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U of L appoints new director to the Prentice Institute

The University of Lethbridge is pleased to announce Dr. Lars Hallström has been appointed as the new director of the Prentice Institute for Global Population and Economy effective Jan. 1, 2021.

“We are excited to welcome Dr. Hallström to the University of Lethbridge and the Prentice Institute,” says Dr. Erasmus Okine, vice-president (academic) and provost. “I got to know Lars when I was still at the University of Alberta and he’s a dedicated scholar and researcher whose expertise is well-suited to the Prentice Institute.”



Hallström is currently the inaugural director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, a joint program of the Augustana Faculty and the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Alberta. His background is in political science and he will be joining the U of L’s political science department as a faculty member. However, his primary duties will be with the Prentice Institute, which was established in 2009 following a \$8.25 million gift from Alberta entrepreneur John

Prentice. As a multi-disciplinary, cross-faculty institute, it is dedicated to researching the long-term effects of demographic, economic and social issues related to changes in world population patterns. Hallström follows in the footsteps of Dr. Susan McDaniel, a sociologist and the Prentice Institute’s first director, who served in the position until August 2019.

Dr. Trevor Harrison, interim director of the Prentice Institute, says Hallström brings with him many interdisciplinary strengths, including the fields of political science, demography, geography and sociology. His skills in these areas will allow him to build upon what has already been established at the Prentice Institute.

“He has an established record of both getting research grants and assisting others in getting grants,” says Harrison. “His research, especially in rural areas and economic development in rural areas, is going to be a real plus for the institute.”

Hallström sees a natural fit between his previous work and the mission of the Prentice Institute.

“The position at the Prentice Institute aligns with some of the different areas where my work has fallen in terms of intersectoral actions, how environment and social and health policy, for example, can all affect each other and maybe leverage positive change in ways that are not directly assumed,” says Hallström. “I am a political scientist by training, but my work is more broadly oriented towards public policy at different levels, including environmental health and social policy, questions of equity, social determinants of health, urban and rural economic development, youth and youth engagement and access to public health infrastructure.”

“Dr. Hallström brings extensive experience in leading a highly impactful research institute within a comprehensive university environment,” says Dr. Robert Wood, interim vice-president (research). “We look forward to the collaborative research and community engagement opportunities he will cultivate in his role as director of the Prentice Institute.”

After a year of university studies and playing rugby in the United Kingdom, Hallström obtained a BA with a major in political science at the University of Calgary in 1995 and completed a master’s and PhD in political science at Indiana’s Purdue University. He began his academic career at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia as a professor of political science and Canada Research Chair in Public Policy and Governance. Hallström joined the University of Alberta in 2009 and has been director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities since then.

Hallström was born in Edmonton but his family, due to his father’s work in the oil industry, left Canada shortly after and he spent most of his childhood living in Europe and the United States before returning to Canada as a teen. Music was a central theme in his life as a youth and something he continues to pursue today.

“My dad was an amateur musician as a youth in northern Sweden,” says Hallström. “I went through the Royal Conservatory piano trajectory and started playing in bands, as many people do, in high school. For the last five years, I’ve been playing bass in a local band. It’s great fun, and we have a good time playing rock and roll and playing it loud.”

This news release can be found online at [Prentice Institute appoints new director](#).

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Contact

Caroline Zentner, public affairs adviser
University of Lethbridge
403-795-5403
caroline.zentner@uleth.ca