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University of Lethbridge International Dinner returns with distinguished alumnus Dez Kamara as keynote

A valued University of Lethbridge tradition is returning in February when the ULethbridge International Centre presents its celebration of the amazing contributions of international students at its 28th edition of the [International Dinner](#).

Hosted for the first time since 2020, the evening will feature a keynote address from author, social justice advocate, alumnus and Alumni Honour Society inductee Desmond (Dez) Kamara (BA '10). The event takes place Thursday, Feb. 6, 5 to 10 p.m., in the University's Science Commons Atrium.



"It's really exciting to be back hosting our International Dinner once again, celebrating all that international students bring to our campus and our community," says Paul Pan, executive director of the International Centre. "You cannot overstate how valuable it is to have a diverse campus culture, one that introduces new world views and fosters mutual learning and a global perspective."

Kamara is testament to the power of education and making the most of his opportunities. Born in Sierra Leone, Kamara survived 12 years of civil war and post-conflict. Focused on supporting war victims, especially former child soldiers, he produced a documentary to raise awareness of their experiences. His career spans nearly a decade working with the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone and various international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Sierra Leone, Canada and Jamaica.

In 2023, Kamara returned to ULEthbridge to launch his first book, *Looking Back: From Yele, Gbonkolenken Tonkolili District Sierra Leone to Lethbridge, Alberta Canada (Achieving an Educational Dream)*, reflecting his commitment to family values, education and his resilience to achieve his dreams.

“This is where my dream came true, and I would not launch this book anywhere except the University of Lethbridge,” he said at the time. “I can always tell anyone that I am the values and the principles of the University of Lethbridge, and in combination with my family, they helped me to be who I am today.”

He recently completed a master’s in social work at the University of Windsor, specializing in mental health and community development (policy + practice).

Kamara is presently living in Gatineau, Que., where he is working with youth in community mental health.

“My task now is to break the barriers of exclusion, to help the forgotten, those left behind and the voiceless. It could be refugees, or immigrants, or child combatants or anyone in our society who is discriminated against, or excluded,” he says. “I feel with what I have achieved with the struggles I’ve faced; I need to give back and help those who need it.”

In addition to Kamara’s inspirational keynote address, the evening will feature fine dining with an international flair, a silent auction and live entertainment. Regular admission tickets are priced at \$100 (\$720 per table of eight) and \$80 per student (\$640 for a table) and registration is available [here](#). All money raised will support the International Student Emergency Bursary.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/university-lethbridge-international-dinner-returns-distinguished-alumnus-dez-kamara-keynote>

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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.