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Solid percentage of University of Lethbridge students coming to community for Fall 2020 semester

Despite a primarily online format for the fall semester, many University of Lethbridge students are planning to return to Lethbridge in September.

A recent survey conducted by Academica Group polled responses from continuing students at Canadian post-secondary institutions on whether they would be attending their school's city for the Fall 2020 semester. U of L students responded favorably, with 60.7 per cent of returning students expected to be in the city in September — approximately 3,800 students in total.

“We think that’s a very strong number and speaks to a variety of factors,” says Mike Mahon, president and vice-chancellor. “While the majority of our classes will be delivered in an online format, the student experience extends far beyond the classroom. There’s a strong social aspect involved, there are lab, co-op, applied study, volunteer and experiential opportunities, and there’s a willingness to live independently and mature as a young person living away from home.”

The U of L has a strong reputation as a destination university with over 70 per cent of its students being drawn from outside of the city’s census area. Students are attracted by the personal and high-quality experience, and Mahon says the amenities and businesses that operate within the city and region are a key component of the student experience.

“I have had many conversations with business owners and community leaders about the online format of our fall semester,” says Mahon. “U of L faculty and staff are looking forward to re-engaging with students in September, and our community partners have always remarked that the vibrancy of our city is greatly enhanced when students return to Lethbridge. I know that they too are looking forward to welcoming students back to our region.”

The safety of students will continue to be paramount in all University operations and the focus remains on limiting the number of people on campus at any given time.

“We remain focused on keeping our students healthy and safe,” says Mahon. “The vast majority of our course work will be delivered in an online format and when we are able to offer in-person experiences, we will diligently follow public health protocols to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff.”

While social distancing measures are reducing the capacity of university residences, it is expected that over 400 students will be living on campus this fall.

“We have so much to offer our students and it’s apparent that regardless of the course delivery method, many of them want to be here in Lethbridge with their classmates and in this community,” says Mahon “This city is very welcoming to students and understands how important our student population is to the vibrancy and economic well-being of the area.”

The first day of Fall Semester classes at the U of L is Wednesday, Sept. 9.

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