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Cormican scholarship award the first to support growth of new Southern Alberta Medical Program

While the University of Lethbridge's Southern Alberta Medical Program ([SAMP](#)) is still in its infancy, a prominent southern Alberta family has stepped forward to establish the program's first scholarship award in perpetuity — the Dr. Cormican Excellence Scholarship in Rural Medicine.

Created through a \$25,000 gift from Dr. Aileen Cormican, which will be endowed and matched by the ULethbridge Board of Governors matching program, the scholarship will provide one minimum \$2,000 award annually to a ULethbridge student who is admitted to the Southern Alberta Medical Program.



"There are a lot of talented individuals and bright minds in our city and region, and we need to do our best to keep them here and practicing in our communities," says Cormican, a senior staff specialist at the Chinook Regional Hospital, a radiologist, and CEO of her own international teleradiology corporation. She also recently was appointed to the ULethbridge Senate.

SAMP was established early in 2024 in partnership with the University of Calgary and is designed to train medical students at the University of Lethbridge and in rural communities across southern Alberta. One of two Rural Medical Education Program Training Centres in the province, learners will train alongside other health-care professionals, gaining practical medical experience. The program will enroll learners who are identified as being likely to practice in rural areas upon graduation.

The Cormican scholarship will give preference to students who have graduated from a high school in a district south of Calgary. Eligible students must have completed a minimum of 60 credit hours at ULethbridge. Cormican says she is cognizant of her

Lethbridge roots, her family originally settled in Allerston and farmed in Milk River, and the unique regional challenges the area faces with regards to health care.

"The pursuit of medicine is hard enough; we need to make sure we are doing the right things to keep health-care professionals here for our region by attracting and then supporting medical students and keeping physicians in southern Alberta," she says.

Cormican is a practicing member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta. Also a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists, she earned a Bachelor of Science and Master of Biomedical Technology from the University of Calgary and a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Queensland. She is a graduate of the Harvard Medical School Global Health Care Leaders Program.

With a fundamental belief in giving back to community and the spirit of philanthropy, she credits those who supported her own academic journey, and with this gift, pays tribute to their philanthropic vision.

"I was fortunate enough to receive a Chancellor's full tuition scholarship to University of Calgary for academic merit and community involvement and was a nominee for the Rhodes and Queens Golden Jubilees Awards. Without that and the generosity from others, I truly would not be where I am today," she says.

"The people of Lethbridge have a history of supporting community, right from the city's humble history as an early settler town — it established its own Galt Hospital, the original mines, created a UNESCO-worthy high-level bridge, created both the Japanese Gardens and the architectural wonder of ULeithbridge, to the more recent infrastructure projects like CASA and the Agrifood Hub — Lethbridge has always created its legacy."

Cormican is excited to be the first to support SAMP with a scholarship gift and confident others will recognize the vast potential of the program and how it could transform health care in southern Alberta through similar gifts.

"We can all make a difference in our community, with whatever our talents or gifts are," she says. "I think my grandparents would be proud of what their hard work and sacrifices amounted to through the generations. They were humble farmers, a miner and janitor, and all were as equally important. You don't have to be "something big" as society defines it to effect great change."

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/cormican-scholarship-award-first-support-growth-new-southern-alberta-medical-program>

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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.