

VISIT

LETHBRIDGE.CA
CAMPUSMEDIA

For additional news, videos,
photo galleries and more!



Lethbridge
Campus Media

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*“It isn’t instruments making music; it’s
the people behind the instruments
that are making the music!”*

See Lethbridge Symphony’s great plans Page 6



March 29, 2021 Vol. 53, Issue 04



ENDEAVOUR



College plans for the fall

Post secondary institutions are urged to be prepared for return to in-person classes in the fall.

By Sylvia Adam Page 2



Virtual reality training

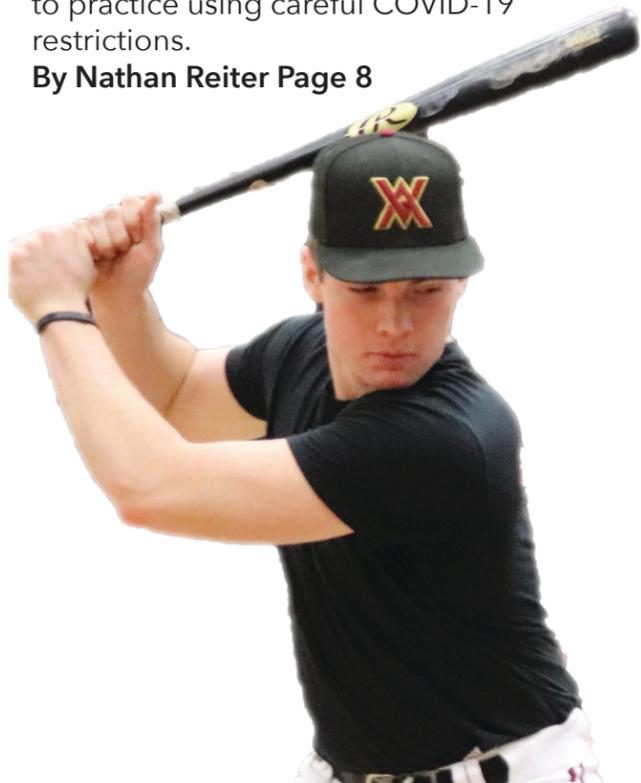
Lethbridge College is developing a virtual reality training program for the school of justice studies.

By Mario Cabradilla Page 6

Jets practice carefully

The Vauxhall Academy Jets are still able to practice using careful COVID-19 restrictions.

By Nathan Reiter Page 8



In love for a long time



PHOTO BY MARIO CABRADILLA

Pam Keating and Duane Pike hold each other’s hands as they sauntered along Henderson Lake in Lethbridge, Alberta on March 23, 2021.

Businesses sad to see Mustard Seed go

KARSEN, MARCZUK

@Karsen_Marczuk

After a lengthy meeting which wrapped up just before midnight on Tuesday, Lethbridge City Council voted against a rezoning application for the Mustard Seed’s proposed sober shelter site.

Council voted 7-2 against bylaw 6267 with only Mayor Chris Spearman and Councillor Rob Miyashiro voting yes. Mustard Seed says it will be leaving Lethbridge after it spent roughly \$100,000 over three years trying to find a location in the community.

Some business owners were setting aside their concerns and hoping to welcome the Mustard Seed’s proposed sober shelter site at the old Western One building in Lethbridge.

The Mustard Seed was planning to open Lethbridge’s only sober shelter at 110 13 St. South, where individuals recovering from addictions or are substance-free can find the resources and support they need.

Duncan Vincent, owner of Custom Indoor Grow doesn’t think it will cause too much of a disturbance.

“I obviously have concerns of it being 100 feet from my front door, but beyond that I think it’s a really good location,” said Vincent. “It’s obviously a needed social service, there’s a serious lack of shelter space in Lethbridge. The existing shelter from what I’ve heard from multiple homeless people is a complete nightmare, people are afraid to go there because it’s way over capacity.”

Businesses in the area were contacted by the Mustard Seed in January regarding the proposed sober shelter site. Kelti Baird, owner of Theoretically Brewing says she also has some concerns but is looking forward to working with the Mustard Seed.

“The lot behind us is a great location for the shelter. It’s an underutilized property, my only concern with it is the size of the building for what they want to do, but if planning says that it’s an appropriate size, that’s fine. I think

that for our area for Lethbridge it’s right beside the 13 St. underpass where a lot of people walk through, it’s very accessible and it’s very visible.”

Byron Bradley, managing director of central Alberta and Lethbridge at the Mustard Seed says the existing shelter in Lethbridge has some of the highest utilization numbers in the whole province and has had that for a number of months.

“The Alberta government wanted us to come down to Lethbridge back in November to open up a temporary site and we were unable to secure a temporary site with the City of Lethbridge. We’ve been very anxious to open something up, the conditions for people currently are not very good, there’s COVID-19 outbreaks, people do not have enough space during this pandemic and even with the pandemic aside, it’s too overcrowded.”

Bradley says the sober shelter will be operational 24/7, providing individuals with support, security and a variety of services.

Baird says the feedback people have provided to her regarding Mustard Seed’s operations has been positive and she doesn’t believe her business will be affected by the proposed shelter.

“I contacted about 20 businesses and heard back from most of them and none of them had any complaints about the Mustard Seed operations. So, the Mustard Seed has a proven track record on responsible operation of the shelter.”

Theoretically Brewing and the Mustard Seed have also been talking about activating the alleyway between the two properties as it is a non-driveable alleyway to create a community garden.

This is the second time in the past few months the Mustard Seed has been unsuccessful in finding a location in Lethbridge. Recently, the Mustard Seed pulled its plans to rezone the Ramada Hotel on Mayor Magrath Dr. for a supportive living after it was unable to get federal funding.

Local post-secondary institutions plan for fall semester

SYLVIA ADAM
@SylviaAdam2

The University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College are currently deciding how curriculum delivery will take place in the Fall 2021 semester.

As of March 18, 2021, Demetrios Nicolaides, the Minister of Advanced Education, released a statement regarding curriculum delivery for the fall semester. In the statement, Nicolaides urges post-secondary institutions to prepare for a full return to in-person classes in the fall.

“With that in mind, I encourage all post-secondary institutions, students and families to prepare for a full return to on-campus learning this September.”

It is estimated that by the end of June, all adult Albertans will be able to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

At the moment, the U of L has 11 per cent of its course offerings on campus, which is a slight increase from the fall semester. The Summer 2021 semester will mostly be held online as well.

Lab classes at the U of L are being held on campus this semester in small groups with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Kathleen Massey, the Associate Vice President (Students) for the university says they're hopeful counseling services and clubs can take place on campus in the

fall.

“Perhaps we can start offering counseling services again in person in the fall for example. Group counseling, with small groups. We hope more club activities can happen on campus in the fall and so we're working with our student union to plan for that as well.”

To keep staff, students and faculty safe, Massey says everyone on campus is expected to wear a mask, social distance, record their presence on campus by using the ulethbridge safe app and do a self-assessment to check for COVID-19 symptoms.

She adds the university has been diligent in sanitizing commonly used areas.

“Anderson Hall has been open throughout the pandemic for students who want to have a quiet place to study,

use the Wi-Fi, use a computer, obtain resources from the library through Anderson Hall and we have staff here who are sanitizing the spaces after every student uses them.”

Due to the pandemic, many of the university's buildings are locked. Students who have classes on campus have a special pass card to access the building their

class is located in.

Lethbridge College has about 30 per cent of its classes on campus this semester.

Paula Burns, the President and CEO of Lethbridge College, is excited for the



University of Lethbridge



college to be full of people again.

“When it's full, our campus is a vibrant, exciting and inclusive place that enhances the student experience. We look forward to once again hosting campus events, cheering on our Kodiaks and bringing together people from across the world. We are ready and look forward to welcoming our community back in September.”

Samantha Lenci, Provost and Vice President Academic at the college says how the next six months unfold will have a big impact on how many classes can be offered on campus.

A new change that has happened at the college during the pandemic, however, is HyFlex opportunities. Lenci explains how HyFlex learning takes place.

“Media is offered, but media is offered in two ways. So, you can either be on campus and take the courses or you could take them remotely at the same time.

You'd be sitting in class if you chose to be in class and there would be a few cameras. People would actually be learning remotely while you're sitting in class.”

She adds that students have a choice to make, they can choose to come to class or they can choose to stay home and learn remotely. Right now, the college has 14 classrooms designed for HyFlex learning and its hoping to get more for the fall semester.

Lenci says it is likely COVID-19 safety protocols will be in effect on campus until the Fall of 2022. One thing that can be confirmed is that tuition for Lethbridge College students will not be going down for the Fall 2021 semester. Despite this, the college is ready to return to on-campus learning.

Overall, both institutions say the number of services and classes they are able to offer on campus depends on public health guidelines and vaccinations.

Lethbridge schools prepare for budget cuts

MARIO CABRADILLA
@cantfindmario

The Alberta Budget 2021 released on Feb. 25 revealed a decrease of \$350 million for the province's higher learning institutions. It is estimated to further decrease by about \$50 million more next year.

Lethbridge College cut its budget by \$2.7 million, a 6.7 per cent decrease from last year's grant. Paula Burns, president and CEO of Lethbridge College, says the budget cut was a little bit higher than expected.

“It's always disappointing when you have to reduce your budget and when the operating grant that you get is less. But, as I said, we did expect a certain amount and we have been working hard to make sure that we can continue to deliver on our mission.”

Mike Mahon, president of the University of Lethbridge, says while he understands the province's fiscal challenges, cutting post-secondary funding is not the way to go and will not benefit the province.

“There is a point at which cutting us too severely undermines our ability to be competitive both in Canada and around the world.”

Mahon says the U of L cut its budget

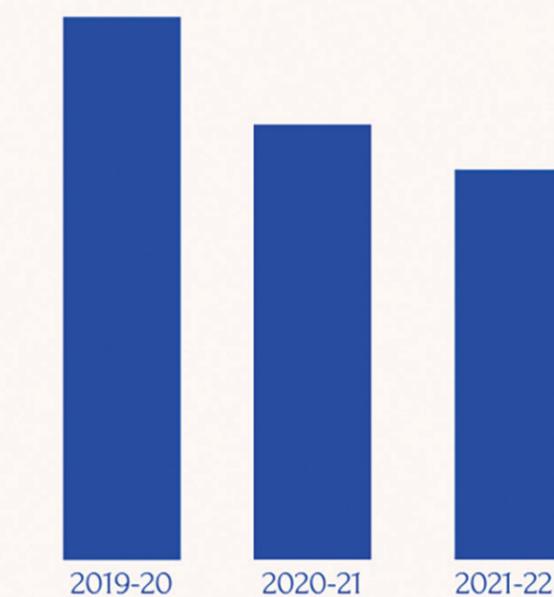
by \$5.7 million and reduced their workforce by 9.2 per cent.

Despite the budget cut, both institutions are working to maintain delivery of high-quality education. Budget 2021

injected \$1.25 billion to the health care system to fight COVID-19. However, according to a Feb. 26 statement released by the Council of Post-Secondary Presidents of Alberta (COPPOA), the government

needs to “reduce red tape and government-imposed rules that prevent institutions from realizing more own-sourced revenue to improve their financial sustainability.”

ALBERTA BUDGET FOR 2021



Total operating expense in millions of dollars (before COVID-19 / RECOVERY PLAN)

- 2019-20 (Actual) : 5,477
- 2020-21 (Budget) : 5,126
- 2021-22 (Estimate) : 5,044

Ministry of advanced education - operating expense

Construction has started on Exhibition Park Agri-food Hub and Trade Centre

KARSEN MARCZUK
@karsen_marczuk

As warmer temperatures arrive in southern Alberta, the reconstruction of the new \$70.6-million Lethbridge & District Exhibition Agri-food Hub and Trade Centre is heating up.

Earlier this month, trees were removed from the grounds in preparation for Phase 1 of construction, which is set to begin with an official sod turning ceremony on March 31. Bill Scales, project director at Ward Bros. Construction Ltd. says it closed the first tender package earlier this week which has given the approval to start earthwork.

“We are basically ready to start at the beginning of April, with site clearing, building demolition, stripping and filling the site. There is a massive amount of back-fill to go in the site as it’s too low. That process will take probably four to six weeks. We will be tendering the piling in April, which will allow that work to start on site around mid-May. Piling will be followed by the footings and foundations, then come September we will start the structure and carry on from there.”

At the beginning of March, 211 trees were cut down, most of the trees removed have been in the ground for over 80 years. The majority of the trees were ready to be removed due to disease or the end-of-life cycle. For each tree removed, a new tree will be planted in the landscaping plan.

Mike Warkentin, Lethbridge and District Exhibition Park Chief Operating Officer says the trees removed won’t be going to waste. A portion of the trees will be recycled and used as furniture pieces in the building, while others will be cultivated and replanted.

“We’re going to actually take cuttings from some of the oldest growth trees on site, cultivate them and replant them into the landscaping plan, which is something I didn’t realize you could do, which is fantastic because it actually gets to maintain these old growth trees that are on site into the future design.”

The new Agri-food and Trade Centre will be over 266,000 square feet. The north, south and main pavilions will be demolished in the redevelopment process, but the northwest building will be used as a shop and storage. Heritage Hall will not be touched and is set to remain a rental facility.

Parkside Dr. will not be closed during the construction process, with construction traffic exiting towards the south on Parkside Dr. to 43 St., helping minimize the impact on surrounding neighbourhoods.

The redevelopment project is expected to create



PHOTO BY KARSEN MARCZUK

Korthuis Tree Care and The Bearded Ox work to remove 211 trees in preparation for the redevelopment of the Exhibition Park Agri-food Hub and Trade Centre.

roughly 300 to 400 jobs throughout the two-year process. Blair Grier, project manager at Lethbridge & District Exhibition says the new facility will be using energy efficient materials such as LED lighting and a new heat exchange system.

“We are using a hydronic heating system rather than just a straight air-to-air system, so where you have natural gas burners in the air handling units, instead we just have a central high efficiency condensing boiler and that will provide hot water and then the cooling towers will provide chilled water to all the air handling units.”

The building will feature huge glass facades, 26-foot high vaulted lobby ceilings and 30-foot high trade halls. In the north end of the trade halls, a 70,000 pound load capacity will be designed to withstand gear and speaker systems that can hang from the roof allowing for future concerts and shows to take place.

Warkentin says the overall goal of the redevelopment is to drive significant economic development to Lethbridge. Whether this means bringing in more business to the community, more jobs, he says the list is endless.

“Lethbridge obviously has a tremendous agricultural industry, connect that with Canada’s premier food quarter that extends to Taber, it’s got every element it needs to be an investment attraction hub with the exception of that showcase piece. We anticipate being that we hope to bring a lot of eyes to the region and as well a lot of investment.”

Over the construction process, Lethbridge & District Exhibition will work closely with Ward Bros. Construction Ltd. to help maintain space for current events and to ensure they will not be interrupted. The completion of the building is anticipated to be in late December of 2022, with an official opening in early 2023.

Local Lethbridge treatment facility is anxious for next year’s funding support

MARIO CABRADILLA
@cantfindmario

A Lethbridge recovery treatment facility is anxious about funding for the next fiscal year following the pandemic. Southern Alcare Manor (SAM) offers various long-term programs aiding clients with addiction.

“We’re just kind of in a period where we don’t know exactly where our funding is going to be after the end of next fiscal year,” says David Fromm, executive director of SAM. “So, just a little bit of nervousness on our part.”

According to Fromm, Alberta Health Services is currently providing 40 per cent of the facility’s funding. However, it remains unknown if continued funding beyond March 21, 2022, has been confirmed.

“I don’t believe that it’s [funding] going to be cut off,” says Fromm, adding on that AHS has been funding the facility for 40 years. “I just don’t know for sure.”

Fromm says the facility is funded on



PHOTO BY MARIO CABRADILLA

Holly Lemieux, program manager at Southern Alcare Manor, says COVID-19 has been difficult for their clients due to being unable to connect with family.

a per-capita basis. However, with occupancy reducing to about 50 per cent because of social distancing and pandemic protocols, funding has also been reduced, resulting in difficulty running the facility.

“They’ve [government] been as supportive as they possibly can,” says Fromm. “But when you cut your capacity in half, you know, as any small business, it’s tough to make it financially too.”

Holly Lemieux, program manager for the facility, says the biggest challenge they are currently facing is the separation of family and friends from their clients. Lemieux says that many clients often first attempt to rekindle and reconnect with their family and relationships, but visitation stopped following COVID-19 guidelines and policies.

“They want to be able to reconnect in a sober, clean way to their family and friends,” says Lemieux. “And they’ve got an opportunity to rebuild those relationships. And COVID has made that hard to happen.”

Despite the challenges, Fromm remains optimistic, adding that the facility is beginning to open up again and encourages people struggling with addiction to put in applications.

“People are afraid of recovery. They think they won’t have the guts or the resources to do it, but it’s a lot less scary to go through a recovery facility than it is to face life with the terrible forces of addiction.”



OPINION

Editorial Staff Fall 2020-Winter 2021

Sylvia Adam	Alejandra Pulido
Mario Cabradilla	Nathan Reiter
Karsen Marczuk	Josiah Spyker
Jaxon McGinn	

Advertising Sales &

Production Staff Fall 2020-Winter 2021

Hannah Barnsley	Isaac Milko
Kiera Bowen	Jacob Pengelly
Tabetha Burke	Jessica Smith
Cole Cyre	Joy Warren
Trevor Graham-Pardi	Darzia Wilson
Sean Kjos	Derek Wipf
Kendra Laybourne	Lexi Wojtowicz
Nicole Letkeman	Colton Won

Publisher

Martina Emard

Technician

Paige Thornborough

Advisors

Martina Emard
Kris Hodgson-Bright

The Endeavour is produced 10 times during the academic year by students in the Digital Communications and Media program at Lethbridge College. Stories, photos and advertisements are produced as part of the academic program and are not representative of the opinions of the Board of Governors of Lethbridge College, its directors, officers, employees, agents or representatives.

The Endeavour newspaper, eNews television and Kodiak online radio are part of LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.



Advertising

For advertising rates and information, please call or email our office. Advertising rates can also be viewed online at lethbridgecampusmedia.ca/advertise-with-us/

Advertising Inquiries:

403-320-3301
ads@lethbridgecampusmedia.ca

Letters to the Editor

Submissions to Letters to the Editor should be exclusive to The Endeavour. To submit a letter, include name, address and daytime phone number. Keep letters under 250 words. The Endeavour reserves the right to edit for length, taste and clarity.

E-mail: news@lethbridgecampusmedia.ca

Fax: 1-888-520-6143

Mailing Address:

Endeavour Newspaper - TE3225
c/o Lethbridge College
3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge, AB T1K 1L6



PHOTO BY SYLVIA ADAM

A Lethbridge College student does her homework in Founders' Square on March 25, 2021.

Alberta budget cuts short-sighted

How much more can they cut?

Alberta's 2021 budget has estimated that funding for post-secondary schools will decrease by \$135 million between 2021-22.

Alberta budget 2021 is expected to increase post-secondary tuition and students say they're already struggling with high tuition costs.

Many post-secondary institutions are expected to receive more minor government support and student financial aid for future students. Student awards are not expected to increase over the next year, despite the rising tuition costs for post-secondary schools across Alberta.

Universities and colleges face cuts in the Alberta government's stay-the-course budget, with institutions expected to cover an increasing share of operational costs.

Alberta's post-secondary schools will be losing up to 750 full-time jobs in 2021-22.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, how are faculty who are losing their jobs able to find work? Some believe staff who are losing their positions will have to find another opportunity in their field of studies.

Shannon Phillips, MLA for Lethbridge-West says the UCP government is making it challenging for post-secondary institutions to operate.

"We will cut off our potential up for the next generation. This is not just the economic opportunity of people graduating with large debts, it's not just shrinking the opportunity for areas of studies which we know is going to happen," said Phillips.

Many students who want to go to post-secondary will see a hike in tuition fees. They are already high for even one semester, making students rethink going to post-secondary.

Students in the Digital Communications and Media program at Lethbridge College pay over \$4,000 a semester to attend college. Across the river, students attending the University of Lethbridge fork out over \$9,000 to \$10,000 for a 5-course schedule. Up

Highway 2, students at the University of Calgary pay between \$6,000 to \$9,000 for a kinesiology degree. Dr. Paula Burns, President and CEO of Lethbridge College says the Alberta Budget will affect the college.

"It's always disappointing when you have to reduce your budget and when the operating grant is less, but as I said, we did expect a certain amount," said Burns.

Statistics Canada compiled a study on the effects of COVID-19 on youth. 49 per cent of post-secondary students lost job prospects because of the pandemic. It also discovered that students could lose between \$23,000 to \$44,000 in cumulative earnings over the next five years.

According to the Global News story on the Alberta budget published on Feb. 25, 2021

by Dean Bennet.

"The U of C Students' Union said students could expect to see their tuition increase by 22.5 per cent by the time the budget runs its course and by eliminating the tuition tax credit, the government is putting another \$200-million tax increase on students and their families."

According to CTV News Edmonton, Rachel Notley quickly criticized the government's fiscal plan, saying it would make Albertans pay more and get less.

"We knew we were going to see cuts. What he didn't tell us was that every single Albertan was going to pay more for income tax," Notley said.

"What he didn't tell us was that you'd pay more for the services you count on."

How is it fair for students and their families to have more of a tuition hike? The answer to that is, it's not fair that families are already struggling to provide a decent education for their kids. Seeing another increase in tuition will be challenging for many families who won't be able to offer their kids' education without going even further into debt.

eLIFE

Lethbridge Animal Shelters Adapt to COVID-19

JOSIAH SPYKER
@JosiahSpyker

COVID-19 has changed the way animal shelters are operating to protect public safety.

This forced shelters to change how animal adoptions take place.

Lethbridge Animal Services was forced to briefly shut down its operations when the pandemic first started, leaving staff uncertain about what would happen to the animals.

The shelter was able to continue with pet adoptions by introducing scheduled adoption appointments, instead of letting the public come in at any time. Skylar Plourde, Lethbridge Animal Services Animal control officer and community relations, says the changes they made turned out to be more beneficial for the animals, reducing the amount of people coming into the shelter and reducing the animal's stress.

"We've found the animals seem to be a little less stressed because we don't have strangers poking their fingers through the kennels and staring at them through the windows all day. The animals have a bit more of a routine and it's a bit more of a stable routine."

Plourde says the shelter is happy with the changes and currently have no plans to go back to the old system once the pandemic is over.

"It's worked really well and it's something that we'll probably stick with. Obviously, everybody hopes that these public health things will eventually dissipate and go away, but we were pretty sure that we're going to continue with appointments."

Animals being admitted to shelters have slowly been

decreasing, while adoptions have been increasing in recent years.

According to Humane Canada, in 2015 there were approximately 35,500 dogs placed in shelters and 42 per cent were adopted. In 2019, approximately 28,000 dogs were placed in shelters, with 48 per cent being adopted.

Plourde says families should take the adoption process seriously, to make sure the animal's needs are the top priority.

"We don't want you to adopt a dog from us because you want a dog, we want you to go and find the right dog for your family."

Plourde also says people should be aware that pets coming from shelters are often more high maintenance and require more attention.

"If you're adopting from a shelter or some sort of rescue, these animals may have minor behavioral issues or were not very well socialized wherever they came from before. So it's going to take a little bit of extra work."

Lethbridge Animal Services says there are adoption



PHOTO BY JOSIAH SPYKER

Pepi the Shih Tzu puts on her jacket before a cold winter walk.

fees in place once the adoption process is completed. The fees cover the animal's vaccines, a microchip and spay or neuter costs and are cheaper than taking the pet to a veterinarian.

"If you were to take a dog without any of that on your own to a veterinarian it would cost a lot more. Our adoption program is just simply a cost recovery agreement."

For those thinking about adopting a pet, appointments can be made by calling Lethbridge Animal Services or visiting their website.

Civil Engineering labs continue with COVID-19 challenges

ALEJANDRA PULIDO
@AliPulidoDCM

Lights! Camera! Action! Who would've thought a Soil Mechanics lab at Lethbridge College would be featured on the big screen? But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that's the new way of conducting engineering technology classes because of limited in-person capacity.

Cameras are pointing at the equipment and it's time to do a sound check. That is something you might expect to see on a movie set, but instead it's just another day at the office for Lethbridge College Engineering Technologies instructors.

Back in his office Doug May, Civil Engineering Technology instructor, prepares his next lecture for the soil mechanics lab broadcast. He says that even though it is not an ideal situation, it's the best that can be done for students.

"We're pushing the data out to our viewers at home and then the lab gets submitted. So, it's the best thing that we can do in I guess these circumstances."

For those not able to physically be present, the best next thing is to watch a live broadcast of the process taking place. Even though it doesn't replace the hands-



PHOTO BY ALEJANDRA PULIDO

Students at Lethbridge College getting some hands-on experience during an engineering lab.

on experience, it provides students with the necessary visuals.

With three cameras in the lab stationed at scales and at the workbench where the students are doing their activities, the atmosphere has a Hollywood feel. While only four students, an instructor and lab assistant are allowed, everyone else at home is watching a live stream of how to conduct various lab activities.

May says his lab assistant is basically the production manager, as she is in charge of cameras, making sure they are

pointed at the action. This requires her to adjust camera angles and positions, as well as making sure the proper feed from each camera is set to be viewed on the screen for those at home.

"I think that the college really stepped up, because we asked for the cameras, we came up with an idea on how we could still deliver the content to the students, even though we were limited by the number of students that we could have in our lab. We asked for the equipment and within weeks we had the equipment in

our labs," said May.

Most of the engineering lab courses happen in the winter. Soil mechanics, concrete design and residential construction. "This was the real test for our program, getting through the winter," added May.

Some students have had the opportunity to attend multiple lab sessions. Hassan Kuppa says there is a big difference between being able to be part of the process in person and watching someone else do it on a screen.

"It's definitely better to be hands-on, 100 per cent. However, due to COVID this is the best they can do and, in my opinion, they're doing a pretty good job," said Kuppa.

Sometimes the process involves more than one student as well as the help of the instructor to be able to showcase the action properly for those watching at home.

Since there is limited capacity for how many people can attend in-person labs, some courses had to be combined. And since parts of the curriculum overlap among the engineering technology programs, some labs are broadcasted to students in the Civil Engineering and Geomatics programs at the same time.

Immersive training and virtual tours help clients in southern Alberta

KARSEN MARCZUK & MARIO CABRADILLA
@Karsen_Marczuk @cantfindmario

Virtual Reality is being used in real estate and training police officers to help not only during the pandemic, but also to give users an immersive experience.

Due to COVID-19, STARS Air Ambulance was unable to host its in-person dream homes for people to view, however, that forced STARS to get creative with virtual showings. For the past few years, STARS has offered virtual tours, allowing people to walk through the homes at their own pace, while remaining in their own homes.

Megan Thomson, manager of lotteries and special projects at STARS Air Ambulance says with the constantly changing technology, their organization was able to offer virtual tours of all its Alberta dream homes.

“We’ve obviously done photos of the dream home and then a couple of years ago, with technology improving, we were able to offer virtual tours. That started sort of like a walkthrough and then expanded more to what it is right now. This wasn’t the first year that we had it, but it is definitely the first year that it played an integral role in the lottery and really provided access for people to view the show homes since we weren’t able to open them.”

STARS worked closely with the home builders in all three cities to plan, film, market and promote this year’s dream homes. Thomson says with COVID-19 restrictions in place, keeping everyone safe while continuing to fundraise was a key aspect in this year’s lottery.

Real estate companies have also continued to use virtual tours and meetings during the pandemic. Technology has allowed for virtual meetings, tours and walk throughs of homes while in-person restrictions were in place.

Courtney Atkinson, owner of the Atkinson Team at EXP Realty says they have offered virtual tours for the past seven years, but over the last year have seen a dramatic increase in the utilization of technology to meet with clients.

“I would also say that as a measure of mitigating risk for exposure to COVID-19 we’ve been using, I would call it a virtual tour whether it be a FaceTime or Zoom or any kind of virtual meeting room that has a video attached to it as a way of touring the property with people.”



PHOTO BY KARSEN MARCZUK

Alejandra Pulido, a Digital Communications and Media student at Lethbridge College tries on a virtual reality headset during her lunch break.

Atkinson says using one-on-one meetings has allowed them to connect with their clients, to make sure they are fully aware of what they are purchasing whereas that wouldn’t necessarily be possible with a standard virtual tour posted on their website.

Over the past year, Atkinson says even with the pandemic, they have continued to see a slight increase in sales, with people wanting to create some certainty in their lives through the pandemic.

Post-secondary schools have also been getting creative with the use of technology to teach students. Lethbridge College is developing a virtual reality training program for the school of justice studies which officially began in 2018. David Maze, chair and instructor for the

school of justice studies, is working with individuals from various college programs.

The project involves an instructor from the Digital Communications and Media program, an instructor in the Computer Information Technology program as well as Mike McCready, the college’s applied research chair in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.

According to Maze, the project will allow students to be more confident and prepared with real-life scenarios. The project consists of filming certain crisis scenes in 360 degree immersive video with actors, then creating a VR scenario for students to participate in as part of their education at the college.

Students can proceed to different scenes within a single scenario based on their chosen words in a previous one. For example, Maze says a scenario can be a traffic stop that includes issuing a ticket.

“Imagine that if I stop you and I say, ‘Hi, my name is Dave Maze. I’m a police officer, Lethbridge Police Service. I stopped you for speeding. Can you provide me license, registration, insurance?’ I have to tape that in 360, but then I have to tape all the other possibilities where you give me your documents.”

However, if a student says something that they are not supposed to say, the scene can devolve into a shot scene where the individual being issued a ticket argues back.

In an earlier version, the project required an instructor to manually select the resulting scenario based on a student’s reaction. Thus, the project developed artificial intelligence (AI) in conjunction with VR.

The AI then “listens” to what students are saying and moves them through a scenario. The challenge, however, is students may have said the words correctly to move through the scenario but said it differently.

Those differences are then put into the project’s learning AI database for it to be able pick-up said differences.

The project’s development for the next 12 months, which will begin in July 2021, includes research on biofeedback and further development in AI to sense the tone, pitch and volume of a person.

Maze is hoping for VR to be a part of the criminal justice curriculum by winter 2021. As for real estate companies, they’re hoping to continue using technology and virtual tours to connect with future home buyers.

Lethbridge Symphony plans for upcoming season and reminisces on past performances

SYLVIA ADAM
@SylviaAdam2

The Lethbridge Symphony is planning for its upcoming season even though they are not quite sure what it looks like.

The Lethbridge Symphony was started in 1961, which means this year it’s celebrating 60 years of providing music to Lethbridge and the surrounding area. Vicki Hegedus, the executive director says they plan to celebrate by playing 60 years worth of music.

“We’re going to take some music from each of the decades that the Symphony has been around. Because the Symphony was started in 1961, we’re going to choose some movie music from the ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, ‘90s, early 2000s and then 2010 to 2020.”

Hegedus says it’s going to be a great performance.

Due to COVID-19, the symphony decided to cancel the 2020-2021 season. Hegedus says it was very disappointing for people, but they ultimately made the right decision.

“That was pretty disappointing for people, but we knew that we really didn’t have a choice and we needed to keep our patrons safe. It was the right thing too because then after that we’ve, you know, we’ve had other lockdowns. We’ve had

limits to how many people can gather indoors or outdoors, we’ve had limits on not only how many people can gather, but how close together people can sit?” she questioned.

Throughout the pandemic, the symphony has received donations from their patrons, which they’re very grateful for.

“They have helped us immensely because as you can imagine, being shut down, budget and funding has been a real issue. So, it’s taken a lot of support and donations from our patrons to help us get through this year and we want to celebrate that too,” said Hegedus.

Glenn Klassen has been the Music Director of the symphony for 17 years. His favourite part about being the Music Director is he gets the opportunity to grow the symphony.

“I think one of the things that I have enjoyed most of all my time here is working at growing the organization and by that, I mean both artistically, in terms of the budget and in terms of growing the community that we reach and also in our partnerships.”

One of its partnerships is with the University of Lethbridge, specifically with its Bachelor of Music program. Hegedus says the University of Lethbridge has a good Fine Arts department and great

professors.

“Its Bachelor of Music has fantastic professors and a lot of the students who are there have to participate in it as part of their studies.”

Klassen finds partnerships to be special because it’s something that has to be done with multiple people, it can’t be achieved alone. He adds that friendships and relationships can also come out of partnerships.

According to Klassen, one of the great parts about being part of the symphony is making music.

“It isn’t instruments making the music, it’s the people who are behind the instruments that are making the music and I think that’s one of the really great things about playing in a Symphony Orchestra.”

Some of the most memorable songs the symphony has played are Mendelssohn’s Elijah, Carmina Burana, Gustav Holst: The Planets and Shostakovich Symphony #5.

When asked about his favourite performance the symphony has put on, Klassen said it was Carmina Burana. The performance had around 300 performers participate in it and they were all local musicians.

The groups involved in that performance were Vox Musica, the Chinook

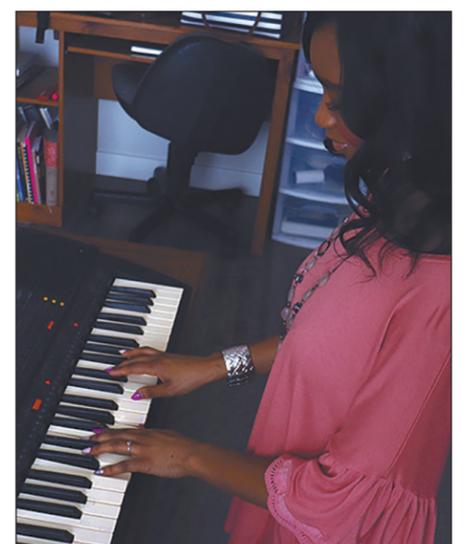


PHOTO BY SYLVIA ADAM

Sarah Adam is a pianist and singer who is practicing her piano skills on Feb. 16, 2021.

Chamber Singers, the University of Lethbridge singers and High School choirs.

If it can reopen for the next season, Hegedus says the symphony has a lot of great plans.

“We’ve got a program that brings in local professional musicians, we are coordinating with some fabulous guests which is really exciting for us. One of our concerts will be the movie, you know the six decades of movie music to go along with our 60th anniversary.”

Criminal Justice students upset by evolving public perception of police officers

JOSIAH SPYKER
@josiahspyker

Some Criminal Justice students are upset by the evolving public perception of police officers.

After a summer filled with demonstrations protesting police actions and calling for the reform and defunding of police, some criminal justice students feel discouraged by what they see online.

Criminal Justice student Brennen Strasser has wanted to be a police officer since he was a kid.

Strasser says online hate won't stop him from pursuing a career in policing, but it is discouraging to see how the public sometimes views the police.

"It sucks that people don't see police how they should, but at the end of the day you're still doing what you want to do. You're still doing your job, it's still the same field, it's just little bit harder now."

Criminology instructor Seth Adema says it's important for students going into policing to educate themselves on different cultures and how experiences differ between cultural groups. Adema says having good intentions as a police officer is important, but sometimes, actions speak louder than words. But are you spending time learning from other cultures? That's one of the really important things you can do.

"It's one thing to say, 'Oh yes, I have the best of intentions and I'm going to be doing all these things.'"
Seth Adema

Adema says you can never fully understand what someone has gone through in their life, so developing relationships with people from all walks of life lets you understand the community better.

"I can't tell you what it's like to be black and how



PHOTO BY: JOSIAH SPYKER

Criminal Justice Students at Lethbridge College are unsure of their future after observing global events in the past year.

the relationship between black people and police has impacted people on a personal level, because that's not my experience. So, developing relationships with people who can help you to better understand those kinds of issues and realities that people are confronting, that's a really good way to kind of keep yourself on track."

Adema adds that people tend to grow up in isolated social communities, but if you take the necessary time to grow and learn from other cultural groups, you'll be better off in your career.

"That people tend to grow up in an insular community, wherever that community is and as you gain more experiences in the world, your understanding of the world also gets bigger."

Strasser says people shouldn't generalize the police and that there are bad police officers, but it's unfair to target police in general.

"Not all of them are bad, it's the same with any other career. There are bad people who wear the uniform, that doesn't mean that everyone that wears the uniform is bad."

Strasser says that no matter how you feel about police officers, people need to know they are there to help you and serve the community.

"Who do you call? You call the police, they are always going to be there for you no matter whether you hate them or not, I think it's just time to put aside all the hate."
Brennen Strasser

Instructor-student relationships become important in during online learning

SYLVIA ADAM
@sylviaadam2

COVID-19 has resulted in post-secondary institutions transitioning their classes online, which means students and instructors are finding new ways to communicate with each other while classes are online, with varying degrees of success. Hannah Blackmer, a student in the General Studies program at Lethbridge College, says online learning has been an obstacle for her.

"I did not do well last semester. I think the reason why was because I wasn't there. I wasn't physically there to see people because it's all about peer relationships as well."
Hannah Blackmer

Chantal Fortier, a second-year nursing student has found ways to make vir-

tual learning work for her. "This semester my roommate and I plugged in this huge screen TV and we watch lectures that way and that's been helping us way more."

Fortier had a hard time staying engaged during her classes at the end of the Winter 2020 semester because she felt exhausted from how intense her studies were.

"I don't think there's many teacher-student relationships happening because you don't get to see them.

You don't get to see, well OK, that kid looks confused, let me re-explain this in a different way, because that's what I would do if I was a teacher."

Another reason Blackmer finds communicating through Zoom ineffective is because some students don't get the opportunity to ask the questions.

"I wanted to talk to one of my teachers over Zoom. It was the end of the Zoom class and I wanted to talk to her and ask her a question about something, but she just ended the meeting right away," said Blackmer.

Blackmer feels if she was in a classroom environment, something like this wouldn't happen. On the other hand, Fortier has found communication with her instructors has been better this year. She says her instructors reply to her emails

very quickly and are always willing to help her.

Another thing Fortier likes about Zoom is it eases the potential embarrassment one may feel when asking a question.

Nichole Covey, an instructor at Lethbridge College, has found communicating with students via Zoom to be a challenge for a couple of reasons. She can't see some students' faces and she can't see their non-verbal communication.

"If some of my classes are larger, lots of my students don't have their cameras on, so I don't get to see their faces. In person, in class, I can watch and see if I have some students who have done it fast. I can also see if there are some students flipping to try to find the answer. On Zoom, I can't see that. So, I have a really hard time gauging, sort of, how much time certain students might need to be able to most effectively learn."

To help build a relationship with her students, Covey stays in her Zoom meetings for an extra five to 10 minutes after class and she reaches out to students via email based on their grades.

Blackmer believes sending emails back and forth, patience and having cameras on will help communication between instructors and students.



eSPORTS

Vauxhall Jets step up to the plate, despite COVID-19 uncertainty

NATHAN REITER
@nathanreiter14

Even with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Vauxhall Academy Jets are still able to practice as a team. Due to all of the student-athletes living at the dorms attached to Vauxhall High School, the Jets are considered a single cohort. Les McTavish, head coach of the Vauxhall Jets says the team was held to strict protocols in order to keep the program going.

“We didn’t let them out. They weren’t going to parties, there was no spending time with people outside the baseball program. It was school and baseball, that was your life.”

The Vauxhall Jets program recruits players from coast-to-coast. This year the program has players spanning from Nanaimo, BC to Middle Sackville, NS. Tyler Boudreau moved to Vauxhall at only 15 years old to play for the Jets from Middle Sackville, NS. He says he was motivated by his mentors and other friends who have attended the academy.

“I actually had a few friends and mentors come here. They were the talk around home. I always wanted to come here because this is the place to be and where to reach your goals later on,” said Boudreau.

He is committed to playing college



PHOTO BY NATHAN REITER

Vauxhall Jets player Shaye McTavish hits a ball during batting practice at Vauxhall Community Hall on Feb. 24, 2021

baseball in Midland, Texas in the fall of 2021. When he came to Vauxhall, Boudreau was not the only player from Nova Scotia as he was joined by two others. He says it was a big help to have others with him.

“I was a little nervous. I was 15, leaving parents was a little nerve wracking. At that time, I did have a couple other guys from Nova Scotia coming with me,” added Boudreau.

Since many players are away from

their families while living in the dorms, homesickness is very common among the roster. McTavish says it’s something every player experiences regardless of where they are from.

“They all feel homesick, doesn’t matter if you are Lethbridge, Medicine Hat or Fredericton, New Brunswick. Just having a surrounding support group who run the residence, but most importantly it’s their teammates. They know they are not alone and can spend time with each other,” said

McTavish.

Vauxhall normally competes in tournaments all over western Canada and the US. Normally, the Jets compete in Missoula, Montana and Las Vegas, Nevada during their season. However, this year due to the international border closure, the Jets do not have any games scheduled as of time of publishing. The team is hopeful to compete against local teams such as the Prairie Baseball Academy and Okotoks in the coming months.

Members of the 1981 Lethbridge Elks reflect on the team’s state title 40 years later.

NATHAN REITER
@nathanreiter14

This year marks the 40-year anniversary of American Legion baseball in Lethbridge. The Lethbridge Elks were a dominant force in the Little League’s “Big League” division following the founding of the team in 1978. The team won the national championship and a trip to the World Series in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1979 and 1980.

Reed Spencer was the Elks manager in 1981 and he says the decision to move Lethbridge into American Legion was made because the Calgary Big League board informed him, they would have to split the team up.

“They told me I had to break up the team in Big League. They told me they didn’t want us up there because it was demoralizing to their players,” said Spencer.

He adds there were pre-existing links between Lethbridge and several American Legion teams because the Elks had been competing in exhibition games with American teams.

“We’d always played exhibition games against teams in Montana. So, I talked to [Kalispell coach] George Haegele and we talked about becoming an American Legion team. They applied to see if they

could let us in. In November or December, George told me we were in,” said Spencer.

The Elks won the state tournament in Helena and had to get a police escort out of the city. Bruce Lyon was an 18-year-old catcher on the Elks in 1981 and he says people were not happy a Canadian team won.

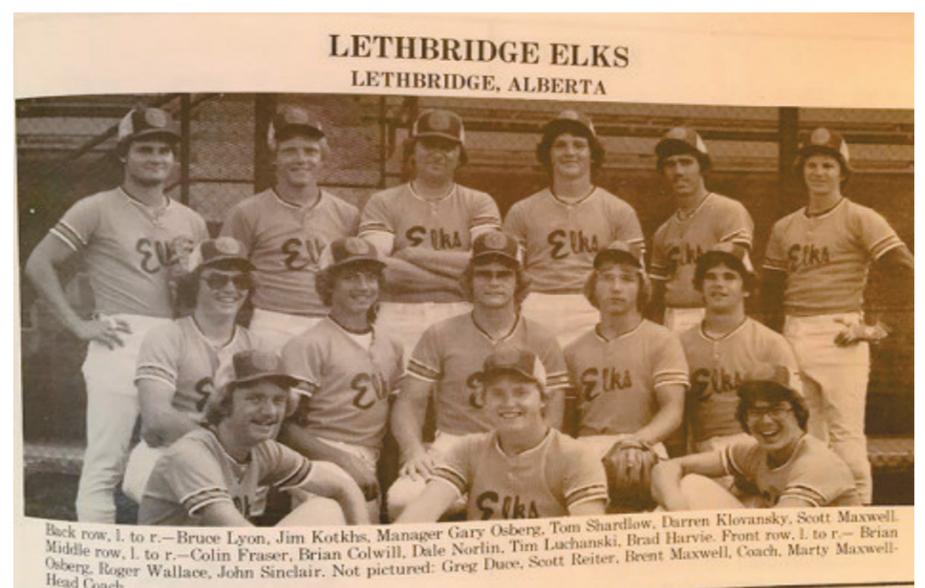
“We literally had police escorts, sheriffs because the bus was getting stoned. People were literally throwing rocks at us because they couldn’t believe a Canadian team could waltz down into Helena and win the Montana state championship,” said Lyon.

Lethbridge’s introduction into the league was the first time a Canadian team was permitted into American Legion baseball anywhere in the US. Lyon says many people south of the border had misconceptions about Canada.

“A lot of them thought we still rolled around in the winter on dogsleds and that we couldn’t play ball. It worked completely in our favour.”

Lyon adds the misconceptions were not only about Canada, but about the young roster.

“We only had three 18-year-olds on our team. Our primary team was made out of 16-year-olds. They thought just by



1981 Lethbridge Elks team

looking at the roster, ‘we’re playing these kids.’ But these kids showed a different light once they hit the ball field.”

Jim Kotkas was one of the 16-year-old players on the Elks back in 1981. Kotkas says the Elks surprised a lot of people in Montana because of the team’s play.

“I’m pretty sure we were undefeated in the west. They knew we were good, but it happened fast, so I think we kind of shocked everybody,” said Kotkas.

The team had to show credentials after winning the state title to prove the Elks

PHOTO COURTESY OF COLIN FRASER

were all from Lethbridge.

“There was a lot of people checking our paperwork. They thought we were an all-star team from across the country. They didn’t understand we were one team from Lethbridge. They said there’s no way you bring a team first year and win the state tournament,” added Kotkas.

The 2021 Lethbridge Elks decision to play in the Montana-Alberta American Legion baseball league is dependent on the government’s decision to open the border to non-essential travel.