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About Saugeen-Maitland Hall Residence

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Saugeen-Maitland has been home to over 50,000 students and alumni over the past 50 years, each with their own unique experiences, stories, and recollections of what Residence life at Saugeen meant to them. As a University, we are proud of the evolution we have fostered at Saugeen. While it's over-glorified and storied days have often captured people's interest, it has become a residence community that houses Western's best and brightest.

Having Saugeen as one of the largest student residences in the province, the University learnt first-hand the importance of focusing on the student experience outside of the classroom. In the 70s and 80s, the residence system at Western University only included Delaware Hall, Medway-Sydenham Hall (which was treated as two separate residences at the time), and Saugeen-Maitland Hall. During this time, over half of students living in residence would have called Saugeen-Maitland Hall their home.

Historically, Residences were only seen as a place to eat and sleep. This often led to unstructured downtime, which resulted in students finding their own ways to entertain themselves. In many ways, if Saugeen didn't have the past that it did, we wouldn't have learnt the importance of focusing on a holistic student experience, ensuring our students in residence had opportunities to learn outside the classroom through a structured Residence Life program.

Saugeen-Maitland Hall was ground central for many innovative and progressive initiatives over the years that supported the student experience and strengthened the focus on safety for its residents. These included:

- Being one of the first smoke-free student residences in Ontario
- Investing in a sophisticated fire alarm system in the mid-80s
- Having men and women living together in the same building, when Delaware Hall was the women's Residence, and Medway and Sydenham Halls still the men's residences. This paved the way for the first co-ed floors on campus being at Saugeen-Maitland Hall
- Organizing programming for students to assist in their development of the whole person, especially around important life skills such as safe alcohol consumption
- Introducing the Academic Programmer, a student leader position responsible for academic and leadership support within the building

The brand and reputation of the residences played (and to this day continue to play), a pivotal role in the recruitment of students to the University. These changes and innovations that were implemented in the late-80s and early-90s would have also coincided with the University's efforts to raise the entering average of incoming high-school students, and the introduction of the first-year residence guarantee.

Our student demographics have changed considerably since the late-80s. The entering averages of incoming high-school students would have been in the mid to high 70s (below the provincial average), compared to our current incoming students who are enrolling at Western with some of the highest entering averages in the province, around 90%. Our students are much more international: Western has grown from a regionally-focused University into a world-recognized institution with 15% of its students coming from over 120 countries. Societally, drinking patterns have also evolved; with the elimination of



Grade 13 in Ontario high schools in 2003, over 90% of our students now arrive on campus under the age of 19. 20% of our students in residence self-identify and choose to abstain from alcohol all year.

Like all residences, Saugeen-Maitland Hall is a great place to live while studying at Western. We are proud to offer a comprehensive residence life program, featuring live-in student leaders who provide support and mentorship. We continue to organize many programs and activities to support our student's academic success and personal growth, such as exam review sessions, Professor Meet and Greet, group outings and social events. With Saugeen being our largest residence, we often say that 'big means more opportunities'. For a building with a population of over 1,200 students, Saugeen has the largest RA, Don and Soph team to support its students, more leadership and volunteer opportunities, more programs and activities, and more food choices and selections.

With its rich culture and storied history, we're excited that the residence is approaching its 50th anniversary milestone, and look forward to sharing in the next 50 years ahead.