



ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

STEWARDSHIP REPORT SUMMER 2017



The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI):

- Develops leaders
- Initiates dialogue
- Supports collaboration
- Identifies and amplifies key issues and opportunities
- Builds organizational capacity in rural and northern Ontario

ROI delivers one of the longest-running leadership development programs in the world – the **Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP)**.

This **Stewardship Report** highlights how support from sponsors helps to build stronger leaders, more resilient organizations and vibrant communities.



THE ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (AALP)

Since 1984, AALP has had a solid track record of developing strong leaders.

Over 470 men and women – current and emerging leaders in Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sectors and in communities across rural and northern Ontario – have benefited from this 19-month executive leadership development program. AALP provides these leaders with the skills, knowledge, broad perspective and positive attitude required to be effective leaders now and into the future. Graduates are strong, capable individuals who take on leadership roles within their communities, businesses, associations and in the broader agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors. The most significant indicator of program performance is showcased in the achievements of our alumni, and the valuable contributions they make after the program.

Through a series of seminars, study tours, self-directed learning and distance education, AALP prepares leaders to help shape the future of their businesses, organizations and communities. AALP combines hands-on experience, introduces broad industry knowledge and exposes participants to contacts and networks that would otherwise take decades to accumulate.

The objectives of the program remain to **develop** leaders who are better prepared to **identify and overcome challenges** and to **capitalize** on emerging opportunities across the agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors.

Support from industry leaders is vital to the strength of our program. In fact, without the support of sponsors and funders, AALP would not be possible. Financial commitments from the industry are matched by a commitment from the Board and staff of ROI to achieve the program objectives and maintain exceptional quality of leadership development programming.



ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

We continue to deliver on program objectives by ensuring that seminar and study travel agendas focus on: core leadership skill development; exposure to the agri-food system and the economic, political, social, cultural and physical environment in which it operates; exploration of local, national and global issues; and personal and professional development.

AALP MILESTONES - CLASS 16

Over the past two years, 26 men and women participated in AALP and achieved the following curriculum highlights and milestones:

1. Completion of Seminars 1-8: Guelph, Peterborough, Chatham, Ottawa, Elk Lake, Toronto, Niagara Falls, London.
2. Completion of the North American Study Tour: Quebec, New York, Washington DC, Maryland and Pennsylvania (July 2016).
3. Class 16 International Study Tour: Vietnam and Thailand (February 2017).
4. Graduation of AALP Class 16 (April 2017).



AALP Graduation
April 2017

ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

During the eight seminars, Class 16 participants covered the following topics:

- Leadership theory and application
- Personality, self-understanding and development
- Human behaviour and working effectively with others
- Decision making and responsibility
- Dynamics of change
- Social, economic and political issues facing northern Ontario
- Visioning and strategic planning
- Federal government; globalization and trade
- Canadian and US government political processes, economic and trade policies, lobbying
- Political, economic and cultural comparisons
- Public speaking and presentation skills
- Facilitation, meeting management and leading groups
- Communications
- Media training and working effectively with the media
- Conflict resolution
- Getting your message across effectively
- Productivity improvement and time management
- Innovation and risk taking

Between September 2015 and April 2017, AALP Class 16 had 453 interactions with global leaders:



ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

Participants also add to their “toolbox of skills” by completing an Issues Analysis Project (IAP). The IAP is an action-based leadership project within the agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors in Ontario. Class 16 worked with the following organizations, in a consultative role, to examine an issue important to the client organization and within the industry:

- Agricorp
- Farm & Food Care Ontario
- 4-H Ontario
- Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance
- Rural Ontario Institute
- University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus



IAP Presentation
2017

EVALUATING, EVOLVING AND RE-AFFIRMING

The ROI Board of Directors and the AALP Advisory Committee proactively ensures that curriculum keeps pace with leadership, agriculture, agri-food and rural issues of the day, the advances in educational trends and the potential impact and challenges of the national and global marketplace.

AALP EVALUATION

AALP ISSUES ANALYSIS PROJECT: Measuring the Impact of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program

One Issues Analysis Project completed by a Class 16 team tasked a group with evaluating the impact of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. The group of four class members used an online survey, a filmed focus group and commodity board polling to develop their report.

The online survey conducted by the group found that:

- Participants agreed (94%) that AALP met their goals or reasons for applying.
- When asked if AALP had an impact on their personal or professional lives, 88% agreed.
- 61% of alumni stated that they currently have an active leadership position within the agricultural industry.
- On average, AALP graduates sit on 1.8 boards and/or committees, 43% of those are commodity boards.

AALP gave me the confidence to network, to reach outside my comfort zone, and to lead in a multitude of situations. It is through programs such as AALP that individuals are able to build upon their talents and strengths and better understand leadership roles within agriculture and beyond.

–AALP alumnus

Polling commodity boards, excluding companies and agencies, showed that 73 of their previous and current members were, or are, AALP graduates. At the time of the study, there were approximately 450 alumni, resulting in 16.22% who have sat, or currently sit on boards, with 18 alumni volunteering with more than one.

Roughly one-third of AALP participants are primary producers, with the remainder working for farm-related companies, government agencies, etc. Many could not serve on a commodity board. Given this, the participation of 16.22% AALP alumni on boards should be considered as a much larger percentage. Board participation data supports a positive impact of the program in providing leaders for agricultural commodity groups.

Results prove that AALP graduates step forward both to lead and to volunteer. In addition to providing leadership in agriculture by serving on commodity boards and committees, they are also leaders in their communities by sitting on town councils, volunteering with sports organizations and churches – all of which strengthen the social fabric of rural Ontario.

EARLIER EVALUATIONS: George Morris Centre Study & University of Guelph Evaluation

The Issues Analysis Project was not the first time that the Rural Ontario Institute has evaluated AALP.

In 2013, the George Morris Centre completed the study: [Social Return on Investment from AALP](#). The study reaffirmed the tremendous value of AALP to Ontario society and the economy. Social return on investment is a method to track and capture the impact a program has on the lives of its participants. The social return on investment from AALP is 25%. That means for every \$1 invested in AALP, the social return on investment is \$1.25.

In 2012, Dr. Harry Cummings and researchers from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph set out to understand, improve and renew the overall effectiveness of the program. Research was conducted between September 2012 and January 2013, which looked at the rural sectors in Ontario and provided recommendations to improve the program.

[Study results](#) showed overwhelming agreement that AALP continues to provide relevant content – based on feedback from participants and industry stakeholders. The study also provided some opportunities for changes and many of the suggestions made have now been implemented.

Both studies are available at: <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/aalpreports>.

LOOKING FORWARD...

As a result of these studies, ROI remains confident that AALP is valuable to participants and to the agriculture and agri-food sectors and rural and northern communities across Ontario.

Because of the overwhelming affirmation received, the core of the program remains the same going forward: eight face-to-face seminars, team projects, a North American Study Tour and an International Study Tour. Changes to the program have included the addition of a webinar component when possible, optional days for some of the seminars, as well as more effective use of social media. These revisions reflect the input of participants and stakeholders and the financial realities of providing the program.

Tuition for Class 17 is \$11,500 which represents approximately 1/3 of the costs required to deliver the program.

AALP was one of the best things I have ever done. The skills and perspective I gained allowed me to face future challenges with confidence and courage knowing there is always an alternative (Plan B).

Even though I have changed careers, I still use the knowledge every day in my work and in my life. The people in my class were/are such a wealth of information and inspiration.

I learned the value of contributing to build a healthy community and that everyone in an organization can be a leader.

--AALP alumnus

AALP IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

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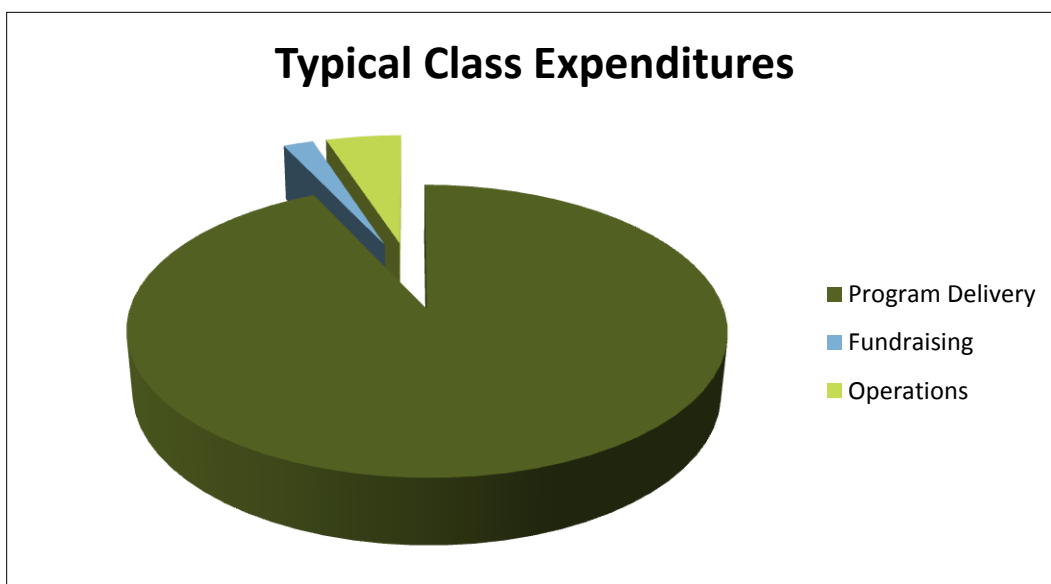
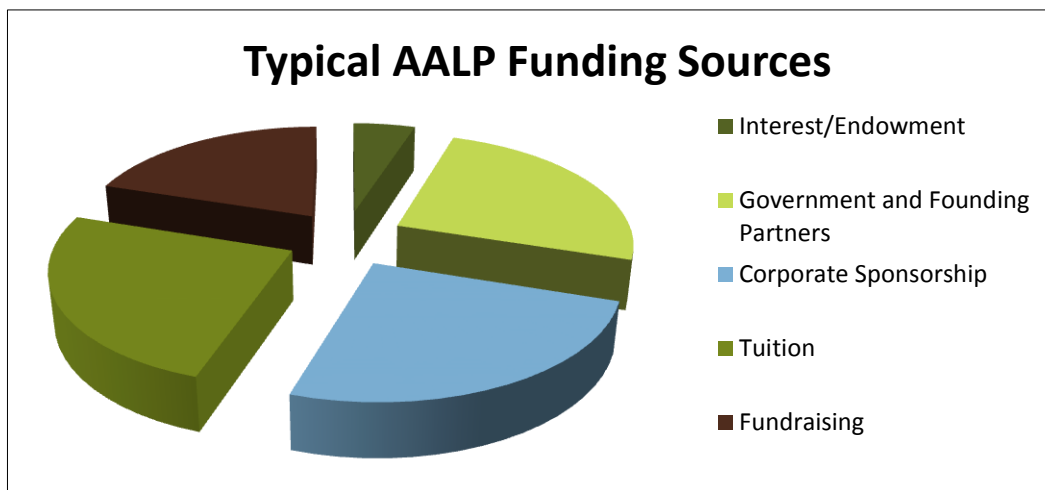


BOOSTERS



HOW YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS USED

Sponsorship support goes directly toward funding AALP's intensive 19-month educational program. Throughout the long history of AALP, costs have increased and so has our commitment to deliver a program of exceptional quality. This requires a large investment from many stakeholders within the industry. Participants are aware that they are only paying about 1/3 of the cost of AALP and that 2/3 is provided through the generosity of sponsors and funders and fundraising endeavours.



RECOGNIZING COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Program sponsors play a significant leadership role in our industry and provide tremendous support to AALP. We continue to recognize this leadership and showcase sponsor support at every opportunity.

In each class, we acknowledge our sponsors in a number of formal and informal ways including:

- AALP class participants work in teams to research and present Sponsor Spotlight presentations that are shared at seminars throughout the program. Each presentation focuses on a specific sponsor, exploring their business and activities and highlighting their sponsorship of AALP.
- Sponsor logos are included in printed and online communications - newsletters, media releases, on our website and in the Rural Ontario Institute Annual Report.
- Signage and printed materials at seminars.
- Sponsors receive special thanks (verbally, in printed materials and on signage) at our key events:
 - Class Opening Event/Banquet
 - AALP Dream Auction
 - Wm. A. Stewart Public Lecture and Reception
 - Class Graduation Banquet



AALP Sponsor display
at Class 16 Graduation

WHY SPONSOR AALP?

- Agriculture, food and rural issues are high priorities for the province. Now more than ever, we have an opportunity to influence the future of our sectors and rural and northern communities across Ontario.
- Good leaders are needed to move our industry forward – in businesses, in associations and organizations, in communities and on farms.
- Investment in AALP pays off at a rate of 25% - that's better than the rate of return on most investments!
- AALP graduates go on to hold many different influential positions within the industry and in their communities. Many credit their AALP experience as one of the cornerstones that helped them get there.
- Sponsor representatives have many opportunities to interact with each class – providing opportunities for sponsors to keep a pulse on what is happening in the industry.



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