



University of
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release — Tuesday, August 12, 2025

New award honours Indigenous excellence and leadership

The Dhillon School of Business at the University of Lethbridge has established a new award to be given annually to a graduating Indigenous student who exemplifies academic achievement, cultural integrity and outstanding character.



Brayden Day Chief is the first recipient of the Poomaksin Pens Award, which consists of the pen set and \$500, because of his academic success and his vision for leadership in business and governance.

Poomaksin is a Blackfoot word that means ‘to transfer,’ as with a sacred bundle or knowledge and skills. The name and the pens reflect the power of voice, leadership and the enduring strength of Indigenous knowledge and

presence within academic and professional spaces.

“This award is not only about celebrating success; it’s about investing in the next generation of Indigenous leaders and honouring the traditions that guide them,” says Don McIntyre, a faculty member at the [Dhillon School of Business](#).

McIntyre, a member of the Timiskaming Nation, was inspired to create the award based on personal experience. When he graduated from law school, a friend and mentor named Billy Mair, a citizen of the Tlingit Nation, gifted him a treasured set of pens.

“Billy had held onto those pens for many years, valuing them not only as tools but as a symbol,” says McIntyre. “To him, those pens represented the power of words, the responsibilities that come with knowledge and the tools needed for the fight ahead.”

Each year, the award will honour the journey of Indigenous students and celebrate the importance of carrying forward their voice, culture and contributions. It not only recognizes

academic success but also celebrates Indigenous resilience and mentorship and affirms the commitment of the Dhillon School of Business to support Indigenous students.

[Read online.](#)

—30—

Contact:

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor
University of Lethbridge
403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)
caroline.zentner@uleth.ca

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.