Invasive Alien Species Institute

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identifies invasive alien species (IAS) as the second most significant threat to biodiversity, after habitat loss. The impact of IAS on native ecosystems, habitats and species can be severe and often irreversible.

To support critical research protecting biodiversity, $5M in donations will create the Invasive Alien Species Institute in the College of Biological Science (CBS).

Impact Statement:

IAS cause billions of dollars in direct losses, through costs of containment and control, production losses, and lost market access each year. The annual cost just to Canada from IAS has been estimated to be between $13 and $35 billion. IAS are particularly damaging to Canadian freshwater ecosystems, agriculture and forestry.

There exists a significant need to train professionals who are able to conduct research in, detect, control, and manage IAS, throughout the world. The University of Guelph has the expertise to produce the next generations of leaders in this field.

Goals:

The Invasive Alien Species Institute will unite a critical mass of expertise from more than 35 faculty members at the University of Guelph with research interests spanning five departments/schools and three colleges. Current expertise study microbe, plant, and animal invaders, in managed and unmanaged aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

By creating an institute, the University of Guelph can launch a number of educational and outreach activities around IAS including:

- An International Invasive Species Scholars Program
- An Invasive Species Summer Intern Program for undergraduates and high school students
- Monthly Distinguished Speakers in Invasive Species Biology and Management Series
- Biennial advances in IAS Conference
- Collaborative graduate program for thesis MSc and PhD students
- A coursework masters

Learn more at alumni.uoguelph.ca/funding-priorities or contact alumni@uoguelph.ca