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University of Lethbridge investing in students through Work2Learn paid work-integrated learning experiences

The University of Lethbridge is investing in its students through paid work-integrated learning positions in Student Affairs — and if the experiences of the first cohort of student employees is any indication, Work2Learn (W2L) is a huge success.

Established in Fall 2021, W2L provides work-integrated learning positions in Student Affairs for full-time, domestic undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. The positions pay a competitive hourly rate for five to 10 hours of work per week. The first cohort of students worked from September through March with roles in Counselling Services, the Registrar’s Office, Student Enrolment and the Information Centre.

“This program is an investment in the future of our students and creates opportunities for them to build their professional lives and careers,” says Carrie Takeyasu, associate vice-president (finance). “And since it is targeted at students with demonstrated financial need, it meets two important objectives: providing quality work experience while reducing financial pressures.”

Over the past three years, the University has invested \$550,000 in its W2L programming to ensure accessibility for its students.

Janey Deacon-Rosamond is in her fifth year at the University and her first in the Faculty of Education. She was successful in earning a position in Counselling Services, and specifically in Sexual Violence Prevention Services where she was an ambassador creating outreach campaigns, planning events and giving presentations. She says the program was just what she needed.

“I was working my dream job,” she says. “I want to work in education and outreach, and this was an amazing learning opportunity and steppingstone. I feel like this job experience really built up my professional toolbox.”

Being able to work on campus and earn more than minimum wage provided Deacon-Rosamond the flexibility she needed to maintain her demanding school schedule.

“I was able to finally afford fresh produce, it was awesome,” she exclaims. “The work hours being so flexible were amazing, especially since I was in my first year of education. I didn’t have the time to work any other part-time jobs because of the course load and my class schedule.”

The skills the students acquired in their various roles will serve them well into the future and open doors when they are ready to enter the workforce. They were also able to add the worked hours to their MyExperience Transcript.

“I benefited from this experience because I got to expand my skill set,” says Erika Vossebelt, a first-year psychology major who had a position in Career Bridge. “I have customer service experience but in a completely different industry. I feel that this really enriched my skills, grew my confidence, and helped me be more introspective about what I enjoy and do not enjoy in a job, and why. It really gave me clarity about myself and the types of jobs I am likely to prefer.”

Work-2-Learn is now taking applications for the next cohort of students who will begin work in May, with further roles to be posted in the summer for September start dates. Available positions include working in Counselling Services, Student Enrolment and Registrar’s Office, Career Bridge, The Agility Zone, and the Accommodated Learning Centre. Students can apply through the [MyExperience website](#) (search Work2Learn).

“We were really pleased with the feedback we received from students who participated in W2L this past year,” says Mark Slomp, executive director of Student Services. “Everyone who participated commented enthusiastically about the value of the program to their personal, academic, and professional lives. We are excited to build on this success in the year ahead.”

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/work2learn-creating-opportunities-students-through-valuable-campus-roles>

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