

For immediate release — Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Southern Alberta Medical Program in the spotlight to kick off 2026-27 Public Professor Series

One of the most significant program additions in the recent history of the University of Lethbridge will be featured as the opening subject as the [2026-27 Public Professor Series](#) kicks off later this month.

Dr. Rick Buck, associate dean of the Southern Alberta Medical Program (SAMP), will be joined by Drs. Jonathan Cluett and Ashley Rommens in presenting [Growing our own: How SAMP can transform health care and research in southern Alberta](#). The talk, the first of six in the annual Public Professor Series, presented by the University of Lethbridge Senate, takes place Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at the Sandman Signature Lethbridge Lodge. Scotiabank is the talk sponsor for the first event.

“It’s exciting to launch this year’s series with such an important topic, and one that impacts our community in such a significant way,” says Dr.

Dena McMartin, ULethbridge’s vice-president (research). “If you look at our speaker lineup for the year, you’ll see a consistent theme of issues that matter to people in southern Alberta, with our faculty members sharing their expertise and opening the door to their insight. It’s really going to be an engaging season.”

The Southern Alberta Medical Program brings medical education closer to home for students in Lethbridge and communities across southern Alberta — an exciting milestone for our region and its future health-care needs.

Join Dr. Rick Buck as he hosts a conversation with Dr. Jonathan Cluett and Dr. Ashley Rommens to discuss what the Southern Alberta Medical Program — a partnership between the University of Lethbridge and the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary — could mean for southern Alberta. Drawing on their experiences as practicing physicians and medical educators in the region, they’ll explore how training future physicians close to home can help



strengthen local health care, support innovation in medical education and create new opportunities for collaboration across communities.

The conversation will also consider how SAMP may help shape the future of health research and scholarship in southern Alberta while building a healthier future by preparing physicians who understand the unique needs, challenges and strengths of the region.

Dr. Rick Buck is the inaugural associate dean of SAMP. He is an associate professor in Family Medicine at the University of Calgary, a clinical assistant professor at the University of Alberta, an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge and an emergency physician at Chinook Regional Hospital.

The Public Professor Series brings ULeithbridge researchers into the community to share their work and explore the ideas shaping our world. All talks are free and open to everyone. Registration for each event is required. In addition to the six Lethbridge talks, the Public Professor Series is going on the road with presenters making appearances in Vancouver (Dr. Susan Dieleman, Feb. 3, 2027) and Medicine Hat (Brent Saccucci, Apr. 8, 2027, in partnership with Medicine Hat College). Join us and discover how far a question can take you.

2026-27 Public Professor Series

Growing our own: How SAMP can transform health care and research in southern Alberta — Dr. Rick Buck, Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026

Grasping at shadows: Our relationship with cinematic characters — Dr. Aaron Taylor, Thursday, Oct. 29, 2026

The curious task of economics and why it matters more than ever in Canadian agriculture — Dr. Danny Le Roy, Thursday, Nov. 26, 2026

When it comes to democracy, what matters more: trust or truth? — Dr. Susan Dieleman, Thursday, Jan. 28, 2027 (Second date, Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2027, Vancouver)

Thinking globally: How do active kids today create a healthy tomorrow? — Dr. Richard Larouche, Thursday, Feb. 25, 2027

From controversy to compassion: How to disagree without disconnecting — Brent Saccucci, Thursday, March 25, 2027 (Second date, Thursday, Apr. 8, 2027, Medicine Hat)

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/southern-alberta-medical-program-spotlight-kick-2026-27-public-professor-series>

-- 30 --

Contact:

Trevor Kenney, Manager of Public Affairs
403-329-2710

403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca
@ULethbridge

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.