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Dhillon School of Business first business school in Canada to require Indigenous course as part of core degree

The Dhillon School of Business at the University of Lethbridge is looking to lead the way in reconciliation and Indigenization efforts by becoming the first business school in Canada to include an Indigenous course requirement as part of a student's core business degree.

Dhillon School of Business Dean Dr. Kerry Godfrey says the move is indicative of the school's dedication to an almost 40-year history of supportive and community-guided Indigenous business education. Actions such as formally joining the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) in 2018, show that the school is focused on finding ways to intentionally support Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, particularly in business.

It is also part of a wider initiative to move the school's reconciliation efforts forward and address the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* (CTA), particularly in relation to CTA 92 on Business and Reconciliation.

"Our school's history shows that we actively value Indigenous business perspectives," says Godfrey, "and we purposely and intentionally work to enhance and broaden our own perspectives, as well as the student lens in a way that promotes understanding."

The course requirement was also created for practical business educational reasons. Dhillon School of Business professor and researcher Don McIntyre, a member of the Wolf Clan from Lake Timiskaming First Nation, asserts that business in Canada is changing.

"Business students used to be able to operate without knowledge of Indigenous history or governance, but this has changed. We're now seeing instances where businesses are failing because they don't have the subsequent knowledge of the people and land they're trying to grow their business with and on," he says.

The new Indigenous course requirement equips students to be prepared for today's business world and positions them as leaders. The wider understanding students will

acquire with the new Indigenous course component aligns with the broad and inclusive foundational teaching and learning philosophy students have come to expect from the University. Students will look beyond core business content to explore how business is conducted in a more inclusive societal context.

Even before the core-course requirement was put into place, Dhillon School of Business students, like recent graduate Mariam Ullah (BMgt '20), were already recognizing the value of taking Indigenous electives as part of their education. Ullah, who professed her most memorable academic experience included the Indigenous Studies course she took, says it was “captivating and enriching in ways I never expected and left me with a changed view of the world.”

Students are able to choose from a wide variety of Indigenous content courses including *Conversational Reconciliation*, *Indigenous Languages*, *Aboriginal Health*, *Indigenous Art History*, *Indigenous Governance in Canada*, and more.

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/dhillon-school-business-first-business-school-canada-require-indigenous-course-part-core>

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