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University of Lethbridge inviting community to play role in developing new Comprehensive Strategic Plan

The University of Lethbridge is looking to the community for input into the creation of its new Comprehensive Strategic Plan, the roadmap that will guide the University and help shape the look of post-secondary education in southern Alberta and beyond for the next five years.

The strategic plan will set the course for the University, and the input received through the strategic planning process will also inform the renewal of other guiding documents, including ULethbridge's Academic Plan, Research Plan and People Plan. At the heart of any successful strategic plan is the process by which the plan was created, and the contributions made by its constituents.



“If I can emphasize one thing related to this process, it is to urge our campus community and our external community partners to be involved,” says Dr. Digvir Jayas, ULethbridge president and vice-chancellor. “This is not my plan — this is our plan, and we will only be successful if this plan is truly collaborative and aligns with the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. There will be many opportunities to participate in the creation of this plan and to have your voice incorporated. Our goal is to achieve a shared vision and your participation is essential.”

The community engagement process over the next several months will elicit the viewpoints of students, employees, alumni and retirees, as well community members, research and industry partners, municipal and provincial government representatives and other key constituents.

“Faculty input will be vital in ensuring a successful strategic plan and our experience, insights, and perspectives will be invaluable in shaping the future of the University of Lethbridge. Input from our academic community will contribute to a plan that promotes on-campus academic excellence and student success, and through our outreach, teaching and research activities, engages the many communities we impact locally and around the globe.”

Tracy Oosterbroek PhD, RN (BN '95, MSc '09)
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences

“Students are a guiding light for our institution, and our experiences, aspirations and needs should be at the forefront of our strategic plan. We are not just recipients of education; we are active contributors to our University community. Our perspectives and collective vision should shape the activities we undertake in the future to build a University experience that is academically enriching, supportive, inclusive and aligned with the needs of the diverse student body.”

Maleeka Thomas
President, University of Lethbridge Students' Union

“Graduate students play an important role in many crucial facets of our university. This includes driving novel research, securing research funding for our institution, and supporting a variety of undergraduate programs and offices on campus through teaching and academic employment. To develop a prosperous and inclusive strategic plan to guide our institution into the future, consultation with our graduate student body will be essential. We look forward to being involved in this process.”

Jaxon Reiter (BSc '22)
President, Graduate Students' Association

“University of Lethbridge non-academic employees, whether in administrative, support or operational roles, work behind the scenes to ensure that everything functions seamlessly, from finance to facilities management, student services and beyond. We understand the intricacies of our roles, the needs of our colleagues, and the expectations of our students. Input from employees, regardless of our responsibilities, will be paramount for a successful strategic plan.”

Nicole Bach (BSc '19)
Planning Assistant, Campus Development

The University's many external partners will also play a major role in the creation of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

“The success and vibrancy of our city is directly tied to the growth and development our post-secondary institutions. Our community's collective voice was instrumental in establishing the University of Lethbridge 56 years ago and it is important now. Having

our community share critical insights into this process will pave the way for a strategic plan that reflects the aspirations of our city, region and university.”

Blaine Hyggen

Mayor of Lethbridge

“The University of Lethbridge is not just a place of higher learning; it is an integral part of our city's economic ecosystem. The decisions made by the University impact not only the education of our future workforce but also the economic development, innovation and prosperity of our community. On behalf of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, I commend the University for taking such a thoughtful approach to their strategic planning process and for seeking the valuable input of local businesses, entrepreneurs and community leaders.”

Cyndi Bester (BFA-Mus '95, MEd '01)

CEO, Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce

Information about how to provide input can be found on the University's [strategic planning website](#), which was launched today.

Another vital element of this process is that it will not create a specific and separate Indigenous plan. The University of Lethbridge (Iniskim) is located on Blackfoot Confederacy Territory, and Indigenous perspectives will inform the entire activity.

“The University of Lethbridge has a deep commitment to building and maintaining strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples. One recent example of this commitment is the University becoming the first post-secondary signatory of the Buffalo Treaty with a focus on education, research and cooperation. The priority to have Indigenous world views that are interwoven into the Strategic Plan, as well as other institutional plans, is paramount in ensuring that the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives is done so in a holistic manner.”

Dr. Leroy Little Bear (BASc (BA) '72, DASc '04)

Vice-Provost, Iniskim Indigenous Relations

“Our commitment to the relationship between the University and Indigenous Peoples connects everything we do and must be woven throughout each plan,” adds Jayas.

As the University begins consultations for the Comprehensive Strategic Plan engagement process and wanting to do it in a good way that is grounded in Blackfoot ways of knowing, culture and protocol, Jayas and Little Bear participated in a pipe ceremony led by Elder, Francis First Charger. The pipe ceremony was held Wednesday, Nov. 15, in the Ikaisskini Gathering Centre.

The University will share further details about the strategic plan engagement process in the coming weeks.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/university-lethbridge-launches-development-process-comprehensive-strategic-plan>

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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.