

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we move into forward into spring - a season of renewal, growth, and new possibilities - I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments of the past year and to thank all those who contribute so generously to the strength of our retiree community.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our board members, whose time, energy, and thoughtful leadership continue to drive the success of the University of Guelph Retirees Association. Their willingness to serve our members and support the ongoing work of the Association is deeply appreciated.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Peter Krell for his service to the board. Peter has served 6 years on the board including a term as president. A "huge" thank you to him for his many contributions and steadfast commitment to UGRA over the years. I am also pleased to report that our members responded enthusiastically to our recent call for board participation. As a result, we now have a full complement of directors for the 2026-27 year - a strong indication of the continued engagement and vitality of our retiree community.

This past year has been one of considerable activity and progress for the Association. Both our Fall and Spring Forums were very well attended and featured excellent speakers whose presentations were warmly received by



members attending both in person and online. These events continue to highlight the importance of lifelong learning, thoughtful dialogue, and social connection within our retiree community.

We have also been pleased to strengthen our linkages and collaborations with Alumni Affairs and the College and University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC), opening the door to new opportunities for engagement and cooperation across the university community. Initial steps have also been taken to highlight the potential involvement of our retiree community in the University of Guelph's future capital campaign.

Our members continue to demonstrate remarkable generosity and commitment to the broader community. Retirees contributed an impressive \$112,505 to the recent United Way Campaign, reflecting once again the spirit of service that characterizes so many of our retirees.

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Did You Know



UGRA

Editor: Cathy Ralston

www.ugra.ca

Annual General Meeting | Thursday, June 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Arboretum Centre (doors open at 9:30 a.m.) or by Zoom (will open at 9:30 a.m.)

10 a.m. Keynote Address: "Hey, Take a Hike! The Bruce Trail and the Power of Volunteerism"

Presented by Rich Moccia, Professor (retired),
Department of Animal Biosciences

Annual General Meeting Agenda (approximately 10:45 a.m.)

Welcome and Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the June 19, 2025 AGM

(<https://ugra.ca/system/files/AGM-Minutes-2025-DRAFT.pdf>)

Business Arising from the Minutes of the 2025 AGM

Reports from the Executive Committee

- President's report
- Treasurer's report, report of the reviewer and nomination of the reviewer for 2026
- Activities/newsletter report
- Membership report and communications
- Scholarship Endowment Report
- Constitutional Report
- United Way

Election of the Directors

Questions and Comments from Members

President's Remarks

Other Business

Adjournment

UGRA 2025 Operating Statement and 2026 Budget

| Receipts | 2025 | | 2026 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Budget | Actuals | Budget |
| Member Contributions | \$4,750 | \$8,623 | \$7,500 |
| Interest Income | 340 | 402 | 180 |
| Ad Revenue & Misc. | 4,560 | 4,425 | 4,550 |
| Total Revenue | \$9,650 | \$13,450 | \$12,230 |
| Expenditures | | | |
| Newsletters | \$5,700 | \$6,004 | \$6,600 |
| Website | 1,500 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Board Meetings | 70 | 68 | 100 |
| CURAC Membership | 300 | 300 | 300 |
| CURAC Conference | 100 | 0 | 3,000 |
| Office and Bank Fees | 335 | 263 | 355 |
| AGM | 890 | 796 | 1,125 |
| Fall Forum | 890 | 719 | 1,125 |
| Spring Forum | 890 | 594 | 1,125 |
| Total Expenses | \$10,6750 | \$9,745 | \$14,730 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | (-\$1,025) | (\$3,705) | (-\$2,500) |



RECENT RETIREES

April 30, 2026

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cathy Bulger | Hospitality Services |
| Cathy Ceccato | Hospitality Services |
| Brenda Duyf | LSD Agriculture and Food Laboratory |
| Dorothy Goettler | Student Wellness Services |
| Adrian Hollingbury | Hospitality Services |
| Zaklina Januseva | LSD AFL Diagnostics Unit |
| Gene Phelan | Hospitality Services |
| Roxann Resch | Hospitality Services |
| Deidre Rose | Sociology and Anthropology |
| Nader Soltani | Ridgetown - Research |
| Peter Wedel | Student Wellness Services |
| Joseph Yankulov | Molecular and Cellular Biology |



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CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada)

Request for Writers for a Series of Articles in the 'Academic for Life' Column in University Affairs

Since 2021, University Affairs has included a column in their newsletter called Academic for Life. It is available on the last Friday of each month. Joe Norris' recent (April 24, 2026) article "Creating retirement, step by step" (<https://universityaffairs.ca/category/career-advice/academic-for-life>) is currently in the top-5 most read articles on the University Affairs website (<https://universityaffairs.ca>).

The Deputy Editor of the University Affairs newsletter is putting together a summer series of point/counterpoint opinion pieces of various topics of interest to the CURAC audience, and is just starting to recruit writers. One of the issues that elicited lively discussion at the recent AGM was the question of whether there should be a mandatory retirement age for professors. If you might be interested in arguing for either the 'pro' or the 'con' side, please send a message to ugra@uoguelph.ca and we will pass your name along to CURAC.

CURAC Events

To learn about events offered by CURAC partners, subscribe to the CURAC events calendar (https://curac.ca/en/home#events_calendar). There is a new page on the UGRA website under the CURAC tab listing groups that post videos of past events and workshops (<https://ugra.ca/curac/videos-curac-partners>).

CURAC Affinity Partners

CURAC offers several affinity partners that benefit both CURAC and individuals (<https://curac.ca/en/member-benefits>).



UNITED WAY

By Julie Hutchins and Heather Bailey

From Julie

My time as your United Way representative has ended. After eight years, it is time to move on to retirement! I have thoroughly enjoyed this role working with some amazing people both for the University, and Guelph, Wellington, and Dufferin United Way. Most of all, I am amazed at how generous the retirees of the University continues to step up to help so many people in need living in our community. Times are so uncertain right now, and charities are struggling to help those who need it most. It is so wonderful to see that the University of Guelph retirees make such a significant difference!

From Heather

I am happy to be following on in Julie's footsteps as the United Way rep – although her shoes may be difficult to fill.

Before I retired in June 2024, I was part of the UW team in Animal Biosciences along with Rich Moccia. Prior to COVID, we held many events to raise funds. While I know it will be different with the UGRA group, I hope to help retirees feel like you are still part of the University and Guelph Wellington Dufferin United Way campaigns and that your donations are necessary and important.



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Happy Spring everyone. Recently, air passenger satisfaction has plummeted for many reasons, including many airlines not keeping their promises with regards to cancelled or redirected flights, and not honouring purchased advanced seat selection. The Canadian Air Passenger Bill of Rights to the rescue - maybe or maybe not. I recently read an article in TravelPulse Canada that Ottawa is stepping in to make airlines accountable for their breaches. Here's a snippet from the article entitled "Help is on the Way: Ottawa Announces Changes to the APPR":

"Canada's beleaguered Air Passenger Protection Regulations (APPR) are getting an overhaul, aimed at shoring up what many see as toothless laws that don't go far enough to protect passengers. Federal Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon made the announcement at a press conference at the Ottawa Airport on Friday, May 1, 2026. "We hear repeatedly, the regulations themselves are too complex," said MacKinnon. "We need a practical regime that safeguards passengers' rights when travel does not go as planned."

Among the changes is the quadrupling of the fine an airline can be subject to for not following the laws - skyrocketing from the

current \$250,000 maximum fine to \$1 million. Additionally, the current federal gag order prohibits travellers from publicly discussing their complaints will be eliminated.

Also announced was the government's intention to hire a third party to adjudicate claims, relieving the CTA of its complaint backlog that hovers at 100,000. In April, Air Canada announced that it would be piloting a third-party resolution solution (<https://www.travelpulse.ca/news/airlines-airports/air-canada-tests-faster-path-for-passenger-claims-with-adr-pilot>) as well.

Air passengers' rights advocate Gábor Lukács questioned if this would actually help, calling the move to outsource complaint resolution "a PR stunt." MacKinnon, however, is confident in the changes. "We put in place a system that in hindsight was onerous, expensive, took too long.... We are going to change that system," MacKinnon said. "If you are one of the 100,000 or so people involved in this backlog, help is on the way."

Let's hope that these changes will actually give air travellers help with protection that have been ignored for so long.

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Spring 2026

UGRA

Report on the Spring Forum Speaker Every Living Thing: Mapping Earth's Biodiversity Before It Disappears

Dr. Paul Hebert | Notes by Rich Moccia and ChatGPT

If you would like to watch the full presentation, please go to the following website: <https://ugra.ca/news/2026/04/recording-spring-2026-ugra-fall-forum-now-available>

In a captivating and deeply personal presentation, Dr. Paul Hebert - founder and CEO of the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics at the University of Guelph - shared his lifelong mission to document and protect all life on Earth before much of it disappears. Introduced as the “GOAT of biodiversity” for his extraordinary scientific impact, Dr. Hebert combined humor, urgency, and scientific vision in describing one of the largest biodiversity research programs ever undertaken.

A Planet Experiencing Rapid Loss

Dr. Hebert opened with a sobering assessment of the current biodiversity crisis. Bird populations have declined dramatically over the last 50 years, insect numbers have collapsed in many regions, and extinction rates continue to accelerate. He described humanity as “burning the books of life before we've even read them,” noting that every species carries an enormous amount of genetic information that may hold future value for medicine, technology, agriculture, and ecosystem resilience.



He posited that society protects libraries and historical records with great care, yet continues to destroy species whose genomes contain vastly more information than any human-written text.

DNA Barcoding: A Revolutionary Tool

The centerpiece of Dr. Hebert's work is a method called DNA barcoding, pioneered at the University of Guelph in 2003. Inspired partly by retail product barcodes, the method uses a tiny segment of DNA to rapidly identify species. Rather than relying on slow and expensive visual classification methods, scientists can now distinguish species using short DNA sequences.

This breakthrough transformed biodiversity science. Dr.

Hebert explained that traditional approaches might require a thousand years and enormous expense to catalog Earth's species. DNA barcoding dramatically accelerates the process and has already been used successfully on more than one million species worldwide.

Today, the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics processes 3 million specimens annually using advanced sequencing technologies and global collaborations involving researchers from hundreds of locations, and 40 nations around the world.

Building a “Library of Life”

Dr. Hebert described major international initiatives led from Guelph, including the Barcode 500K and BIOSCAN projects, that aim to create a comprehensive global biodiversity reference library. These programs not only identify species but also map interactions among organisms used to monitor ecosystem health.



One of the most exciting discoveries, he noted, is just how little we still know about life and all the species interactions on the planet. Scientists estimate that roughly 90% of multicellular species remain undocumented. DNA barcoding is revealing hidden species at an unprecedented speed, with discovery rates now vastly exceeding traditional taxonomy approaches.

Canada's Leadership in Global Biodiversity Science

Dr. Hebert emphasized that Canada - and particularly the University of Guelph - has become a global leader in biodiversity genomics. He concluded with a call for greater international investment in protecting Earth's “life support system,” arguing that understanding biodiversity is essential if humanity hopes to live sustainably with nature.

His final message was both hopeful and urgent: while we cannot save what we do not know, new technologies now give us the opportunity to document, understand, and perhaps preserve the extraordinary diversity of life that still remains on planet earth.

I am equally pleased to report that the UGRA Scholarship Fund now exceeds \$127,000. In addition, important steps have been taken to improve the accessibility of the scholarship program so it can continue to support deserving students in meaningful ways for years to come.

Over the past year, we also undertook a member survey to better understand priorities and opportunities for the future. Feedback from that survey has now been carefully collated, and the board is actively working on several of the emerging recommendations.

Financial sustainability has also been an important focus. We have taken significant steps to strengthen the long-term stability of the Association, including a notable increase in paid memberships. In addition, we have begun transitioning our newsletter from a print format to a digital publication. This change will result in substantial annual savings while also opening the door to expanded advertising opportunities and additional editorial contributions from members.

As an organization, we have faced - and will continue to face - important challenges. Issues surrounding benefits and pension plans will require our careful attention and steady communication in the months ahead. As the retirement landscape continues to evolve, UGRA remains committed to providing clear updates, thoughtful advocacy, and strong support for all members of our community.

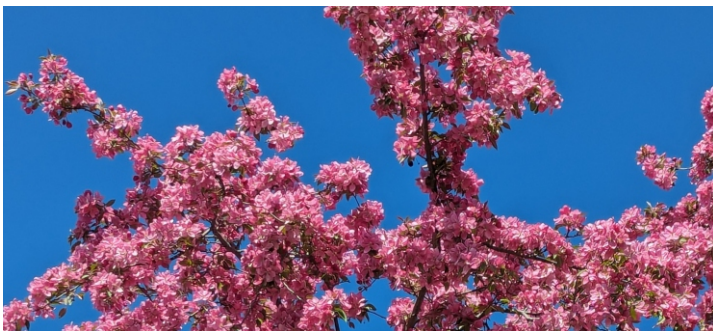
Finally, I would like to remind members that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18, from 10 a.m. to noon at the University Arboretum. Members may attend either in person or online. Additional information will be circulated by email as the meeting date approaches. My term as president will come to an end at the upcoming AGM. It has been both an honour and a privilege to serve on the board of UGRA and to help provide leadership and direction for our organization. Most importantly, it has been a genuine pleasure to serve you - our members - during your retirement years.

Over the past several years, I have greatly valued the friendships, conversations, and shared commitment that make this retiree community so special. I remain deeply appreciative of the support, encouragement, and dedication shown by our members and fellow board colleagues alike. I am confident that UGRA will continue to thrive as a vibrant and caring organization in the years ahead. I wish you all a wonderful spring season and look forward to seeing many of you in the months ahead.

Warm regards,
Clarence Swanton



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Passings

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Douglas Odegard | January 23, 2026 | Mary Glen | April 1, 2026 |
| Leona McKendry | March 20, 2026 | Claude Macorin | April 7, 2026 |
| Trieste Embro | March 24, 2026 | John Fitzgibbon | April 12, 2026 |
| Ursula Rodrigues | March 25, 2026 | Calvin Hutchins | April 16, 2026 |
| David Sandals | March 27, 2026 | Michael Little | April 25, 2026 |
| Nancy Bligh | March 28, 2026 | Mae Ellig | April 26, 2026 |
| Thomas Funk | March 29, 2026 | | |



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Keep being you **Love your ears**

University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership (2026) Form

YES! I want to help promote the welfare of retirees and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University by contributing to the UGRA's administrative costs.

My contribution is \$.....

Name..... Date.....

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City/Province..... Postal Code.....

Email..... Phone.....

(Note that the email address will be used for UGRA communications only.)

Please make your cheque payable to the University of Guelph Retirees Association. Mail this form with your cheque to: University of Guelph Retirees Association • PO Box 48-4916 • University of Guelph • Guelph Ontario, N1G 2W1

Electronic Payment **PayPal**

Instead of mailing in a cheque, you can now make a secure donation to UGRA electronically using PayPal and your credit card on our web page at: <https://ugra.ca/join-us>. You can also use e-transfer to pay using the email address ugraEtransfers@gmail.com. If you are new to e-transfers, we have provided a short primer <https://ugra.ca/join-us>

UGRA

Spring 2026

How to Contact Us

Don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, comments, and concerns. To advocate on your behalf, we truly want, and need, to hear from you. Here are the ways to contact us – don't forget to provide your name and contact information in your message so we can follow up promptly.

By Email:

ugra@uoguelph.ca

By using the UGRA website:

<https://ugra.ca>

By Letter:

University of Guelph
Retirees Association
P.O. Box 48-4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Did you have questions?

If you have questions about your benefits, please contact Sun Life by checking your claim at <https://www.sunnet.sunlife.com/signin/mysunlife/home.wca> or calling 1-800-361-6212. If you have questions about your pension or to change your address or status, please check out this website: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/retire>. If you have other questions or concerns, please contact UGRA at ugra@uoguelph.ca and we will see if we can help.

Did you know?

The main objectives of the University of Guelph Retirees Association are to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University of Guelph and to advocate for our members in matters such as access to university facilities and resources on retiree benefits. The UGRA works hard to keep our members up to date on the University community through emails, newsletters and meetings and, from time to time, also shares information that is of more general interest to retirees.

All UGRA members are also members of CURAC which offers many benefits including discounts for insurance and travel, as well as access to educational events at other participating institutions. For details, check their website <https://curac.ca>.

The UGRA is run by a group of fellow retirees who freely volunteer their time and talents. The funds needed to run the UGRA come mostly from our members' contributions. With your support, we can maintain an electronic presence, produce the newsletters, as well as hold the AGM, Spring and Fall Forums, and other events and activities to keep you connected to the university and fellow retirees. You can send feedback by email or physical mail.

Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA in 2026

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, our informative website (<https://ugra.ca/>), and our various on-campus functions throughout the year. An annual contribution of \$30 from you goes a long way in sustaining the UGRA so we can continue to work on your behalf.

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