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University of Lethbridge launches AGILITY program

The University of Lethbridge today launched a new program – AGILITY – a university-wide initiative that has been designed to nurture and support innovation and entrepreneurship among U of L students at both the Lethbridge and Calgary campuses.

AGILITY builds on the strong foundation of a liberal education while preparing students for life and careers in the 21st century. Launched under the leadership of Interim Vice-President (Research) Dr. Lesley Brown and U of L alumnus Anil Pereira (BMgt '87), AGILITY provides students access to knowledge about innovation within key sectors of the Canadian economy, and supports them through talks and mentorship by faculty and industry leaders, course work, scholarships and fellowships, access to the latest technological tools and physical innovation and collaboration spaces.

"AGILITY is poised to advance the position of the University of Lethbridge as a leading institution for teaching, research and 21st Century skill development," says Brown. "By encouraging and helping students learn about innovation, and by celebrating and supporting their entrepreneurial spirit, AGILITY will enhance the University's capacity to graduate the thought leaders of tomorrow."

What exactly is AGILITY? It's an experiential academic and research program that bridges all disciplines and is open to students in all majors on both of the University's Lethbridge and Calgary campuses. AGILITY's goal is to equip students with the skills of resilience, responsiveness and adaptability to allow them to keep pace with an evolving labour market, as well as skills that will enable them to tolerate risk and thrive despite change or failure. In short, AGILITY will give U of L students a head start in establishing their careers before they even enter the workforce.

"AGILITY builds on the fabric of the University," says Pereira, a Silicon Valley veteran who advises high-profile startups and technology companies on how to launch new products and grow their businesses. From this unique vantage point, Pereira sits at the forefront of cutting-edge technologies and brings that expertise to U of L students through his role as an advisor to the AGILITY program.

"AGILITY is about helping students learn that innovation happens at all levels, and in all

types, of enterprise – whether a small business, family-owned business, large company, public sector organization, or an entrepreneurial venture that a student may want to join or start down the road."

In its first rollout phase in 2015-2016, AGILITY will focus on enabling innovation and entrepreneurship in the areas of agriculture and agribusiness. With thanks to the generous financial support of Cor Van Raay Farms, the University of Lethbridge has created a program that responds to our agricultural heritage and the fabric of the southern Alberta landscape. The initial thrust of the AGILITY program will also lay the foundation for a range of academic and learning experiences in other sectors.

AGILITY Speaker Series

AGILITY will offer students a range of public lectures and workshops in both Lethbridge and Calgary. Examples of 2015-2016 AGILITY speakers include:

• **Tom Burke** – Senior Investment Advisor, Canaccord Genuity, who will moderate a roundtable with agribusiness and agri-tech leaders entitled Canadian Agriculture in the 21st Century: Technology, Finance, Sustainability
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• **Steve Cloutier** – Chief Executive Officer, Roper Energy Inc., who will deliver a public lecture on Energy Startups: Key Lessons and Insights for Today's Entrepreneur

• **Paul Oss** – Public Affairs Officer, Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education, Province of Alberta, who will deliver a lecture on A Public Sector Perspective on Keeping Pace with Technological Change

• **Chris Perry –** CKP Farms Ltd. and Grow the Energy Circle Ltd. in southern Alberta, who will hold a workshop on integrating environmental stewardship and innovative technology into agriculture

AGILITY Scholarships and Fellowships

In order to attract, support and incent students who show a demonstrated interest in innovation and entrepreneurship, AGILITY will offer a range of scholarships and fellowships. The first awards – the Cor Van Raay Scholarships and Cor Van Raay Fellowships – will be awarded to students focused on innovation and entrepreneurship in agribusiness and agri-tech. These awards build on existing scholarships at the U of L, including the Pereira Entrepreneurship Award, which was established last year in advance of today's launch of AGILITY.

AGILITY Innovation Labs

To provide students with access to the latest technology, as well as space for innovation

and collaboration, AGILITY will design, outfit and deliver a series of collaborative, flexible, open spaces for formal and informal learning across both U of L campuses. These innovation labs are the cornerstones of AGILITY's applied learning activities. AGILITY spaces facilitate learning through hands-on, self-directed exploration of the latest software, hardware and applications, and they provide a physical location where students can access these tools and technologies for creativity, for advancing new ideas, or simply to gather to share knowledge and resources, or develop ideas. Examples of software, hardware and applications that students, faculty and alumni can access through AGILITY innovation labs include:

• Digital media and design resources such as virtual reality films from industry leaders such as Montréal-based Félix and Paul Studios (http://www.felixandpaul.com)

• State-of-the-art Education Technology (Ed-Tech) platforms for use by future teachers such as the Classroom Edition of SplashMath, the leading math practice apps for grades K-6 (https://www.splashmath.com); and Tynker Classroom, the leading platform for teaching kids programming and STEM skills (https://www.tynker.com/school/)

• State-of-the-art hardware including 3D printers, touchscreen monitors, microcontrollers, CNC routers, vinyl, laser and plasma cutters, laser scanners, motion sensing equipment and virtual reality headsets

For more on the U of L's exciting new AGILITY program, visit agility-ulethbridge.ca.

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