



BRANTFORD TOWN AND GOWN COMMITTEE

Brantford is home to three post-secondary institutions: Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College and Six Nations Polytechnic. In total, approximately 1500 students graduate from these institutions every year contributing qualified candidates to the workforce in a wide range of professional specializations including: early childhood education, skilled trades, front-line health care, justice, social work, education and applied computing.

Brantford's post-secondary institutions play a vital role in shaping the city's social and cultural life. Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College, and Six Nations Polytechnic bring students, creativity, and energy that strengthen community vibrancy, foster inclusion, and expand access to arts, culture, and lifelong learning. Their partnerships with local organizations support volunteerism, social innovation, and community well-being, helping make Brantford a more connected, dynamic, and collaborative city. (Wilfrid Laurier University, 2024; Conestoga College, 2024).

In addition, both Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College have recently published community impact reports, quantifying the contribution of students, faculty and staff to the local, provincial and national economies (Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, 2023; Wilfrid Laurier University, 2025).





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What is a Town and Gown Committee?

Maintaining productive, long-term relationships between post-secondary institutions, the municipality, local service organizations and the private sector can be challenging. It requires the partners to navigate competing priorities, limited resources and changing policy and funding landscapes. Town and Gown Committees can help solve these challenges, serving as a central place for information sharing, problem-solving and collaboration.

The Brantford Town and Gown Committee was officially established in August 2025, with the following member organizations:

- Brantford Public Library
- Chamber of Commerce of Brantford Brant
- City of Brantford
- Conestoga College
- Conestoga Students Inc.
- Downtown BIA
- Six Nations Polytechnic
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union





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A History of Partnerships and Investment

Since welcoming Wilfrid Laurier University in 1999, followed by Conestoga College in 2012 and Six Nations Polytechnic in 2015, the City of Brantford has played a foundational role in supporting the growth of the post-secondary sector. Through strategic investments and collaborative planning, the City has become a vibrant education hub, attracting world-class researchers, faculty and students from Canada and around the world.

For over 25 years, the municipality has supported the vibrancy and growth of the post-secondary sector through capital investment, joint initiatives and advocacy, with key examples noted below:

Expansion and Growth

- Carnegie Building acquired by WLU (1998)
- Odeon Building acquired by WLU (2004)
- One Market acquired by WLU (2014)
- Laurier Brantford YMCA Opened (2018)





BRANTFORD TOWN AND GOWN COMMITTEE



Public Spaces and Amenities

- Harmony Square (2008)
- Victoria Park Square Heritage District Upgrade (2014)
- Brant's Crossing Skate Park & Amphitheater (2017)
- 'New' City Hall Opens (2021)
- Civic Centre Upgrades (2023)
- Launch of Brantford Bulldogs (2023)
- Community Peace Mural (2024)
- Phil Hartman Mural (2024)
- Downtown Performance Space (2024)
- Sport & Entertainment Centre Approved (2024)
- Entertainment District Planning Begins (2024)
- Downtown Revitalization Construction Begins (2025)

Safety and Security

- Downtown Constables (2021–present)
- Mobile Security Team (2021–present)
- Expanded By-law Enforcement (2022–present)
- CCTV Installation (2021–2024)
- Encampment Outreach Initiatives (2023–present)
- SafeHawk and Hawkwalk
- Walksafe and Friend Walk





BRANTFORD TOWN AND GOWN COMMITTEE



Research and Collaboration

- Brantford Crisis Response Team Research (2015)
- Newcomer Connections Research (2018)
- Big Data Conference (2018)
- Brantford Downtown Outreach Team Program Development and Evaluation (2019–2020)
- Building Safer Communities (2023–2026)
- Annual Community Connections Conference (2023–2025)
- Annual Hub for Community Solutions Summit (2023–present)
- Ontario Works: Service Navigator (2024–2025)
- Brantford 2050: City Vision (2024)
- College-Within-a-School Partnership, Conestoga College and Grand Erie District School Board (2025)
- The Social Welfare and Experience of Newcomer Students Using Public Transit (2024–2025)
- Brantford Food Security Forum (2025)

Culture and Inclusion

- Neighbourhood Changemakers (2016–present)
- Pieces for Peace (2023–present)
- International Film Series (2023–present)
- Fusion Beats (2023–present)
- Beats and Eats Festival (2023–present)
- Winter Fun Fest (2025)
- Culture Royalty Gala in celebration of Black History month (2025)
- Indigenous Matters micro-credential (2025)





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Purpose of the Action Plan

The 2026-2027 Town and Gown Action Plan provides a clear sense of purpose that guides the work of the Town and Gown Committee to accomplish tangible goals and specific deliverables.

Developing the Action Plan

In October 2025, members of the Town and Gown Committee participated in a facilitated workshop to develop a two-year action plan, with 4 priority outcomes and 16 actions.

Guiding Principles

Within the session the group identified the following guiding principles:

- Trust and Transparency
- Collaboration and Inclusion
- Innovation and Pride
- Safety and Belonging



Outcome #1: Attract Students

Action 1.1

Consult with students to learn what they love about studying in Brantford and what would improve their experiences.

Action 1.2

Launch a marketing campaign to showcase the reasons students enjoy studying in Brantford.

Action 1.3

Jointly support the development of local recruitment events, focused on secondary school students and other prospective post-secondary applicants.



Outcome #2: Create Desirable Student Experiences

Action 2.1

Utilize survey results to learn how to best communicate with students and involve them in community activities.

Action 2.2

Work together to promote inclusive and culturally safe spaces where all students feel welcome (including exploring current research and trends related to student experiences of discrimination and bias).

Action 2.3

Review and update digital local resource guides to support students (e.g., housing and tenant information).

Action 2.4

Explore the Feasibility of a student discount program at local merchants.

Action 2.5

Jointly support the development of 'week-night' events that would attract students.



Outcome #3: Keep Graduates in Brantford

Action 3.1

Connect more students to local employment and volunteer opportunities through time-limited co-op, internship, and placement programs, as well as long-term community-based volunteer programs.

Action 3.2

Connect more students with research opportunities through collaborative research projects.

Action 3.3

Consult with local business and service providers to better understand the current opportunities and challenges when hiring recent graduates, as well as current youth employment trends.

Action 3.4

Seek out grants and other resources to support local research and opportunities that help connect recent graduates to the local job market (e.g., Learn and Stay Bursary Program)



Outcome #4: Strengthen our Partnerships

Action 4.1

Create a report that highlights the economic and social contributions of local post-secondary Institutions.

Action 4.2

Jointly advocate for funding and resources to support a strong, local post-secondary sector.

Action 4.3

Share information and resources to support joint advocacy and resource planning.

Action 4.4

Jointly promote events, amenities and activities for post-secondary students.

