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# UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2013

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### WHO WE ARE

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A Board-governed public university functioning under Alberta's *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, the University of Lethbridge is a premier institution of higher education and research. A comprehensive university founded on the principles of liberal education, the U of L emphasizes inspiring teaching, a personalized and interactive learning environment, and student engagement in learning, creative activities, and research.

We provide undergraduate and graduate programs in education, fine arts, health sciences, humanities, management, nursing, sciences, and social sciences, leading to academic degrees at the Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral levels. We offer targeted programming at our campuses in Calgary and Edmonton and through distance delivery. The University collaborates with FNMI<sup>1</sup> peoples to develop programs that are relevant and accessible to them.

The University of Lethbridge fosters an environment that meets the educational and personal needs of students through excellent teaching, exposure to research, interaction with professors and instructors, academic advising, counseling, and cultural, recreational and extracurricular programs. We value and support many approaches to teaching and learning, and strive to be a leader in using teaching tools, techniques, and technologies to facilitate, ameliorate, and refine the educational experience.

We establish and sustain facilities for pursuing original research and creative activities, and conduct research in all disciplines, developing and sustaining centres of research excellence in areas where we have special expertise or that have particular relevance to the region.

We build mutually supportive relationships and partnerships with governments, institutions, communities, organizations, and individuals, to evolve and improve the value of the University to the region, the province, the country, and the world.

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### WHY WE EXIST

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*The University of Lethbridge exists to build a better society.*

We do this in six essential ways:

1. We prepare students for their personal and professional paths.
2. We develop creative discoverers and independent learners at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
3. We create, discover, disseminate, and apply knowledge through excellence in basic and applied research of regional and global impact.
4. We encourage and nurture creative expression.
5. We pursue community engagement.
6. We value, encourage, and celebrate the talents and efforts of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations, Métis, Inuit.

## WHERE WE ARE GOING

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*The University of Lethbridge will continue to build a comprehensive university that advances its sense of community, engagement, diversity, and connection.*

The University of Lethbridge will be the institution of choice for those seeking an intimate and supportive environment, excellence in research and creative activity, an engaging and challenging learning experience, and respect for diversity. We will continue to broaden the scope of our programs and research while staying committed to our founding principles of liberal education and retaining the intimate academic experiences on which we have established a tradition of excellence.

We will welcome our students to a community of scholars that offers relevant and academically challenging programs. Opportunities for engagement in learning and research will exist across all disciplines and levels of program, from undergraduate to graduate. Rigorous research and creative work will continue to form the basis for inquiry and teaching across the learning contexts we provide.

Our University will continue to increase the diversity of its scholarly activity and contributions. In achieving this we will be defined by collegiality.

The University of Lethbridge community—which includes all students, faculty, staff, and alumni who contribute to its operation and success—will extend beyond the walls of our institution. We will remain an integral part of our communities while fostering scholarly contributions of international excellence. We will support and enrich the diverse communities we serve with fresh insights and new directions.

## OUR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

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The University of Lethbridge is committed to the following fundamental principles.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY

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*We cultivate responsible citizenship.* The University develops and promotes good citizens who contribute to the building of better societies by applying their knowledge, skills, creativity, and powers of critical inquiry for the improvement of regional and global communities.

*We protect and encourage free inquiry and expression.* In keeping with the unique mandate of the university in society, the University of Lethbridge supports and protects artistic expression and the free and open scholarly discussion of issues, including those that are controversial. In the tradition of academic freedom, the University models collegial and civil debate, dissent, and controversy to critically explore and resolve issues in an atmosphere of professionalism, respect, and good will. We also have an obligation to address long-term issues and those of broad scope.

*We work for the public good.* As a public institution, the University of Lethbridge promotes and provides degree-level education for the public good and anticipates and responds to societal needs. The University bases its decisions about programs, standards, and capacity on the best available evidence. Within that context, we use innovative methods and processes to optimize the openness of the institution to qualified students.

*We are connected with the community.* The University publicizes its research, scholarship, creative activities, and other initiatives that have significance for society. Members of the University contribute to the community based on their professional expertise. The University develops relationships with organizations and individuals, and shares its facilities and resources for the good of the community. We acknowledge faculty, staff, students, and alumni for initiative and creativity that leads to the increased involvement of the University in the community.

The University of Lethbridge values its close and mutually supportive relationship with its alumni, who exemplify the benefits of the University and communicate its value locally, provincially, nationally, and globally.

*We adopt a global perspective.* Social, political, and economic divisions across the globe threaten the peace and prosperity of all. We nourish a global mindset in our students, faculty, staff, and alumni that facilitates cultural awareness and sensitivity that leads to a mature understanding and appreciation of the things that divide and unite us.

*We promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity for participation.* Diversity strengthens the University and enriches the experience of our students, staff, faculty members, and alumni. We respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, and provide equal opportunity for full participation in the University. We are an inclusive community, in which students, staff, faculty members, and alumni feel welcome, respected, valued, and empowered to contribute fully. The University facilitates accessibility by all students, staff, faculty members, and alumni to the intellectual, physical, and social aspects of the institution.

*We promote gender equity.* The University of Lethbridge honours the rights of all and treats people with dignity and respect. We acknowledge the similarities and differences among women and men, and seek to remove all barriers that inhibit an individual's aspirations and potential. The University will create a supportive environment through education and communication. Equity is inclusive.

*We increase the participation of FNMI peoples in all aspects of the University community.* The University of Lethbridge values its relationship with FNMI peoples, and collaborates widely to develop programs that are relevant and available to them. We work with FNMI peoples to ensure that these partnerships, and the resulting programs, continue to meet all students' needs.

*We promote a healthy lifestyle for our students, faculty, and staff.* The U of L offers proactive health education, on-site health care, and health insurance information. We work to provide non-judgmental and confidential health care in a safe and caring environment. University facilities and programs provide opportunities to participate in sport, exercise, and recreation.

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO CREATIVITY, INQUIRY, AND DISCOVERY

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*We encourage and support research, scholarship, and creative work.* The University of Lethbridge stimulates and supports research, scholarship, and creative work in all areas in which we teach, and in areas of special relevance to the region and province. This link between research and teaching allows us to explore what is known, challenge how it is known, and thus influence the nature of teaching. We value and protect an environment of free inquiry in which to conduct research, scholarship, and creative work, and communicate the results of these activities with others. We conduct ourselves on the basis of informed, evidence-based practice. We encourage students at all levels to become involved in research, scholarship, and creative activity.

*We conduct research in many forms.* Given the range of disciplines involved, research at the University takes many forms, including that with the broadest scope and longest term. The University has a responsibility to analyze and reflect on these matters, and to communicate the outcome of these efforts.

We believe that research—intellectual inquiry, study, and artistic investigation aimed at establishing facts and reaching new conclusions—is an inherent societal good and an end in itself. But, wherever possible, we connect our research to the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS

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*We give students the best preparation for their future.* The University of Lethbridge provides students with a liberal education—a solid foundation for personal and professional growth. Liberal education promotes the development of academic skills that students can apply to a wide range of experiences, and a broad base of knowledge in the human, aesthetic, ethical, scientific, and organizational disciplines. It encourages a multi-faceted, reflective approach to the complex challenges of the 21st century.

*We strive to develop a culture of achievement and motivation among students.* The U of L helps students to identify strengths and overcome weaknesses. We seek to foster: a sense of responsibility for students' learning and personal development; effective student relations to peers and teachers; and student involvement in local, provincial, and national communities.

*We are student-centred.* Students give focus and meaning to the University of Lethbridge. The University helps students achieve their full potential by facilitating their intellectual growth and academic and personal excellence. To this end, the University maintains high academic standards and excellent programs, supported by high-quality, responsive services.

The University of Lethbridge supports and encourages the growth of students as whole persons, in an atmosphere of engagement, freedom from discrimination, and responsible use of authority.

*We are a comprehensive university.* Broad in scope, we offer undergraduate and graduate university education across Faculties and Schools and apply a balance between our focus on teaching and our commitment to research, scholarship, and creative activities.

*We believe in excellence in undergraduate education.* The University of Lethbridge treasures its reputation for quality, responsiveness, and innovation at the undergraduate level. We will continue to enhance our reputation as an institution offering outstanding programming to undergraduate students in a comprehensive university environment. We enhance our value for students and society by concentrating on fields that reflect the excellence of our faculty members and the interests of both students and society.

*We are fully engaged in graduate education.* The University of Lethbridge offers masters and doctoral programming, and we integrate graduate studies with undergraduate and research programs. Through our graduate offerings across all academic units, we contribute to our students' personal, intellectual, and professional development and help meet society's need for citizens with the highest levels of professional and intellectual achievement.

*We promote effective teaching and learning.* For the undergraduate student, we promote primarily face-to-face learning, which reflects our belief that people benefit from spending time working together in the same place. We provide online and distance learning for courses and programs where these delivery modes make the best sense. Our use of appropriate technology permeates teaching and learning activities, enhancing both.

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO INSPIRATION

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*We inspire.* The University of Lethbridge aspires to inspirational teaching that ignites intellectual passion and stimulates a thirst for knowledge. We value and support many approaches to teaching and learning, in a variety of settings within the University and in the broader community.

*We believe education is a journey, not a destination.* A true measure of our success is our alumni's continuing interest in a lifetime of learning, and their commitment to this goal. The University welcomes those students pursuing degrees and those taking courses out of general interest and intellectual curiosity. We are open to offering quality programs for degree completion and programs that are approved and recommended by professional associations and organizations.

*We expand horizons.* A global perspective is essential to the University of Lethbridge in its teaching, learning, and research. The University educates its students to become well-rounded citizens of a complex society, capable of making important contributions in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

The University of Lethbridge invites students and faculty members from around the world to participate in learning at the University, and provides international opportunities for our students and faculty members to experience other cultures.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE ACTION

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*We advance the interests of the University of Lethbridge.* The University of Lethbridge communicates with its internal and external communities so that its mission, goals, and work are well understood. We engage our alumni and other supporters in the activities of the University. We build the value of the University to society by developing mutually supportive relationships with governments, individuals, and organizations.

*We practice procedural fairness.* All internal and external University processes are fair, open, and transparent. We act in accordance with all applicable codes of professional and ethical practice, and practice professionalism and civility in all interactions.

*We are active and innovative in recruitment and retention.* In developing a coordinated approach to recruiting and retaining excellent faculty members and staff, the University of Lethbridge pursues new and innovative ideas, implements the most effective strategies, and monitors their success. We encourage and pursue the training and professional development of all our people.

*We practice sound financial and resource management.* The University of Lethbridge maintains exemplary financial management of our public and private funds and resources. We practice resource management in a transparent manner.

*We use technology effectively.* We use technology to facilitate and enhance, not supplant, learning and research relationships among students, faculty members, and other university stakeholders. The University considers technology a means, not an end.

*We are environmentally and socially responsible.* When making decisions about the design and operation of the University of Lethbridge, we act ethically and responsibly, considering environmental sustainability and good citizenship.

## HOW WE WILL REACH OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

With this Strategic Plan as the framework, the University of Lethbridge commits to continuing action in the areas in which we presently excel and in those key areas where enhancement is required or where there are new directions for us to pursue.

Here are our broad Strategic Directions and their associated Strategic Priorities. The Strategic Priorities represent those **key areas** in which the University of Lethbridge will apply a special effort so that the institution can more successfully align itself with its Strategic Plan. For each Strategic Direction we have included some examples of specific actions. These are suggestions only; the University is not limited to these specific actions.

The Strategic Directions and Strategic Priorities, and specific actions linked to them, do not exist in isolation. Any specific action taken, for instance, will likely have multiple impacts across the Strategic Directions and Priorities. All of the items in this section are inextricably linked.

| STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:                                     | STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:   | EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS:  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>A. Confirm our Place as a Comprehensive University</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create and grow graduate programs and a culture of graduate education.</li> <li>2. Broaden our base of undergraduate programming.</li> <li>3. Grow the financial resource base of the University.</li> <li>4. Create a physical and intellectual environment that fosters and promotes creativity, research, and innovation.</li> <li>5. Preserve and enhance our focus on teaching excellence.</li> <li>6. Hire excellent professors that contribute to the continued success of the university in teaching and research.</li> </ol> | <p>Develop Doctoral and Masters programs in a broader range of disciplines.</p> <p>Develop and enhance the programs and profile of the Centre for the Advancement of Excellence in Teaching and Learning.</p> <p>Develop programming niches at undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g., M.Ed. FNMI).</p> <p>Evaluate existing and develop new programs of study that contribute to the notion of a comprehensive university (e.g., programs of study supporting the Prentice Institute).</p> <p>Grow endowments to support student scholar-ships.</p> <p>Expand our facilities to enhance our teaching and research.</p> <p>Develop existing and new revenue streams, such as research funds, donations, and targeted capital funding.</p> <p>Develop a new academic building that includes lab and classroom space.</p> |

| STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:  | STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:   | EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS:  |
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| <b>B. Enhance the Student Experience</b>   | 1. Refine and promote liberal education.  | Increase student residence space on campus.  |
|  | 2. Evaluate and evolve student recruitment strategies.  | Establish campus collegiums, places of belonging for students that enhance their connection to the University community.   |
|  | 3. Develop and implement student retention strategies.  | Develop an FNMI social/cultural space.   |
|  | 4. Expand the internationalization of the University.   | Promote international exchange opportunities.  |
|  | 5. Promote and enhance diversity within the University.   | Enhance existing and provide new support structures for students.  |
|  | 6. Engage students in a welcoming environment that supports learning, discovery, and creativity and promotes model citizenship.                                   | Target scholarships and bursaries to increase participation by under-represented Albertans.  |
|  | 7. Enhance the experience of FNMI students.   | Establish an on-campus day care operation.   |
|  | 8. Continue to encourage academic and administrative units to work together to enhance the student experience.  | Continue to innovate and expand student use of computer technology and the Internet to access information.   |
|  | 9. Ensure the health, safety, and security of students.   | Establish guaranteed scholarships for students that meet a certain academic standard.  |
|  | 10. Recognize and promote the essential role of staff in keeping the campuses welcoming, functioning, and modern.   | Develop a bursary and scholarship system that rewards and highlights achievement, motivation, and participation in democratic and learning institutions.   |
| <b>C. Build Internal Community and Enhance Relationships with External Communities</b> | 1. Continue to build a healthy, supportive, and collaborative environment and culture that promotes student, faculty, staff, and alumni success and satisfaction. | Build more social spaces on campus.  |
|  | 2. Continue to develop bridges to Lethbridge and southern Alberta communities.  | Establish a community-friendly outreach presence in downtown Lethbridge in the Penny Building.   |
|  | 3. Strengthen links to regional centers of excellence in research and development.  | Develop arts facilities, including an art gallery, and academic space for the arts.<br>Continue to engage alumni to help promote the U of L.<br>Enhance the Human Resources Recruitment Office and its welcome and orientation activities. |



| STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:  | STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:  | EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS:   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>D. Promote Access to Quality Post-Secondary Education</b>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a sustainable strategy for delivering programs outside of Lethbridge.</li> <li>2. Maintain and enhance working alliances with other educational service providers and stakeholders.</li> </ol>   | <p>Develop a strategy for the future of the Calgary and Edmonton campuses.</p> <p>Explore the development of collaborative pro-grams with other post-secondary institutions.</p> <p>Develop a strategy for articulating blended program delivery using technology.</p> <p>Explore the best means of meeting the needs of adult learners.</p>  |
| <b>E. Enhance the Environmental Sustainability of the University</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to transform the University into a sustainable community.</li> <li>2. Wherever possible, incorporate sustainability into teaching, learning, and research.</li> <li>3. Promote sustainability inside and outside the University.</li> </ol> | <p>Develop an overall U of L sustainability strategy that includes ways to reduce the consumption of non-renewable energy and water.</p> <p>Continue to construct environmentally sustainable buildings using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification as a guide in the development of new facilities and the renovation of existing facilities.</p> <p>Continue to meet ethical and environmental purchasing standards.</p> <p>Develop further waste reduction strategies.</p> <p>Develop a strategy to decrease the number of vehicles driven to campus.</p> <p>Continue to use certified green cleaning products.</p> |