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## University of Lethbridge appoints new director of Indigenous education and communications

The University of Lethbridge is excited to welcome Mike Frank (BA '09) to his new post as director of Indigenous education and communications.

Frank has a long-standing and multi-faceted relationship with the U of L. He recalls coming to campus at age five when his grandmother, the late Dr. Helen Manyfingers (LLD '92), received an honorary degree. His mother, Lois Frank, was a U of L instructor and on top of that, Frank says he has 65 relatives who've earned U of L degrees and he's attended 33 convocation ceremonies. He's been a student, research assistant and now rejoins the U of L as an employee.



“Starting my position as director of Indigenous education and communications allows me to build on the many student supports at the U of L,” says Frank. “My passion has always been helping with education and my work goal is to create supportive pathways for Indigenous students.”

“We are so pleased to have Mike join our team,” says Dr. Erasmus Okine, provost and vice-president (academic). “He has a broad range of skills and experience that will serve him well in his new role. I look forward to working closely with Mike to ensure Indigenous students succeed in their studies at the U of L and in their lives following university.”

The new position was created as a result of the EleV program, a partnership initiative between the University and the [Mastercard Foundation](#). The program, announced a year ago, is designed to create new opportunities for Indigenous, primarily Blackfoot, youth to access education and the needed supports to be successful, ultimately resulting in employment, economic inclusion and economic development opportunities within their communities.

The position is an integral part of the U of L's Indigenous leadership and governance team. Frank will be at the helm of establishing an office of Indigenous education and continuing the

Indigenous strategic planning process. He'll also forge connections with Blackfoot political leadership and lead a team that will build strong relationships within Blackfoot communities.

"From my work with various First Nations as the CEO and executive director, one of my duties was to better the retention and graduation rates of students both on and off reserve at all levels," says Frank. "As Indigenous people, we must continue to develop strong students at the post-secondary education level. I directed many potential students to a degree at the U of L. It has always been a strong academic institution, especially with its liberal education philosophy. Its structure is a credit to my success."

Frank's executive work experience began immediately after graduation as the director of operations and subsequently as the CEO for the Blood Tribe Department of Health. He later became CEO for the McLeod Lake Indian Band (McLeod Lake, B.C.), chief operating officer for the Nak'azdli Whut'en Indian Band (Fort St. James, B.C.), CEO for the Salt River First Nation in Fort Smith, N.W.T., and CEO and executive director for the Paul First Nation, near Edmonton.

Academically, Frank is currently working on a master of arts in corruption and governance through the University of Sussex. He also studied petroleum land administration at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and took police officer training at the Justice and Solicitor General Staff College.

"I'm glad to be back at the U of L," says Frank. "Being an undergrad here is a highlight in my journey. Because the U of L has a strong administration team, I was able to ask for help to navigate my student career. As a student, I accessed the many academic and student supports available to become a better writer, access student housing and focus on my studies. I would like to thank a few of my amazing professors such as Drs. Kent Peacock, Paul Viminiz, Bryson Brown, Peter Alward and Trudy Govier. They opened an academic journey of thought, critical insight and logic. I gained a deeper understanding of governance through Drs. Yale Belanger, John von Heyking and Harold Jansen in political science. In short, having a liberal education allowed me to have a solid base to work with Indigenous communities."

This news release can be found online at [director of Indigenous education and communications](#).

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