



News Release

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Southern Alberta Higher Education Relationship creates shared vision for region's post-secondary institutions

An historic collaborative relationship between four southern Alberta post-secondary schools will create a shared vision for the future of higher education in the region and further solidify southern Alberta as a destination for post-secondary learners.

The Southern Alberta Higher Education Relationship is a formal Commitment to Work Together that unites Red Crow Community College, Lethbridge Polytechnic, Medicine Hat College and the University of Lethbridge in a partnership to enhance higher education in southern Alberta through collaborative efforts. The alliance's Blackfoot name, Innakotsiysinni (respect for others), reflects the shared goals and mutually supportive nature of the agreement.

The alliance will focus on four specific areas of collaboration, including academic programs, research, student supports and regional stewardship.

- Academic programs will feature clear articulation pathways between institutions that encourage student mobility, with interdisciplinary programs jointly developed to meet regional needs.
- Research projects will encourage the sharing of facilities and expertise as well as joint applications for research funding.
- Student support services and facilities will be enhanced through shared resources and jointly developed initiatives promoting student well-being and success.
- Regional stewardship involves the collection and sharing of information and knowledge between institutions, while leveraging resources and building collective capacity. The goal is to determine, prioritize and then enable educational access to the full spectrum of learning opportunities available to learners.

The alliance plans to meet two to three times per year to discuss action items and evaluate progress, guided by the principles of inclusivity, transparency and consensus-building. Mutual respect and reconciliation are at the heart of the collective approach, with a special focus on

reconciliation and Indigenous education. A student-centred commitment to all learners will be the focus of all decisions.

The potential of this collaborative effort is substantial. By leveraging the unique strengths and resources of each institution to create a comprehensive and diverse educational environment for all learners, the alliance will be able to enhance educational opportunities, strengthen research impact and improve student supports.

Partner Statements

“This partnership embodies our purpose of building a vibrant future with learners and our region. By working together, we can better support students across southern Alberta, strengthening our college, our community and our region.”

Kevin Shufflebotham
President & CEO, Medicine Hat College

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“In our partnership, we share our history, strengths and responsibilities so every learner can find their place. In the Niitsitapi way, relationships are the source of strength. Each institution offers its own gifts, stories and responsibilities. When we come together in Innakotsiisinni — respect for one another — we honour the land, uplift our learners and ensure that the wisdom of our ancestors guides our future. Our partnership and commitment bring balance, respect for each Nation and institution, and help create a place where all learners can learn, thrive and belong.”

Sinopaaki - Samantha Fox
Interim President, Red Crow Community College

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“This partnership reflects something truly unique, a university, college, polytechnic and Indigenous college coming together with a shared purpose in one region. By working collaboratively, we are strengthening pathways for students and positioning southern Alberta as a distinct and compelling destination for post-secondary education.”

Dr. Brad Donaldson
President & CEO, Lethbridge Polytechnic

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“The opportunities created through this collaborative approach will greatly enhance student outcomes by creating more mobility between institutions, enriching educational options through collaborative programs and initiatives and enhancing services and supports. This sharing of expertise will also strengthen the significant impact of our research efforts regionally, nationally and globally.”

Dr. Digvir Jayas

President & Vice-Chancellor, University of Lethbridge

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“This partnership is about making post-secondary education work better for students — clearer pathways, stronger alignment with jobs, and high-quality education close to home. It’s a practical example of how collaboration strengthens Alberta’s post-secondary system.”

Minister Myles McDougall
Minister of Advanced Education

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/southern-alberta-higher-education-relationship-creates-shared-vision-region%E2%80%99s-post-secondary>

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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.