support in their pursuit of production excellence," he says.

"I love my job and I look forward to going to work each day to consider the many applications of high-tech agriculture." He also enjoys working with his Ridgetown classmates.

Wilson enjoys spending time with his family and working with his father on their local cash crop farm operation. He considers himself very fortunate to have received a valuable post-secondary education, and to have found rewarding and challenging employment in his Chatham-Kent community.

By Liz Meidlinger

Take a Tour of Guelph's Gardens



Photos by Laura Crawford, the Stinsons' granddaughter, who will graduate from U of G in June with a degree in applied human nutrition.

You're invited to tour the University of Guelph's gardens on June 13 as part of national Garden Day, a coast-to-coast celebration of Canada's unique garden aesthetic.

As part of Canada's Garden Day, an annual initiative of the Canada Garden Council, the University is providing free shuttle buses and tours of its Guelph Turf-grass Institute, Arboretum, Conservatory Gardens, newly renovated Branion Plaza and Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming. The Arboretum will also be a featured garden on the VIA Rail Garden Route, a train journey linking Canada's most beautiful gardens.

This year's Garden Day celebrations on campus will also mark the University of Guelph's 50th anniversary, the OAC's 140th anniversary and the 65th anniversary of the OAC Class of '49.

"The celebrations will include gathering music, a ceremonial planting of a tree in the area of the water garden, a brief official welcome, refreshments and shuttle buses

to deliver guests to the guided tours," explains Ivan Stinson, BSA '49.

Ivan and his wife, Margaret, spear-headed the University's involvement in Canada's Garden Day and are heavily involved in planning the activities.

"The numerous benefits of gardens include a celebration of our cultural garden landscape, history and innovations," says Margaret. "The promotion of sustainable garden practices and acknowledgement of the benefits of gardening, such as recreation, health, environmental and economical are all very important."

Ivan and Margaret's support of the Garden Day celebrations is the most recent gift in a long list of contributions. The Class of '49 supported the addition of the clock faces on Johnston Hall in 1984, the construction of the water garden adjacent to the Conservatory in 1994, and the restoration of the Portico on Johnston Green in 1999. The class also established four annual scholarships for bachelor of bio-resource management students.

"With the University's Canada Garden Day committee, we look forward to welcoming the Guelph community to campus on June 13," says Margaret.

The day's events run from 12:30 to 4 p.m. at the Conservatory.


Garden Days.ca
Les Journées du Jardin.ca
Flagship Event / Événement vedette

Upcoming Events

June 20 to 22

[U of G's 50th Anniversary Alumni Weekend and Conversat Ball](#)

Details and registration info at www.alumni.uoguelph.ca

Sept. 20

[Homecoming](#)



Are You Following...

Three of OAC's six academic units have active Twitter accounts. Follow them for news, event information and research updates.

[@FAREUofG](#)

Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics

[@SEDRD](#)

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

[@plantagguelph](#)

Department of Plant Agriculture

OAC Alumni News

The **OAC Alumni News** is a publication supported by the OAC Alumni Association and OAC Alumni Foundation for the alumni and friends of the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph.

For more information, contact:
Tara Collins

Alumni Advancement Manager
519-824-4120, Ext. 56842
tcoll02@uoguelph.ca
www.uoguelph.ca/oac/alumni

