

## Reaffirming our Values: A University Response to the 2013-14 Provincial Budget

***We commit to maintaining the forward vision of the University of Lethbridge. Our Strategic priorities remain priorities independently of the financial challenges our University encounters.*** To take us to our desired future the University will pursue its established strategic directions and identified priorities.

The Alberta Provincial Budget 2013-14 has imposed severe reductions and thus introduced significant financial challenges for the post-secondary sector in our province and for the University of Lethbridge. A reduction to our University's Campus Alberta Grant of 7.3% will require the University to eliminate \$11.9 million from its continuing operating budget.

An increase of 2% to the Campus Alberta Grant for 2013-14 had previously been communicated by the Government of Alberta to the University, as part of a three year funding commitment. This was presented with the intention of enhancing future financial planning and sustainability. Although it became increasingly clear during the 2012-13 fiscal year that the 2% increase was becoming less likely, the University, and others in the post-secondary sector, were not informed or warned by the Ministry of the deep financial reduction that has been applied to our continuing operating funds.

In managing the impact of this severe funding reduction, members of University senior administration have committed to clear, timely, and transparent communication to all members of the University. Our first order of business is to enter into a process that will address our required reductions. To do this, our institutional values will be reaffirmed and will be used to guide and influence all budget related decisions and processes that lie ahead. The processes by which these values will be endorsed and reaffirmed by the University and by which the 2013-14 budget will be established are provided within Appendix 1 of this document. They follow closely the paths already utilized for budget approval within our University.

Fortunately, in the last few years much work has been completed with respect to the values of our institution. They are contained within the documents that provide the framework for the operation and the establishment of priorities for the University. These documents include our current Strategic Plan, Academic and Research Plans, and our Comprehensive Institutional Plan. All of these documents were approved utilizing the full scope of the University bicameral governance framework. Although they were created and approved at times in which significantly different financial conditions were anticipated, these documents enshrine both our values and our priorities as an institution. These values and priorities are independent of our immediate financial future as the long-term future of our three-campus University extends well beyond immediate budgetary issues.

To intentionally follow our priorities will require all constituents of our University to work together. Working together provides strength. As we address our financial challenges we will strive to ensure that all groups within the University are engaged in the protection of the

academic integrity and the future of our institution. There are no aspects of the University's operation that will be excluded from consideration in constructing the path by which we will best ensure the continuing financial sustainability of our institution. Indeed, in moving towards this desired outcome it will be necessary to explore all possible operational collaborations to achieve efficiencies. New forms of revenue generation will be considered an important component of any plan to mitigate our financial challenges.

The values presented below are purposely non-prioritized as they provide a holistic framework to guide and influence the budget processes and decisions that lie ahead. Underlying these values is a commitment to open, transparent and timely communication to our University community. And fundamentally, as president Sam Smith asserted in his August 1, 1967 address to the students of summer session, our core commitment is still "*to the individual student as a person and as of ultimate worth.*"

***Our people define our University and are our greatest strength.***

People are the essential resource of our institution and as such the University will strive to preserve employment. All University employee groups will be treated with fairness and with respect in all that lies ahead in our work to maintain our student centred focus and to ensure the continuing financial sustainability of our institution.

***High quality is central to all that we do.***

Our commitment to maintaining high quality undergraduate and graduate academic programmes is key to our University mission *to build a better society*. High quality instruction and teaching are essential to this commitment. Research and creative activity are also key to our mission and their vitality and vibrancy serve as a differentiating feature of our institution and a central part of our culture as a comprehensive academic and research institution. High quality facilities and services support our mission and best serve our students, staff, and academic staff.

***Access to our University is a foundational value.***

As a Comprehensive Academic and Research University, dedicated to liberal education, that was born out of the needs and aspirations of our local communities we are committed to providing student access to our high quality academic programs throughout the province without creating unnecessary financial barriers. Community engagement with our University and community use of our facilities play a role in defining us as a public institution.