

University of Waterloo, long known for its innovation and creative collaboration, is exploring a branch campus in Stratford, in partnership with the City of Stratford and the Stratford Festival of Canada. This partnership grew out of discussions at the Southwest Economic Alliance in May 2006, hosted in Stratford.

Benefits

To the Citizens of Ontario and Canada:

- New media training and research will create knowledge and innovation in this explosively expanding field and help Ontario create and retain jobs
- Proposed research institute on the new economy in rural and small-town Canada would be of particular benefit to Ontario, which has a larger non-urban population than the total for Canada's two most-rural provinces: Saskatchewan and New Brunswick
- Bolster provincial and national leadership through conferences and specialized summer courses
- UW-Stratford will create a "destination college" in a prime Ontario visitor destination, strengthening Stratford's culture and tourism cachet

To the Community:

- Attracting a post-secondary institution to Stratford is part of the city's long-term economic development plan
- Investment will follow through research collaborations, incubators and business start-ups, particularly in the field of new media
- Stratford's hospitality and retail sectors, busiest during the Festival season, will benefit from the fall-winter presence of students, staff and faculty in the community
- The Festival will gain a desired partner and additional facilities to develop for adult learning

To the Students:

- Students from Canada, the U.S. and abroad will benefit from being part of Stratford's uniquely enriched cultural milieu
- They will have advanced preparation in two critical areas – Global Business and Interactive Media – the intersection of which promises to define economic opportunity in the coming decades
- Students will enjoy the advantages of an enriched college while drawing on the research and support resources of UW, only a 35-minute drive away

STATE OF PLANNING

The university, city and festival signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* on October 16, 2006.

Under development:

- an academic plan
- preliminary budgeting
- identification of funding sources
- economic impact analysis
- financial feasibility study

Early drafts of the facility plan call for a building project of \$30 million requiring 25-30 acres for future expansion.

The university is meeting with potential community partners (library, YMCA) to explore leveraging the university investment to benefit Stratford.

The university is honing an academic plan based on the unique qualities of Stratford, the need to attract students to the campus, and the opportunity to contribute to the long-term economic viability of Stratford and region.

Academic Programs Proposed

Interactive Media

- New media has been identified as one of the major employment/business growth areas in the 21st century
- Students will get an extensive social science and humanities background in media and communication studies and will gain an understanding of the practical applications of new media

Global Business

- This program offers a unique approach to the study of business leadership and development, focusing on the realities and challenges of Canada's position in a global commercial environment
- Students will pursue advanced study of other cultures, learn about the challenges of international commerce and gain an appreciation of the operation of international businesses
- Students will have an international internship or practicum

The Model

UW is proposing a standalone undergraduate campus, in the model of academically enriched U.S. liberal arts colleges such as Swarthmore and Middlebury colleges, but with a 21st-century approach to academic programming, career preparation and a commitment to developing regional and national leaders.

- Enrolment: an initial target of 1,000 students spread over four years, possibly growing to 3,500 students in 35 years
- Featured: small classes, close faculty-student interaction, strong student support and a rich extracurricular life
- Student experience: closely integrated with the Stratford Festival and other local resources to best capitalize on the rich cultural traditions of the Stratford community

UW-Stratford will attract a balance of international and Canadian students to create a campus that fosters cultural inclusiveness, international awareness and social responsibility.

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

"Banff East"

We envisage a "Banff East" conference-and-courses operation, capitalizing on the attractiveness of the Stratford setting and UW's excellent reputation for professional engagement and preparation.

Cultural programming and cultural management will feature prominently, but all UW faculties and schools can offer short courses, training sessions, symposia, and conferences at the UW-Stratford location, held during the Festival season and partnering with the Festival for guest speakers and other enrichment opportunities.

Research Centre: New Economy in Rural and Small-Town Canada

This proposed Institute, rooted in New Media studies, would gather academics to study the impact of the technology revolution on small town and rural life.

Stratford, in Perth County, is a perfect locale as Ontario's largest provincial rural riding.

The institute would be forward-looking and work with small towns and rural areas to research concerns and develop strategies.