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Top Alberta high school students earn University of Lethbridge Chinook Scholarships

The University of Lethbridge will welcome six of the province’s top high school graduates to campus this fall as recipients of the \$5,000 Chinook Scholarship, ULethbridge’s most prestigious high school entrance award.

These outstanding students from the communities of Airdrie, Coaldale, Cochrane and Lethbridge earned Chinook Scholarships from a field of outstanding applicants. All ULethbridge-bound high school students are eligible to apply for the Chinook Scholarship, which recognizes those who have demonstrated superior academic achievement (minimum 85 per cent admission average) and leadership qualities.

This year’s Chinook Scholarship recipients are Madison Hansen (Bert Church High School, Airdrie), Rachel Jensen (W.H. Croxford High School, Airdrie), Abigail Giacchetta (Kate Andrews High School, Coaldale), Janelle Saltvold (Cochrane High School, Cochrane), Kaytrin Irwin (Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Lethbridge) and Madison Tsui (Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Lethbridge).

The award recipients were selected by a committee based on a submitted student essay, references, academic excellence and leadership experience.

“The commitment these students have shown to their studies, their classmates and their communities throughout their high school careers is impressive,” says Dr. Erasmus Okine, provost and vice-president (academic). “They have shown they are among the brightest young minds in the province, with an aptitude for leadership and service. We are excited to welcome them as part of our vibrant campus community and look forward to seeing the avenues they will explore throughout their post-secondary journeys.”

Following is a brief synopsis of the winners.

Madison Hansen, Bert Church High School, Airdrie

Intended area of study: General Sciences and Education

- Team captain for high school basketball, soccer and volleyball teams, she also volunteered to coach boys' basketball and volleyball
- Volunteered as a math tutor for fellow students and was president of the High School Grad Committee
- Volunteered for the Summit Foundation for Cystic Fibrosis

QUOTE — “I feel honoured to be selected as a recipient of the Chinook Scholarship. The award serves as validation of the hard work, dedication and abilities demonstrated in my high school career as well as acknowledges the importance of being a leader in both the community and in school. The award represents the start of a strong foundation for my future academic and personal growth. I am excited to attend ULethbridge in the fall to start a new chapter in my life and look forward to the opportunity to meet new people, participate in extracurricular activities and further my education.”

Rachel Jensen, W.H. Croxford High School, Airdrie

Intended area of study: Combined degree in English and Education

- Served as a recreation volunteer and leader with the City of Airdrie
- Student Manager, Leadership, W.H. Croxford High School, as well as student leader in Movement for Mental Health
- Junior counsellor for Rotary Youth Club and holds two jobs outside of school

QUOTE — “This award means not only financial relief while I’m going into a new field of study in the fall, but it allows me to further apply myself whilst doing so. I am so grateful for such an amazing opportunity, and it really makes all the hard work worth it. I am very excited for the fresh start Lethbridge brings, as well as getting to apply myself in two fields of study where I hold passion. Beyond that, there are so many new people to meet, opportunities to explore and a school culture I cannot wait to immerse myself in!”

Abigail Giacchetta, Kate Andrews High School, Coaldale

Intended area of study: Neuroscience

- First chair in both jazz band and concert band, as well as second chair in honour band
- Co-President of Kate Andrews Student Council and Youth-Do volunteer, board member for the Rachael Thomas Youth Advisory Board and Everactive Schools Advisory Board
- Passionate about research, goal is to attend medical school

QUOTE — “I am incredibly honoured to have been recognized for my leadership work within my community and awarded this prestigious scholarship. It has helped boost my confidence, and I am energized to continue my volunteering and leadership at the

University of Lethbridge. I am so excited to meet new individuals with the same goals and aspirations as myself. Joining new clubs and stepping out of my comfort zone are wonderful ways to better experience university life. I have always been interested in neuroscience, so I was incredibly happy to have been accepted into the program and I cannot wait to meet the amazing individuals there and learn about topics I enjoy.”

Janelle Saltvold, Cochrane High School, Cochrane

Intended area of study: Biological Sciences

- Section leader with the Cochrane High School band and student leader with choir, as well as a member of the Cochrane High School Interact Club
- Volunteered as a camp councillor for Wilderness Ranch Camp and served as a voluntary leader at Vacation Bible School for Brooks Trinity Lutheran Church
- A youth ambassador for the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund

QUOTE — “I am so grateful for this award! Not only will it significantly contribute to my university fees, but it also helped me to reflect on the importance of leadership and boosted my confidence. Thank you so very much. I am excited to be attending a school with smaller class sizes that will allow me to ask my teachers questions, while still having lots of opportunities to discover more with the many resources and knowledgeable people available. I am also excited to study on such a beautiful campus and to meet new people.”

Kaytrin Irwin, Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Lethbridge

Intended area of study: Psychology and Chemistry

- Member of National Honor Society
- Volunteered at a naturopathic medical clinic and Lethbridge Humane Society, as well as LCI Lifeskills Bottle Recycling program
- Coach with City of Lethbridge Learn-to-Skate program

QUOTE — “This award brings recognition to all my academic accomplishments over the years. It brings me pride and eases much of my financial anxiety that comes with wanting to attend post-secondary. I am so fortunate to have been chosen for this award as I am now able to begin my studies with confidence and anticipation. I am excited to attend ULethbridge for many reasons, some being the amazing facilities and community I’ve been told about from both previous and current students and staff.”

Madison Tsui, Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Lethbridge

Intended area of study: General Sciences

- An Ecclesiastical Youth Group President, she participated in several volunteer and service projects, including service to seniors, community clean-up programs, charitable drives and fundraising initiatives
- Volunteered as a respite caregiver

QUOTE — “I am beyond grateful to receive such a significant award. It will allow me to gain the confidence and reassurance to push myself while striving for the best throughout the beginning of my post-secondary studies. It is incredibly motivating to be acknowledged for all the hard work and sacrifices that dedicated high school students make to better their schools and communities. I look forward to interacting with more like-minded peers while I attend ULethbridge in the fall. I cannot wait to further my education in such an encouraging environment while also facing new and unfamiliar challenges along the way.”

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/top-alberta-high-school-students-earn-chinook-scholarships>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.