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U of L welcomes new and continuing students to campus

Before they attend their first lectures for the 2016 fall semester on Wednesday, Sept. 7, new University of Lethbridge students have the chance to check out their surroundings and get oriented to university life.

In addition to the more than 5,800 students who will return to campus as continuing students, more than 2,500 new students are expected to arrive at the U of L. New students are invited to attend New Student Orientation (NSO) on Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 5 and 6.

“We are extremely excited for the holiday Monday and we look forward to meeting students at our NSO program,” says Natasha Buis Deering, director of enrolment services. “More than 70 per cent of students are from outside of southern Alberta so orientation programming plays a critical role in welcoming students, not just to our university but also our community.”

From 8 to 9 a.m. on Monday, Julie and Lowell Taylor, the two alumni who participated in CTV’s *The Amazing Race Canada* will be on hand to welcome new students. NSO gets underway with the Bullhorn drum group providing the official kickoff at 8:30 a.m. Commencement, the formal ceremony where students are welcomed to the academic community at the U of L, begins at 9:05 a.m. Danielle Tait, the inaugural Young Alumnus Achievement Award recipient, is the keynote speaker at 9:40 a.m. She will talk about the importance of following one’s passions, her own experiences with liberal education and the value of learning beyond the classroom.

Following Commencement, new students can check out a variety of sessions designed to acquaint them with the U of L. Session topics include how to get involved on campus, academic expectations, financial management, support services, safety initiatives and study strategies. Sessions continue on Tuesday morning until 11:30 a.m. Starting at 11:45 a.m., students can meet the members of their respective faculty. The day wraps up with a scavenger hunt from 2 to 3 p.m.

Because a new student’s first week is packed with an overwhelming amount of information, Encore Orientation sessions are offered during the first semester at times when students can really use the information. For example, a session on coping with homesickness is offered after the Thanksgiving weekend and a session on study skills is offered before midterm exams.

“NSO sets students up, both academically and personally, to make the most of their post-secondary journey and a strong orientation program has proven to increase student success in the classroom and throughout their degrees,” says Buis Deering.

Following NSO, the U of L Students’ Union (ULSU) has planned three days of fun for Fresh Fest 2016. The Fresh Fest Luau on Thursday, Sept. 8 goes from 1 to 5 p.m. on ‘The Hill’ located on the south side of Lot E. Students can enjoy the inflatable obstacle course, music, giveaways and a giant 100-foot slip ‘n slide. A Fresh Pizza Party follows from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at The Zoo. A cabaret is scheduled for Friday night and the Fresh U Jamboree, featuring live music and entertainment from 4 to 11 p.m., will be held Saturday in The Grove. The line-up of talent includes Mother Mother, Coleman Hell, The Dudes, Shred Kelly, The Silkstones, Awd Fellas and Millz Skillz. About 1,900 students are expected to attend.

“Fresh Fest is an amazing way for new and returning students to come together and celebrate the beginning of another school year. Our aim is to provide students at the U of L with a safe, fun, and unforgettable experience while they attend post-secondary,” says Royal Adkin, the ULSU vice-president of student affairs. “The Students’ Union is always committed to putting the safety of students first, regardless of how large Fresh Fest becomes. The SU strongly believes that Fresh Fest encourages students to have fun in a safe and responsible way.”

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