



For Immediate Release — Friday, April 28, 2017

## **University of Lethbridge hosting Livingstone Range high school students for Experiential Learning Week**

A group of nine high school students from the Livingstone Range School Division will get a sneak peek of life as a post-secondary student at the University of Lethbridge May 1-5, all the while learning skills to develop solutions to the world's problems.

The U of L's Faculty of Arts & Science, with support from the AGILITY program, is piloting an Experiential Learning Week project that will see eight high school students from Pincher Creek's Matthew Halton High School and one from Nanton's J.T. Foster High School spend a full week at the U of L investigating issues related to water. A true campus experience, the students will live in campus dormitories, attend sessions with world-class water researchers, design and create prototype solutions and learn how to pitch their ideas to potential investors.

"Our theme for the week is water because we know that water is an increasingly scarce resource," says Dr. Jackie Rice, associate dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science. "Water is related to everything we do on a daily basis. It is an essential part of agriculture, industry, even recreation, and we have expertise here that can help guide the students in their thinking about water and the potential problems a lack of water could cause."

With a liberal education approach, Rice says students will first identify and then approach water issues from a variety of perspectives.

"We want to expose students to the different ways that they can look at that particular problem," she says. "Whether it be through the eyes of a scientist, a sociologist, an anthropologist, all of those different perspectives can be brought into how to solve a potential problem."

John Taylor, an off-campus coordinator for Livingstone Range School Division, says he's looking to remove potential barriers for rural students pursuing post-secondary studies.

"We're trying to break down the walls of school and get them out of the building and into the real world, solving problems, making a difference and developing the skills and

competencies they need,” he says. “It’s only one week but it’s an immersive experience. It’s really trying to build that bridge between high school and post-secondary.”

He’s keen to see his students challenged to think in a new space, something that post-secondary studies demand.

“In this age, the information is readily available to everyone, but what we need to do is develop their skills to apply that information,” says Taylor. “They’ll get a chance to learn about design thinking, empathy, ideation and to think as an entrepreneur.”

Rice says the students will first identify a problem, then follow it all the way through to product creation in an attempt to solve the issue.

“We want to expose students to these problem-solving approaches,” says Rice. “Beginning with their ability to empathize, to define what they see the problem to be, to ideate, and then coming up with ways to solve it and then prototyping and testing what their solutions could be. We want them to see how those things actually work in practice – we want them to do it, we want them to build their solution.”

All the while, the students will gain valuable skills of adulthood. They’ve already been working on grocery lists and meal planning for the five-day stay, and will be responsible for getting to classes on time, cleaning up their living areas and more.

“Experience is the way to go, it is the best teacher,” says Taylor. “It’s only five days but it’s a start and it might be the doorway toward going to a university or college in the future.”

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/u-l-hosting-livingstone-range-high-school-students-experiential-learning-week>

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