



CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
A MODERNIST MASTERWORK
BUILT FOR BELONGING

Case for Support



THERE ARE PLACES WHERE LONG-HELD TRADITIONS MEET CURIOSITY, AND COMMUNITY OPENS INTO POSSIBILITY.

Champlain College has carried that spirit forward since the day it opened.

Trent University's founders imagined a place where learning would feel personal and grounded in community. Peterborough residents rallied behind this vision and helped establish a university built on the collegiate tradition, where students live and learn among peers, mentors, and faculty who know them.

There's a reason Champlain College remains one of the most distinctive communities at Trent. Rooted in tradition yet shaped by global perspectives, it's a place where students balance excellence with experience, learning not only in classrooms but also from the people around them. Champlain encourages students to dare – to discover, to embrace adventure, to reflect, to engage – and in doing so, it becomes a home for many who seek connection and possibility.



I believe a university's physical environment is a fundamental part of the educational experience. A quality education requires an understanding and appreciation of beauty and design. Ron Thom conceived the buildings of Trent to grow out of the landscape. It's a superb example of a conceptual architecture that is respectful of the location."

Thomas H.B. Symons, Trent University Founding President

A LANDMARK BORN FROM TRENT'S FOUNDING IDEALS

When the idea of a new liberal arts university took root in Peterborough in the late 1950s, founding president Thomas H.B. Symons sought an architect who could express Trent's educational ideals through thoughtful design.

Architect Ron Thom's craftsmanship and sensitivity to place immediately stood out. He was appointed master planner for the new campus and entrusted with an extraordinary mandate: to shape not only the buildings, but the pathways, interiors, furnishings, and landscape that would define a complete collegiate environment.

Champlain College emerged as the centerpiece of Thom's plan. Built with aggregate-rubble walls that evoke timeless strength, Champlain comprises residences, seminar rooms, the former master's residence (now Alumni House), a bell tower that anchors the site, and the expansive Great Hall at its core. Thom combined natural materials with traditional forms interpreted through a modernist lens, creating a college that feels grounded in its landscape yet unmistakably of its era. Winding corridors, courtyards, and views of the Otonabee River echo his belief that architecture should encourage reflection and spirited engagement.





Champlain's motto, *Continuer nos découvertes* (Continue our discoveries), reflects a shared cultural heritage shaped by exploration and collective learning. Situated along the Otonabee River, a historic waterway travelled by Samuel de Champlain in 1615, Champlain College honours the French-Canadian presence that helped link peoples and places across what is now Québec and Ontario, and that continues to shape Canada's national story.

Today, Champlain College consciously situates itself at the intersection of Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg, English, and French-Canadian cultures. Recognizing the Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg as the traditional inhabitants of the territory on which Trent University sits, and Anishnaabemowin as the original language of this land, the College acknowledges the complexity of shared histories while embracing ongoing reflection and reconciliation. In doing so, Champlain remains a living, evolving community – one that honours its past and creates inclusive spaces where students are encouraged to reflect and engage.



“ I lived in Champlain for two years and after I moved into town, it was my second home as many friends stayed in residence their entire time at Trent. It’s always the first place I stop when I visit Trent, and it always brings back a flood of memories. The mixture of concrete and wood in all the public spaces was unique to Champlain, and being awakened at 6:00 a.m. by the rowing team going by under my window every fall was always a treat!”

David Evans '76 (Champlain College)



A GATHERING PLACE AT A PIVOTAL MOMENT

The Great Hall has always been a place where students find belonging. It remains the setting where much of Champlain life unfolds.

Throughout the day, students return to its long wooden tables to share meals, study, talk, or take a quiet moment for themselves. Light pours through the tall windows. Conversations rise and soften. College dinners, community events, Remembrance Day ceremonies, weddings, and academic displays fill the room with energy and purpose.

Like all heritage spaces, however, it requires thoughtful care to endure.

Recent work has honoured the Hall's character and craftsmanship. Window restoration has reinstated the original bottle-green finish. Accessibility upgrades continue to reduce barriers across the College. Inside the Great Hall, refinished tables, restored flags, cleaned light fixtures, new seating, and heritage-sensitive cabinetry reflect the University's commitment to stewardship.

Yet the most significant work still lies ahead. Restoring the Great Hall roof and completing the next phase of heritage renewal are essential to protecting this landmark and ensuring it remains a place of gathering and learning for decades to come.





**BUILT BOLDLY. CRAFTED CAREFULLY.
PRESERVED TOGETHER.**

Spaces like the Great Hall do more than house activity – they shape how students experience belonging. When a room is warm, filled with light, accessible to all, and designed to support conversation and learning, it becomes a place students return to again and again.

Trent is seeking philanthropic support to restore the Great Hall roof and renew key heritage features, bringing this iconic landmark back to its original glory. Your support is key to renewing and reimagining priority heritage projects like the Great Hall revitalization. While government funding underpins the University’s core mission, philanthropy makes it possible to care for the historic spaces that define the Trent experience. With donor partnership, these iconic places can be preserved, strengthened, and passed on to future generations.

The roof is the most urgent component of this work. Renewed in copper, as originally envisioned, it represents an investment in lasting stewardship – protecting the Hall’s integrity while honouring the craftsmanship and spirit that generations of students associate with Champlain.



The next phase of renewal will care for the Hall from the inside out. Structural, geothermal, moisture, and insulation upgrades will protect the building while improving comfort and sustainability. Thoughtful interior design updates, refinished floors, fresh paint, and restored surfaces will renew the warmth and character students associate with Champlain. New doors and windows will enhance connection to the landscape, while modern acoustic panels and audiovisual systems will ensure the Great Hall continues to support teaching, performances, ceremonies, and student-led gatherings.

Even beyond its walls, the renewal of Champlain imagines a new gathering place along the Otonabee River. A future waterfront patio, connected to the accessible Founders Walk, will link the C elie Pub and the Seasoned Spoon Caf e and open the Great Hall to the landscape that has long defined it. Designed as an outdoor extension of student life, this space will invite shared meals and moments of connection – where conversations linger, friendships take shape, and the river becomes part of the everyday Champlain experience.

For today’s Trent students, these enhancements mean a Great Hall that meets them where they are: inclusive, inspiring, and ready for the ways they learn and live.

This work is an invitation to steward a place that has shaped generations – to protect its legacy while ensuring it continues to foster connection and community for those who will call Champlain home in the years ahead.





RECOGNIZING A LASTING IMPACT

For decades, Champlain College and the Great Hall have served as a touchstone for the campus community, welcoming students, faculty, alumni, and visitors. With your support, preserving this heritage space helps safeguard Canada's academic and cultural legacy for the next generation of leaders.

It would be our sincere pleasure to celebrate your generosity through a new, thoughtfully designed recognition element within the College, honouring the lasting difference your support makes for students.

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