

Statement — Hockey Advisory Committee

Last year, a Hockey Advisory Committee reporting to the President's Executive Council, was struck to explore the feasibility of a sustainable community-based funding model that would allow for the reinstatement of the men's and women's hockey programs at the University of Lethbridge. While the committee identified potential financial support within the community, we have been unable to arrive at a model that does not include a substantial ongoing funding investment from the University.

The release of the 2021/22 budget by the Province of Alberta, in which the University of Lethbridge received a larger-than-anticipated 5.8 per cent (\$5.7 million) cut to its operating grant, highlights the University's inability to commit to an ongoing funding investment in reestablishing these programs. This cut is in addition to cuts of 3.2 per cent (\$3.4 million) and 6.6 per cent (\$6.7 million) over the past two years and the University expects a further cut of 5.5 per cent in the 2022/23 operating grant. These reductions, coupled with significant negative financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, have been felt in every corner of our university and has resulted in the loss of over 100 positions thus far.

For these reasons, the activities of the Hockey Advisory Committee will be discontinued.

We know many members of the Lethbridge community are passionate about Pronghorn athletics as evident by those who eagerly stepped forward to serve on this committee. Our University and external community will always value our history of Pronghorn Hockey, as well as the alumni who have come through our program.

The University extends its sincere thanks to committee chair Dan LaPlante and all committee members. We are grateful for the important work these individuals undertook on behalf of the institution and we will apply what we have learned through this process in future decision-making pertaining to Pronghorn Athletics and the University as a whole.