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Dhillon School of Business to announce new major in Agricultural Enterprise Management

Thanks to the generosity of Cor Van Raay and his \$5-million gift to the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College, along with matching funding from the provincial government, the Dhillon School of Business is launching a new major in Agricultural Enterprise Management.

Van Raay recognized the business and management aspects of agriculture — agricultural finance, marketing and trade, for example — needed more attention and his donation became the catalyst to expand the business focus on agriculture.

“This new major in Agricultural Enterprise Management is a great fit for the Dhillon School of Business,” says Dr. Shamsul Alam, associate dean of the Dhillon School of Business. “We are focused on business innovations, such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data, and many of these innovations will help keep our food production safe and nutritious.”

“The agri-food sector is forecast to be one of the most dynamic, challenging and rewarding areas of business as the world’s population keeps increasing,” says David Hill, director of development with the Southern Alberta Agriculture & Agribusiness program. “This agribusiness program concentrates on how business, management, finance and their related disciplines can be actively applied to any agricultural enterprise.”

The Agricultural Enterprise Management program was developed by Lethbridge College and the U of L in an integrated way. Both institutions spoke with stakeholders in the farming community, industry and government to develop eight learning outcomes for the program. From there, four pillars were identified: accounting and finance, policy and regulations, marketing, and operations and management. Following Van Raay’s investment, the U of L created a six-course minor which was the forerunner to the current major. Following the creation of the minor, Lethbridge College created a diploma in Agricultural Enterprise Management and students were accepted into the fall 2018 term. The U of L’s major will accept students beginning in the fall 2019 term.

Students from across Campus Alberta will be able to participate in this new major, with at least 12 courses from other colleges transferable and work being done to add even more. The program is not a typical two-plus-two model but rather is an integrated, flexible, four-year program where students have an opportunity to exit with diplomas or to complete a four-year degree.

“We deal with the service value-added activities and how it goes from the farm to the fork,” says Alam. “Although we have developed this with the college, it is unique in its delivery. No other university in Canada or the United States has this program. Other programs are based on science or economics or biotechnology, but this program is based on business.”

The new major will be formally announced on Saturday, Oct. 27 during the Cor Van Raay Agribusiness Case Competition gala dinner and awards presentation at the Garden Court restaurant at Lethbridge College. Van Raay, as well as college and university officials, will be in attendance. Any interested media outlets are invited to conduct interviews from 5:30 to 6 p.m.

This news release can be found online at [Agricultural Enterprise Management](#).

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