



ENVIRONMENT ADVANCEMENT

2025

# ANNUAL REPORT



UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**

FACULTY OF  
ENVIRONMENT

# ABOUT

The Environment Advancement team connects donors, alumni, and partners including individuals, industry and foundations with opportunities to support the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo. We champion philanthropic investment, build lifelong alumni relationships, and amplify the Faculty's research, teaching, and experiential learning.

## QUICK FACTS (2025)

- Faculty of Environment Alumni: 18,000+ in over 90+ Countries
- Annual Events: 20+ alumni and donor events
- Major Campaigns: Future Cities Institute, Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, Climate Change, Global Citizen. Internship, Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships, Graduate School for Environment, Designer in Residence.
- 2025 Gifts to Environment: \$1.6M from 274 donors; \$13M+ in proposals submitted
- 2024–25 Fundraising Priorities:
  - Centennial Fund: Invest in the next generation environmental leaders
  - Future Cities: Build healthy, prosperous future cities and communities through cutting-edge urban research and innovation.
  - Climate Change: Scale real-world solutions to mitigation and adaptation
  - Student Experience & Internships: Enhance hands-on learning and impact
  - Graduate Scholarships: Attract and support top top environmental innovation, policy and research talent
- Advancement Team Members: 4 core staff + 2–4 co-op students each term

## KEY FUNCTIONS

- **Fundraising and Philanthropic Development**  
Drive strategic fundraising initiatives and secure transformative investments in graduate and undergraduate education, experiential learning, Chairs and Professorships, and capital projects – aligned with Environment 2035 and core research priorities: Cities, Climate Change, Natural Resources, and Sustainable Transitions.
- **Donor Stewardship and Impact Reporting**  
Through personalized stewardship, impact reporting, and recognition, we build donor trust and highlight the tangible outcomes of their philanthropy.
- **Alumni and Donor Engagement**  
Foster and sustain deep relationships with alumni and donors through meaningful communications, volunteer opportunities, and high-impact events such as Reunion, the ENV Leadership Series, the Awards Banquet, Jack Rosen student pitch competition, and milestone donor celebrations.
- **Strategic Communication, Brand, and Marketing**  
In partnership with Communication teams both at Environment and UW, craft and share compelling stories that elevate the Faculty's mission and research and community impact.
- **Strategic Planning and Advancement Infrastructure**  
Lead the development of advancement strategies, systems, and cross-functional collaboration to support long-term philanthropic and community engagement growth. We ensure alignment with Faculty-wide goals, build data-driven operations, and cultivate a culture of advancement across all levels.

## COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

We collaborate with:

- Faculty researchers, students, and staff
- Industry, government and foundation partners (e.g., CAIVAN, Intact, TD, Region of Waterloo, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)
- Alumni volunteers, advisory boards, and student groups
- University-wide Advancement and Faculty based partners

## CONNECTION TO TEACHING & RESEARCH

Advancement enables the Faculty's mission by securing resources that enhance research capacity, elevate student experiences, and recruit and retain top talent. We align closely with academic and research priorities and help communicate their societal impact.

2025

# HIGHLIGHTS

2025 was a year of progress and transition. Despite staff changes - including secondments and the decision not to backfill a key role in line with Faculty budget priorities – we advanced our mission by focusing on core strategic goals. We strengthened alumni relationships, solidified fundraising priorities for the upcoming campaign, and aligned initiatives with *Environment 2035* and *Waterloo at 100*. These efforts were made possible through strong collaboration with campus and external partners.

## 93

Alumni Class  
Volunteers from  
1968-2023

18,000+ Alum in  
90+ Countries

## GLOBAL

## ↓↓30%

Decrease of donors  
from previous fiscal  
(264 donors 2025)

## +42%

Increase of  
volunteers  
mentoring students

## 1400+

Students Engaged  
in 2025

## 1500+

Engaged 250+ alum, 60+  
donors & 1200+  
community members

## \$1.6+M

In philanthropic  
support; \$13M in  
proposals

Increased School of  
Planning Alumni  
Engagement

## SOP

## TOP 2

Gift from UW Alum & First  
Principal Giving Gift from an  
ENV Alum – Frank Cairo

2025-26<sup>1</sup>

# KEY INITIATIVES<sup>2</sup>

## INITIATIVE 1 | Campaign Readiness

Build campaign momentum through refined cases for support, internal champion engagement, leadership gift prospecting, and alignment with University-wide timelines.

## INITIATIVE 2 | Alumni and Donor Engagement

Deepen strategic engagement through storytelling, recognition, events, and volunteerism—aligned with emerging Faculty priorities.

## INITIATIVE 3 | Climate Change Strategy and Partnership

Position the Faculty and key partners as a national leader in climate solutions through a new integrated case for support, strategic fundraising, and stakeholder engagement.

## INITIATIVE 4 | Experiential Learning and Talent Development

Scale impact through support for the Global Citizen Internship, Capstone projects, and Innovation Challenges, and through scholarships and awards.

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of University planning, a year is a fiscal year (May 1-April 30)

<sup>2</sup> Per the University planning tool user guide, "initiatives":

- are at least one year, and likely two to five years in duration;
- include a series of steps / actions and milestones to complete the initiative;
- are cross-unit and collaborative in nature; and
- address an issue that is focused on achieving Waterloo at 100 (and/or ENV2035, in our case) goals.

# APPENDIX A

## *Community Giving*

The generosity of our community—through both philanthropy and dedicated time—continues to drive meaningful progress toward the Faculty of Environment’s *Environment 2035* strategic priorities and the University’s bold *Waterloo at 100* vision. From scholarships and experiential learning to research and community partnerships, these contributions are empowering the next generation of environmental leaders and creating lasting impact across campus and beyond. Together, we are building a more sustainable, and resilient future both in Canada and across the Globe.

*President Vivek Goel, Dean Mary Wells, Benefactors – Frank Cairo and Troy van Haastrecht, Founder CAIVAN Group, and Dean Bruce Frayne at the FCI Gift announcement*



The launch of the **Future Cities Institute Founded by CAIVAN** marked a defining moment in 2025. With more than 250 community members, thought leaders, and public officials in attendance, the event celebrated a \$10M transformational gift—the largest ever from a Faculty of Environment alum, and second largest from a Waterloo graduate. This milestone reflects trust in the University’s ability to lead bold, community-driven urban innovation. This event was made possible in collaboration with our partners at Central Advancement.



*President Goel and Frank Cairo discuss the transformation the Future Cities Institute will enable.*



*Audience members at launch of the Future Cities Institute Gift Announcement, including Mayors of both the City of Kitchener and Waterloo.*







Thanks to a generous \$200K gift from Dr. Satinder Singh Rekhi (centre front row) and the Rekhi Foundation for Happiness, the Faculty of Environment is advancing interdisciplinary teaching and research at the intersection of sustainability and the science of happiness.



With a renewed \$100K gift, KEEN and our non-profit partner Georgian Bay Biosphere continue to support graduate students on Global Citizen Internship placements and collaboration with Professor Chantal Markle and the Wildlife Ecohydrology and Conservation Lab in advancing critical research and conservation efforts across Ontario's biosphere regions. KEEN's Matt Merko, Director Insights & Engagement Canada (far right) and team visited campus to see the impact of their support firsthand.





Supported by:



In partnership with:



National Workshop Agreement

Prepared by Joanna Eyquem  
Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation  
University of Waterloo

Funded by Standards Council of Canada

January 2025

Intact Financial Corporation's renewed \$200,K commitment to the [Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation](#) is advancing national efforts to integrate natural assets—like wetlands and forests—into municipal financial reporting, helping communities recognize and manage the economic value of nature-based climate resilience.



Captain John Craig (BSc '96) (Left) established Waterloo's first alumni-funded Aviation Scholarship, awarding \$2,500 to support a promising student—pictured here with fellow alumni First Officers Chanelle Charlesworth Lavictoire (BES '13) and Miguel Jardeleza (BES '16) after landing AC873 from Paris, a testament to the growing Waterloo Aviation community.



Through a generous gift of \$50K 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award Winner Derek Coleman (PhD '74) and Kay Coleman of the Ages Foundation have supported a graduate scholarship at Environment. Derek and Kay have provided outstanding support to our student community through several initiatives including the Student Athlete Award and the Global Citizen Internships in partnership with the Rare Charitable Research Reserve.





Annual donations from alumni and friends play a vital role in advancing the Faculty of Environment's vision by providing students with transformative opportunities that prepare them to lead with purpose. In 2025, Sheryl Kennedy (BES '76)—a trailblazing alumna, 2019 *Friend of the Faculty Impact Award* recipient and former Board of Governor member (far left), and one of Canada's Most Powerful Women—renewed her pivotal gift to the Global Citizen Internship program. Her leadership and philanthropy have enabled many students to complete meaningful work terms with Habitat for Humanity, Sustainable Waterloo Region, and other nonprofit partners - developing critical professional skills while contributing to community resilience. As a lead alumni advisor and seed donor, Sheryl exemplifies how our community is helping realize the ambitions of *Environment 2035* and *Waterloo at 100*—investing both time and resources to shape the next generation of global changemakers.

# APPENDIX B

## *Alumni Engagement*

### 2024-25 Engagement Overview

- **Total Alumni:** 18,353 total in 90+ Countries from Traditionalists to Gen Z
- **Top Generations by Engagement:**
  - Baby Boomers (1946–1965): 27.6%
  - Gen Y (1980–1994): 30.3%
  - Gen Z (1995–2015): 18.7%

### Engagement Scores by Type<sup>3</sup>

- **Communication:** ENV:1,352 scores (most common)
- **Volunteerism:** ENV: 487 scores
- **Experiential:** ENV: 327 scores
- **Philanthropy:** ENV: 258 scores

### Top Cities for Engagement

- Vancouver (highest engagement score: 1.42)
- Ottawa, Kitchener, Waterloo, Toronto (high participation)
- Most engaged provinces: Ontario (87%), BC, Alberta, Quebec

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### <sup>3</sup> Understanding Alumni Engagement Metrics

Our alumni engagement data is built around four core pillars defined by CASE: Communication, Experiential, Philanthropy and Volunteerism. Each time an alumni interacts with us in a meaningful way such as opening emails, attending events, giving back or volunteering is recorded under the appropriate pillar. These activities are then counted and scored.

Each alumnus can earn up to four engagement points, one for each pillar. For example, someone who reads our newsletters and attends an event would score 2 out of 4. The overall engagement score is the average number of pillars alumni are engaged in.

For example, Vancouver has the highest average engagement score at 1.42, meaning alumni there are typically engaged in more than one way. High pillar totals like 1,352 Communication scores reflect where the most engagement is happening. These numbers help us track what's working, where alumni are most active, and where there's room to grow.



Our Evergreen banquet brought together our talented students, faculty and benefactors whose contributions have enabled transformative impact.

Annually we celebrate the immense contributions and accomplishments of our alumni and friends through our Faculty of Environment Alumni Awards Program. Our 2023 and 2024 recipients' outstanding contributions to their community, society and our planet are exceptional.

Our community was inspired by our Alumni Award winners the Jack and Honey Rosen Charitable Fund, Frank R. Cairo (BES 2005), Ashley Salvador (MA 2021), Eldon C. Theodore (BES 2002), Michael Wulder (PhD 1996), Sabine Weber (MES 2015) Learn more about the impact of our community including messages from our award winners here:  
<https://youtu.be/PBrboBJtbWg?si=qmLKdF6LtYE-vZw7>





*Former ESS President, Karen Chan, at Environment Convocation ceremony where we welcomed 348 (Spring Convocation) and 184 (Fall) new alumni to our ENV and Waterloo Alumni community*



The masters of Climate Change (MCC) Program 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary convened alumni and experts to address Canada's growing need for skilled climate professionals and to reflect on a decade of leadership in climate education.





*In partnership with the Faculty of Environment friend Dax Dasilva, The Black Hole experience by Age of Union was brought to the Waterloo Community in collaboration with Create Waterloo where nearly 2000 community members engaged with this exhibit.*



*Students at the Waterloo Food Truck Social in Waterloo Park*

## Alumni Voice in Shaping Our Future: Brand Refresh Focus Groups

As part of the Faculty's strategic planning process under *Environment 2035*, we invited alumni to help shape a refreshed brand that reflects our evolving identity and values.

**Thirteen alumni** participated in dedicated focus groups, offering thoughtful insights on how we can better communicate the faculty's impact, strengths, and distinctiveness.

Their contributions are helping guide the development of a new mission and vision that resonates with both our internal community and the broader world ensuring alumni perspectives are at the heart of how we tell our story moving forward.



Our Alumni Office Hour series saw **23 alumni** from diverse backgrounds, programs and career fields share their advice and experience Alumni Office Hours amongst **195 students**.

The Environment Leadership Series connects current students with alumni who are leaders and professionals across diverse sectors. These evening events offer valuable opportunities for networking, learning, and professional development. In 2023–24, the series engaged a total of **26 alumni volunteers** (13 in the fall and 13 in the winter) who generously shared their time, expertise, and career insights with **103 students**.





Fall 2024 Leadership Series



Winter 2025 Leadership series



Over 500 high school students in Hagey Hall Theatre with TD Walter Bean Professor, Dennis Aheto, Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast. Every year Environment hosts a globally renowned speaker to engage on topics that link to our strategic priorities and global issues. Over 200 community members attended the public lecture.



Dr. Derek Armitage, Dr. Denis Aheto, and Dr. Prateep Nayak





### Jack Rosen Memorial Award for Environmental Innovation Inspiring Solutions for a Better Tomorrow

Each year, the Jack Rosen Memorial Award Pitch Competition challenges Faculty of Environment students to propose innovative ideas whether a device, process, or method to address critical environmental problems.

Aligned with the University's *Waterloo at 100* vision and the **Global Futures** framework, the competition encourages interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to tackling global challenges across five key areas: **Technology, Society, Health, Sustainability, and the Economy.**

In the most recent competition, **seven alumni generously volunteered their time**, participating as **judges and attendees** in support of **10 student teams** who pitched.



*Students at the Airbus Canada panel with President and CEO of Airbus Canada Benoit Schultz, following meetings with over 20 faculty and staff while hosting the Airbus leadership and HR team on campus.*





*12 alumni volunteer at the Young Alumni Social preceding the UWPAT Dinner with over 300 Attendees. As engaged group of Alumni for over 33 years and generous Donors, UWPAT's support has impacted thousands of students and our broader Planning community.*



### **AGPS Professional Planning Mixer**

This year, **13 alumni volunteered their time** to engage with **44 graduate planning students**, offering career insights, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Hosted by the Association of Graduate Planners (AGP), the event brings together hiring employers and emerging talent from Waterloo's School of Planning, helping students prepare for co-op and permanent roles.





### University of Waterloo & Toronto Metropolitan University Planning Conference

The annual Waterloo–Toronto Metropolitan University Planning Conference (WTMUPC) continues to foster professional growth and collaboration between planning students from both institutions. With this year’s theme, *Converging Perspectives: Piecing the Urban Mosaic*, the conference invited participants to explore diverse approaches to urban planning through engaging dialogue and experiential learning.

This year, **eight dedicated alumni** shared their expertise with nearly **100 students** from both universities delivering presentations, participating in speed networking, and even joining in a lively trivia session. Their presence added valuable real-world insight and enriched the conference experience for attendees.

Notably, alumni representing event sponsors such as **MHBC** and **Weston Consulting** further demonstrated the deep, ongoing impact of our alumni community within the planning profession.





**Planning Class of 1985** with class champion Diane McArthur-Rodgers sitting in the middle.

The Class Champions Program taps into that sense of connection by empowering alumni volunteers to serve as official representatives for their graduating class.

These champions play a vital role in planning and promoting milestone reunions, encouraging classmates to reconnect with one another and with the Faculty they once called home.

- 93 alumni volunteers representing classes from 1968 to 2023 are actively fostering class connections
- **In 2024–25, a total of 7 class reunions are planned: 1 held in June 2024, 3 scheduled for June 2025, and 3 taking place outside of June 2025.** These reunions are being organized and led by **12 dedicated Class Champions**, committed to keeping classmates connected and engaged with the Faculty.
- **Next Reunion Day on Saturday, June 7, 2025**



Our alumni community spans the globe, with graduates making an impact in every corner of the world. This year, we had the pleasure of reconnecting with alumni, donors, and friends in China and Hong Kong, where we were reminded of the strength, pride, and generosity of our international alumni network. Alumni were especially thrilled to reunite with former faculty members, sharing memories and celebrating how far they've come since their days at Waterloo. In a lighthearted moment, the Waterloo Goose (in plush form) proved to be a surprising crowd favourite—despite the less-than-fond memories many shared of being chased by the real ones on campus!



# LOOKING AHEAD

2026-27

- Launch transformative funding initiatives and kick off our priority campaigns including Climate Change, Future Cities, Graduate School of Environment
- **2026: 21 confirmed Environment Advancement events**, creating meaningful opportunities to connect our community around shared priorities aligned with Environment 2035 and the Waterloo at 100 vision.
- **Future Cities Conference:** Inaugural event in Winter 2026, bringing together thought leaders and innovators to shape more sustainable, integrated, and resilient urban futures.
- **TD Walter Bean Lecture:** From September 29 to October 1, 2025, we are honoured to welcome Sir Andrew Steer, esteemed global leader, economist and author, as the TD Walter Bean Visiting Lecturer, to lead a vital conversation on Advancing System Change for Nature and Climate.
- **New Flagship Events:** Launching in Vancouver and Ottawa, delivered in partnership with key industry collaborators.
- **Annual Environment-Wide Food Truck Social:** On September 25—this time bigger, better, and more community-driven than ever before.
- **Alumni-Student Mentorship Program:** Deepening connections across generations and empowering students with guidance, inspiration, and support from our outstanding alumni network.

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