



Stay connected to University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus

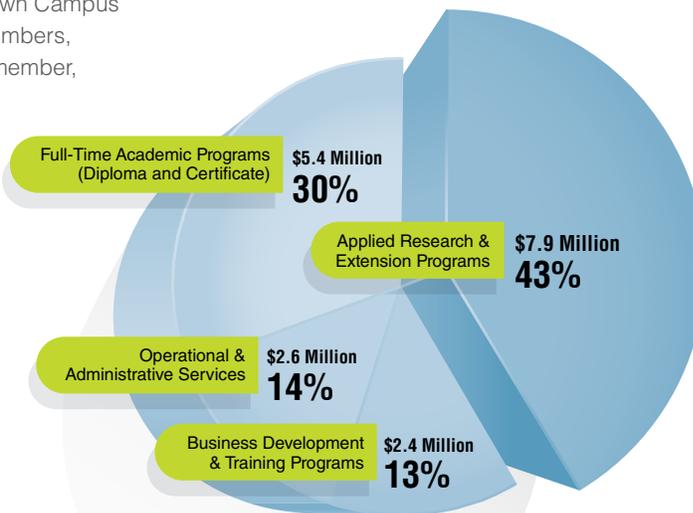
## Research Investment – Big Business at Ridgetown Campus

Alumni and friends of Ridgetown Campus often inquire about student numbers, or a particular teaching staff member, or Steckley Hall. These are pretty common questions, but some folks with operational or management interests ask about our business model. They want to know how much provincial, private, or other funding we receive; and they want to know how many people we employ, how many students we attract, and what our impact is as an organization.

This short article is intended to provide a snapshot of our campus business and the clients we serve.

OAC's Ridgetown Campus is an \$18.3 million per year operation that attracts revenue to three key pillars: **applied research and extension, diploma and certificate education, and business development/contract training.**

As the above pie chart indicates, **Applied Research and Extension** is the biggest part of our revenue stream attracting almost \$8.0 million annually. Our team of 18-19 research scientists work intensely with 15-17 research associates, as well as supervise 15-17 Master's and PhD



Campus Business 2013/2014

candidates. This group of experts address current applied industry issues in a timely manner through research trials, publications and presentations across the province, Canada, and around the globe. Our research program attracts 75-100 partners annually and works closely with several OAC Guelph Campus research faculty.

The delivery of **Full-Time Academic Programs** entices approximately 600 full-time students annually and attracts approximately \$5.4 million in tuition and provincial funding support. The campus

## issue highlights

Messages .....	2
Graduation Guest Speakers Deliver Key Messages .....	3
Best All-Round Student Going Home to Diversified Farm Enterprise .....	4
"Dr. Sue" and Veterinary Technology Students Send Soccer Balls to Africa .....	4
Graduate Student Sees Big Advantages in the Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) Scholarship Program .....	5
Ridgetown Part of a 5-Year National Pulse Crop Study .....	5
Let's Tweet About Your Farm Issues and Opportunities .....	6
Breeder Addressing Health Benefits of Purple-Skinned Tomatoes .....	6
Westag Alumnus Important Mentor in Student's Big Decisions .....	7
Colombian Homeland Brings 1969 Westag Alumnus and Research Student Together .....	7
Candid Shots from our 62 <sup>nd</sup> Graduation on June 6, 2014 .....	8

continued on page 3

## Campus Director's Message

While I sit in the Director's Office, I get to spend some time thinking strategically about the future of the campus. Here are four areas we need to focus on.



The Ridgetown Campus needs a new crops research centre so that we can continue to deliver applied research results to Ontario and the world. This is our top capital priority and this will help secure a long-term vision for the campus.

Just like home, the Ridgetown Campus needs upgrades and repairs. Plans are underway for a significant investment in new roofs, new roadways, new agronomy theatre seating, etc. over the next twelve months. These improvements will enhance our physical resources across campus for students and our broader stakeholder community.

With classes just a few weeks away, I think about how fortunate we are to see continued strong numbers at Ridgetown and I wonder how we can continue to enhance our students' experience. At this time, fall 2014 student registrations look positive.

But perhaps most importantly, I spend time thinking about how privileged we are to have such great alumni, staff, students, and industry partners, and I want to thank you all for your on-going efforts to make us a successful campus community.

Kindest Regards,  
**Ken McEwan**

## Ridgetown Agri-Food Foundation Volunteer Message



As I look at the opportunity to build connections with our 6,500 Westag alumni, I see a huge potential to enhance our alumni community.

Let's look at ways to improve communications, build relationships, and simply stay connected. That might mean giving back to the campus through being a guest lecturer, or becoming an alumni mentor, engaging on social media, returning for a class reunion, or dropping by a booth at a trade show to say hello.

If you have some creative ideas about alumni engagement, feel free to contact me by e-mail at [ben.arnold@rogers.com](mailto:ben.arnold@rogers.com) or reach out by phone at 519-868-3931.

Let's get to it, and show how proud we are to be Ridgetown alumni.

Kindest Regards,

**Ben Arnold**, Class of 1999,  
Lead, Westag Alumni Engagement

**PS:** Please join me in congratulating Foundation Chair, Dave Baute on being named President of the Canadian Seed Trade Association.

### About Your ROOTS Newsletter

The **ROOTS** newsletter is published twice per year by Communications, University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. Its mission is to enhance the relationship between alumni and community friends and promote success and opportunities within the campus community.

**ROOTS** is paid for by Ridgetown Campus.

To view on-line, visit: [www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/alumni/alumni\\_roots.cfm](http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/alumni/alumni_roots.cfm)

To send comments: Email [rcroots@uoguelph.ca](mailto:rcroots@uoguelph.ca) or call Liz at 519-674-1500 ext.63587.

Comments can be mailed to: Communications, University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus, 120 Main Street East, Ridgetown, ON N0P 2C0

To update your mailing address: Email [rcroots@uoguelph.ca](mailto:rcroots@uoguelph.ca) or call Liz at 519-674-1500 ext.63587.

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## Graduation Guest Speakers Deliver Key Messages

With winning communications skills, the graduation guest speaker and valedictorian addressed over 1,000 people attending the 62<sup>nd</sup> graduation on June 6, 2014.

Graduation Guest Speaker, Jim Campbell, General Manager, Agris Co-op, Blenheim, ON, reminded graduates of three things to keep in mind for a successful career. His key points included:

- Put yourself in challenging or difficult situations; you'll learn and grow from them.
- Continue to learn; your industry will always be changing.
- Be a leader; step up to the plate.

With one of the final presentations of the ceremony, Class of 2014 Valedictorian Gerard Van Den Boogaard of Gorrie, ON, shared many memories and left classmates with three important take-home messages.

- You need to have a vision, and a workable plan.
- Check your attitude, if it needs an adjustment, fix it!
- Take calculated risks. 'Get your ducks in a row' through your own initiatives to make things happen!

This fall, Gerard will be furthering his education in the Bachelor of Science, Agriculture program at OAC's Guelph Campus.

Watch Jim and Gerard's messages at [www.ridgetownc.com/grad](http://www.ridgetownc.com/grad).



▲ (L-R) Gerard Van Den Boogaard, Class of 2014 Valedictorian with Dr. Rob Gordon, Dean, OAC, and Jim Campbell, General Manager, AGRIS Co-operative and graduation guest speaker 🌱

## Cover story extended continued from page 1



▲ Dr. Darren Robinson, Associate Professor, Horticultural Crop Weed Management

employs a number of full-time and sessional instructors in the delivery of four diploma, and two certificate programs. The agriculture diploma program is the largest academic program, representing approximately 42% of the student body. It began in 1951, and has since graduated sixty-two classes.

### **Business Development and Training**

offers a number of provincially mandated programs across Ontario on an annual basis, including the Ontario Pesticide Education Program. They also manage Conference and Facility Services, and co-ordinate the annual Southwest Agriculture Conference. Business Development attracts approximately \$2.4 million annually.

An **Administration/Operations** team oversees strategic directions, facilities and financial management, and day-to-day operations of the Campus, working within the OAC. The Campus also works closely with its Agri-Food Foundation, alumni and community stakeholders to secure on-going investments.

The campus employs 130-140 full-time equivalents, and employs 65-70 summer students from late April through August.

Provincial campus funding totals \$5.0 million and our professionals attract the additional \$15 million from private and other government funding. **That means we leverage provincial investment at a ratio of three to one, and we're proud of that track record.** 🌱



▲ Class of 2014's Best All-Round Student, **Matthew Hebblethwaite**, Blenheim, ON, with his father, **Tom Hebblethwaite**.

## Best All-Round Student Going Home to Diversified Farm Operation

"I live and farm just 10 km from the campus and many friends and neighbours felt I should venture just a little farther from home for my post-secondary studies. I looked at the courses offered at Ridgetown, and they were just what I needed," says new graduate, Matthew Hebblethwaite, Blenheim, ON. "And now that the two years are over, I can say I gained a lot from my Ridgetown experience. I now have new contacts, knowledge, experiences, ideas, and great life-long friends! The Ridgetown experience was just right for me!"

During his two years at Ridgetown, Matthew excelled academically and got involved in many campus activities including the Student Ambassador Program, the OAC Winter Games, several intramural sports teams, and the Campus Chaplaincy Program.

This year's Best All-Round Student also won the top academic achievement award in the Agriculture Diploma program and has returned home to a third-generation family farm. Matthew, with his parents, Tom and Susan, grow corn, soybeans and wheat, as well as specialty crops including tomatoes, seed corn, and tobacco. The farm operation also includes solar and wind energy systems. The farm employs 8-15 farm workers from spring planting through fall harvest.

"I look forward to the tremendous opportunities that our agri-food sector has to offer," stated Matthew. "What better job than helping to feed the world!" 🌱

## "Dr. Sue" and Students Send Soccer Balls to Africa

She makes time for important humanitarian service work, and she is one very busy lady! Dr. Sue Burlatschenko, better known to our Veterinary Technology students as "Dr. Sue," runs a specialty veterinary practice focusing on swine production, works as a part-time technical services veterinarian with Merck Animal Health, and finds time to teach the Pharmacology and Public Health course to senior, Veterinary Technology students at Ridgetown. She is also the mother of three busy teenagers!

Sue is an excellent story teller, and she likes to share stories with her Ridgetown students. Earlier this year she relayed a story to her class about an upcoming trip she would be making to Lesotho, Africa through the Bracelet of Hope organization. Sue's focus with the organization is to help those less fortunate improve pork production in an area of Africa hit very hard by AIDS.

The students were touched by the simple story she hold of the difficulty in raising local African funds for teens in the orphanages of Lesotho to get soccer balls to start a soccer league.



▲ "Dr. Sue" with new acquaintances in Kenya.

The senior Veterinary Technology class got to work and collected donations from classmates and friends, and later presented Sue with seventeen autographed soccer balls to take to Africa this past April. Students added their names and drew paw prints on the soccer balls; they will be the only soccer balls in Africa with creative paws print designs on them!

Way to go Veterinary Technology students!

More information on the Bracelet of Hope organization can be found at [www.braceletofhope.ca](http://www.braceletofhope.ca) 🌱

## Graduate Student Sees Big Advantages in the Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) Scholarship Program

Andrea Hitchon loves science, and she likes bugs too! So does her master's program supervisor at Ridgetown, Dr. Art Schaafsma. When considering completing her master's degree, Art encouraged Andrea to look into a very unique scholarship program offered through the University of Guelph in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF), and the Ministry of Rural Affairs (MRA).

It's called the Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) Scholarship program, and Andrea feels the benefits of the program are enormous! The goal of the program is to support future researchers, policy-makers and innovators in our agri-food system.

For starters, the program's participants have their annual program tuition covered at around \$17,000 per year. Beyond the huge financial assistance, the program has a requirement for a related industry work placement and Andrea worked for the Canadian Corn Pest Coalition (CCPC). This placement provided an opportunity to work with industry leaders and travel to industry and academic meetings in Canada and the USA. Andrea added that during her time with CCPC she was very fortunate to find a mentor in coalition member, Tracey Baute, Field Crop Entomologist at OMAF and MRA in Ridgetown. The program also requires students to complete graduate-level research courses, as well as get some 'business smarts' through completing The Integration

of Science and Business in the Agri-Food System course.

"It's such a winning program; combining research science with applied industry experience and agribusiness training; and while you do all that, you make industry connections and meet other scientists. It's a fabulous opportunity for which I am very appreciative," notes Andrea.

Andrea is completing her master's degree in Insect Resistance Management (IRM), and her academic committee members include Dr. Jonathan Schmidt (Associate Dean, Academic, OAC) and Dr. Rebecca Hallett (Associate Professor, School of Environmental Science).

Andrea is also this year's winner of the OAC Class of 1960 Leadership Development Award, as well as a number of other graduate recognitions for academic excellence and research leadership.



▲ **Andrea Hitchon**, master's candidate evaluates her greenhouse trials. 🌱

## Ridgetown Part of a 5-Year National Pulse Crop Study

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, through the Growing Forward II policy framework, has committed over \$13.5M to pulse-related research across Canada as part of a national Pulse Science Cluster program linking government with researchers and industry to address priority pulse issues. Pulse Growers participate through a check-off program that supports research program delivery and the Ontario and Manitoba pulse producer groups will be contributing \$250,000 to this initiative.



▲ **Chris Gillard**, research scientist with master's student, **Xinyu Zhang** in campus field plot

But you might be wondering, just what is a pulse crop? The term "pulse" refers to grain legumes used for human consumption and includes chickpeas, dry beans, dry peas and lentils. Pulse crops are high value but relatively low acreage compared to traditional crops such as corn, soybeans, or wheat.

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, on behalf of pulse producer groups across Canada, will be administering the project funding of approximately \$1,000,000 to Ridgetown Campus over the next five years to address two key areas of dry bean production including pest management and nitrogen fertility research.

This project has a unique focus within the Science Cluster, and will be led by Chris Gillard, Assistant Professor in the Department of Plant Agriculture. The research will be conducted at the Ridgetown and Huron Research Stations.

The research team members currently include Xinyu Zhang, a M.Sc. student from Shenyang, China as well as technical support from Kris McNaughton and Don Depuydt. 🌱

## Let's Tweet About Your Farm Issues and Opportunities



◀ **'Doctor Dave'**  
with student  
**Jimmy Lavrysen**

**"It's fast. It's effective. It's great to disseminate information at the touch of the keypad! It connects me with industry, producers and students – in no time at all!"**



Yes, it's tweeting, and Dr. David Hooker, better known by many as 'Doctor Dave' has been tweeting for about two and half years. "It's a great medium to connect with research stakeholders, growers, other scientists, and students without having to leave my desk! I get agronomy research ideas from other producers on Twitter who are sharing their production issues. My desire is to be as up to date as possible with my teaching and research efforts, and tweeting is one method to acquire information, but also to extend information to growers and the scientific community as well."

"I also like to stay connected with the students I teach, and I encourage current students and former to connect with me in one of several ways including: text message, e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, phone or stopping by my office. I share my cell phone number and my Twitter handle with students on the first day of class," says Hooker. "Some students might not want to connect in person, but they are more comfortable with e-mail or tweeting."

"Alumni, if you'd like to follow me on Twitter or send me some tweets, I'd welcome the opportunity to connect."



**TWITTER NAME: @cropdoc2**

**Dr. Dave Hooker**, Assistant Professor, Agronomy  
(and part-time farmer)

Or contact Dave by email: [cropdoc2@gmail.com](mailto:cropdoc2@gmail.com)

Cell: 519-318-1860 Office: 519-674-1500 ext. 63559 📍

## Breeder Addressing Health Benefits of Purple-Skinned Tomatoes

"They are deep purple on the outside and bright red on the inside, and they're for the processing tomato industry, most likely for juice or sauce. What's important is that these purple skinned tomatoes are extremely high in anthocyanins, which provides the deep purple skin colour and extends possible health benefits for consumers," notes campus tomato breeder, Steve Loewen.

The anthocyanins, which are responsible for the purple colour of these tomatoes, have shown evidence of protecting cells from oxidative stresses that may lead to some types of cancer, and have also shown evidence of reducing tissue inflammation. In addition, these tomatoes have all the same health benefits as regular red tomatoes.

With funding support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and the Ministry of Rural Affairs, along with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Steve began the development of this new strain 2009. Steve works with scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Guelph and Nanchang University, China on this collaborative effort.

"We are now working to develop important horticultural characteristics of the tomato such as size, firmness, and early maturity," adds Steve. "The project is progressing steadily."



▲ Tomatoes turn from green to red to purple in the field. 📍



▲ L-R: **Jim Magee**, mentor and Class of 1964 alumnus at June 6, graduation with mentee **Scott Meadows**, Class of 2014.

## Westag Alumnus Important Mentor in Student's Big Decisions

Scott Meadows of Woodstock, ON was not born and raised on a farm like most of the students studying agriculture at Ridgetown. He certainly had no thoughts of an education or career in agriculture until he met an alumnus from the Class of 1964, named Jim Magee.

In high school, a friend of Scott's helped him get a part-time job on Jim's beef farm outside of Drumbo, ON. Initially, it was just a job for Scott, but then, with Jim's help, Scott's eyes were opened to the opportunities in agriculture. Not sure where to go for his post-secondary education, Jim encouraged Scott to consider Ridgetown. "Ridgetown was a pretty good place for me, and I think it would be a good place for you too," Jim told Scott.

Jim has now moved off the home farm, and Scott has just completed his agriculture diploma. With his new found interest in agribusiness, Scott is heading off to Alberta this fall to complete an Applied Agribusiness degree.

With just a little bit of help from his mentor, Scott has opened the door to the career possibilities in the agri-food system, and he is adding to his resume with a summer job at Cargill, Princeton, ON where he says, "I have plenty to learn."

Jim and Scott continue to stay in touch; Jim's mentorship has helped a fine young man find an interest, an education, and the beginning of a great career! Way to go Jim! 🍀

## Colombian Homeland Brings 1969 Westag Alumnus and Research Student Together



Two couples recently had the opportunity to connect on common ground. Colombia, South America is the homeland of these individuals and they find themselves drawn to Ridgetown campus for different reasons.

Cesar was one of three international students in the 1969 agriculture diploma program; and forty-five years since his graduation his memory of 'Pop Wilson' and his residence shenanigans are crystal clear. After a 26 year career working in immigration at the Toronto International Airport, Cesar and his wife, Angela spend part of their retirement experience living close to campus, as well as living in Toronto and Colombia at various times throughout the calendar year. In reminiscing about his career experiences he noted the importance of his Ridgetown diploma in helping him obtain work for the Federal government, and he added that while working in immigration he had the chance to get the autographs of several major stars as they travelled through the airport. Cesar and Angela gather with a number of 1969 alumni each summer, and were recently on campus for their 45th class reunion.

Arriving on campus just months ago, Gabriel is currently working as a research technician with Dr. Art Schaafsma, and is starting a Master's program under Art's supervision this fall. Gabriel and his wife Andrea welcomed the opportunity to meet with folks that speak Spanish as their first language, and share a passion for a common homeland, and for Ridgetown campus.



▲ (L-R) **Gabriel Forero**, Research Technician with wife, **Andrea Sanchez**, alongside **Angela Ardila** with husband, **Cesar Ardila**, (Class of 1969). 🍀

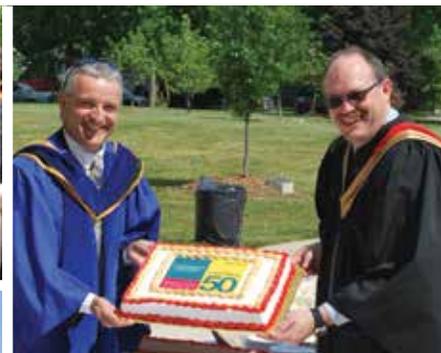


Have you checked out the new **Ridgetown Westag Alumni** Facebook page yet? We want to hear from you!

**Search “Ridgetown Westag Alumni” on Facebook and “like” our page! See what contest is currently running – you might be a winner!**

This Facebook page is managed by Communications, Ridgetown Campus in an effort to build our alumni relationship with you, and to keep you up to date on current activities at the campus.

Candid Shots  
from our 62<sup>nd</sup>  
Graduation



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