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Celebrating University of Lethbridge Spring 2025 Convocation medal winners

The University of Lethbridge is excited to celebrate the achievements of its 2025 graduating class this week at Spring 2025 Convocation.

Distinguishing themselves among the 1372 graduates are the ULethbridge medal winners for 2025. They are as follows:

Gold Medal of the Governor General — Ogochukwu Kelechi Onyeso (Ceremony III)

(Awarded to the student with the highest academic standing at the graduate level)

Ogochukwu Kelechi Onyeso
graduates with a PhD in
Population Studies in Health.



Silver Medal of the Governor General — Hailey Slobodian (Ceremony I)

(Awarded to the student with the highest academic standing at the undergraduate level)

Hailey Slobodian graduates with a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience.

Undergraduate Academic Medals

Faculty of Arts & Science Gold Medal (Arts) — Joseph Dyck (Ceremony II)

Joseph Dyck earned a combined Bachelor of Science with a double major in philosophy and psychology. Having grown up with an intense passion for law, Dyck was elected vice-president and president of the Pre-Law Society, where he promoted a support network for future lawyers and was an active member of both the psychology and philosophy clubs. Dyck volunteered with the Lethbridge Police Service as a crisis support

worker, where he used his knowledge of psychology, sociology and neuroscience to better understand those who have witnessed and survived trauma. His exceptional grades and keenness for research led him to co-author an article in the Canadian Journal of Mental Health on community treatment orders. He also worked on multiple research studies funded by SSHRC and NSERC and has won more than 15 awards. He has been accepted to study law at the University of Alberta.

Faculty of Arts & Science Gold Medal (Sciences) — Rexelle Asis (Ceremony I)

Rexelle Axis earned his Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and is now working on a Graduate Certificate in Bioinformatics. Alongside with his coursework, he took an independent study involving Dr. Theresa Burg and Dr. Shawn Bubel to examine the genetics and evolution of modern bison from the DNA of ancient bison bones excavated at the Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump site. This project culminated in winning the best student presentation at the 2023 Joint Annual Conference of Alberta and Saskatchewan Archaeological Society and a first-author publication in a peer-reviewed Elsevier Journal of Archaeological Science. This early success fueled his passion for research and led to a co-op study in Dr. Nora Foroud's lab at the AAFC's Lethbridge Research Development Centre. Here he assisted implementing a novel gene editing protocol in wheat fungal pathogen. This research was the groundwork for his honour's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Foroud and a second co-op study in Dr. Reem Aboukhaddour's lab.

Faculty of Education Gold Medal — Devin Law (Ceremony III)

Devin Law graduates with a 3.99 GPA (including 30 A+ grades) in both the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Fine Arts. An outstanding student who has focused on vocal performance and education, Law shared his talents in live ensembles including the U of L Singers, Wind Orchestra, and Jazz Ensemble. Throughout his time as a student, he also volunteered the last three years by directing a community adult choir. His final project in his last student teaching experience included re-arranging a musical theatre production (one that he composed himself) to customize it for the students at his school. The school is planning on staging the musical next year.

Alberta Teacher's Association William Aberhart Gold Medal in Education — Madeleine Suggitt (Ceremony III)

Madeleine Suggitt, a social studies major and after degree student, graduates with a perfect 4.0 GPA. Her distinguished final project investigated how student-led exploration across different school subjects impacts student engagement and learning. Suggitt has always been a teacher at heart. An accomplished dancer, she became an apprentice at the age of 12, soon moving on to become an assistant teacher, and eventually a head teacher at her studio in Toronto. Her passion for teaching led her to southern Alberta and the Faculty of Education. Suggitt, who taught Grades 2 and 3 at

Park Meadows School for her final practicum, is passionate about helping her students feel valued and cared for.

Faculty of Fine Arts Gold Medal — Keely Evanoff (Ceremony III)

Keely Evanoff graduates with a Bachelor of Music with majors in music (specializing in tuba performance) and digital audio arts. Evanoff has been involved extensively in the ULEthbridge fine arts community as a member of the U of L Wind Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, jazz combos, and in drama productions including Jesus Christ Superstar and Dumbwaiter. As a talented electric and acoustic bass player, Evanoff performed with Lethbridge Musical Theatre, the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra, Symphony of the Kootenays, and as a member of a local rock band. Off stage, she has been on sound teams for professional recording sessions and drama productions in both the University Theatre and David Spinks Theatre and has done live sound for the Owl Acoustic Lounge. All the while, she has grown her teaching skills serving as a tuba and bass clinician both on campus and in local schools, as well as with the girls' Rock Band Camp.

Faculty of Health Sciences Gold Medal — Oghenekome Obrutu (Ceremony II)

Oghenekome Obrutu has earned several ULEthbridge awards and scholarships, including the Chinook Summer Research Award and the Prentice Institute Undergraduate Research Award. In her final semester of a Bachelor of Health Sciences in Public Health, she completed a practicum where she conducted qualitative research on LGBTQ2S+ newcomer youth experiences with gender-based violence and explored social enterprise models for black and racialized communities. She has served as a student mentor with Student Enrolment and Registrar Services and as an undergraduate representative on the Accessibility, Belonging and Community Advisory Council.

Dhillon School of Business Gold Medal — Ashley Pierson (Ceremony IV)

Ashley Pierson is a Combined Bachelor of Health Sciences (Public Health)/Bachelor of Management (General Management) with Great Distinction graduate from the Fall 2024 class. Noted for her engagement, excellent communication skills, work ethic, and intellectual capacity and curiosity, she addresses challenges head on and is a natural leader who inspires the teams she works with utilizing kindness and empathy. Pierson went beyond the classroom by working on a research paper with Dr. Anastasia Stuart-Edwards on perfectionism, which she presented publicly twice and helped prepare for submission to a top-ranked industrial psychology journal.

Graduate Academic Medals

School of Graduate Studies Silver Medal of Merit, Doctor of Philosophy — Ogochukwu Kelechi Onyeso (Ceremony III)

Dr. Ogochukwu Onyeso exemplifies the highest standards of academic excellence, research innovation and scholarly leadership. A PhD graduate in population studies in health, his doctoral work is both original and impactful, contributing significantly to global ageing and health research. With an outstanding record of publications, awards, teaching and service, he has distinguished himself as one of the most accomplished students in the ULethbridge graduate program.

School of Graduate Studies Medal of Merit, Master of Arts — Madison Badger (Ceremony II)

Madison Badger graduates with a Master of Arts in Anthropology. Her thesis, *Queering Cultural Resource Management: Defying Norms in CRM Archaeology*, examines the gendered production of knowledge in archaeological research by employing queer and feminist theories and perspectives. Her research makes important contributions to our gendered understanding of the archaeological past. She will commence her PhD studies in Applied Health Sciences at Brock University in September.

School of Graduate Studies Medal of Merit, Master of Fine Arts — Mahsa Zaredehabadi (Ceremony III)

Mahsa Zaredehabadi conquered the challenges of beginning a new program while being introduced to an entirely new country. She continues to thrive as she learns western theatre practices and applies her previous skills and experience to new ways of working and collaborating. Her thesis production, *Encouraging Live Theatre Attendance: Innovating with the Application of Emerging Technologies to Attract Contemporary Audiences*, was an exciting experiment into the world of technological application in theatrical contexts.

School of Graduate Studies Medal of Merit, Master of Science — Jaxon Reiter (Ceremony I)

Jaxon Reiter, a Master of Science in Biological Sciences graduate, has contributed to ULethbridge through research, teaching and collegial governance. He made novel and important discoveries about seed production and has developed teaching strategies for challenging courses at all undergraduate levels. As Graduate Students' Association president, he effectively represented graduate student interests at all levels of university governance. Reiter will continue his academic path at University California-Davis, where he has been accepted into a PhD program in plant biology.

School of Graduate Studies Silver Medal of Merit, Master of Education — Brandon Good (Ceremony III)

Brandon Good graduates with a Master of Education in Educational Leadership. He conducted his graduate research with patient thoughtfulness and integrity, aiming to better understand the work of K-12 educators. His research highlighted the importance

of placing the process of learning at the centre of leadership decision-making. Additionally, he discovered that teacher and leader perceptions of professional learning often differs, underscoring the need for continued research on professional learning communities.

University of Lethbridge Spring 2025 Convocation ceremonies take place Thursday, May 29 and Friday, May 30 at the Centre for Sport and Wellness gymnasium, beginning at 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. each day.

For complete information on Spring 2025 Convocation, visit the [convocation web page](#).

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/celebrating-spring-2025-convocation-medal-winners>

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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.