



Office of the Vice President Student Affairs

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August 2020 Report
Contribution Hours: 170.5

- Territorial Acknowledgement
- Comments
- Fresh Fest
- COCA Virtual Student Life Summit
- Clubs
- Online Programming
- Pride Centre
- New Student Orientation
- Committee Meetings

Territorial Acknowledgement

Oki, I acknowledge and honour the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Lethbridge is also part of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. The Blackfoot name of the University of Lethbridge is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. Thank you for the privilege of working, learning, and living in this place. I am grateful and I am committed to doing my part in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in my day-to-day life.

Adapted from: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/indigenous/cultural-protocol> and https://www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/2019/08/final_territorial_statements_june_2019.pdf

Comments

August has been the busiest month of my term so far, as multiple projects are culminating in preparation for the Fall semester. It has been a month of highs and lows. The most rewarding part has been seeing the fruits of my labour and connecting with individual students through online programming and presentations to new incoming students. This upcoming school year will be unlike any other, but I am reassured to know that there are many other passionate members of the University of Lethbridge community who have been working hard to provide the best possible experience for students.

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Fresh Fest

After several months of planning with the Fresh Fest Committee, I am excited to finally share concrete details of what it will look like this year. It will be from September 8-12, following the heels of New Student Orientation. We have been working tirelessly to be innovative with Fresh Fest this year, with unprecedented cross-campus collaborations and new events, the objective of Fresh Fest is to celebrate the U of L and connect students together. Key events this year include:

- **Campus Concert Kick-Off (Thursday, September 10 at 6 PM)** – Organized by the Canadian Organization of Campus Activities (COCA), the ULSU is one of 26 Canadian campuses that will be collaborating on hosting an online concert. Featuring 6 different artists, as well as a contest for a student to win free tuition for a year, this nationwide concert will be the first of its kind. The ULSU will be hosting watch parties of the concert at Hudson's and the Canadian Brewhouse in Lethbridge, which students have to reserve tables ahead of time and we will be following the health and safety procedures of the venue.
- **A Conversation with Angela Davis (Friday, September 11 at 6 PM)** – Spearheaded initially by the ULSU and the Students' Association at MacEwan University (SAMU), there are 6 partnering campuses in the Western provinces that will be hosting a moderated discussion and Q&A with political activist Angela Davis. Joined also by Eternity Martis, author of "They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up", both speakers will be discussing the important issues of anti-racism and allyship in current times.
- **First Lecture (Saturday, September 12 at 2 PM)** – As a bookend to the annual Last Lecture event where professors share what they would say in their last lecture, First Lecture will feature 5 alumni giving talks to new and continuing students. This is a collaboration between the ULSU, PACT, and Alumni Relations, and serves as a great closing event for Fresh Fest as students head into the rest of their year.
- **Much more:** Fresh Fest also includes a series of speed friending activities and presentations from Agility, the ULSU Health & Dental plan provider, and from the various levy groups so that they can share about their services going into this semester. Additionally, students can participate in GooseChase, a digital scavenger hunt app where we've curated specific challenges for students to learn more about the U of L culture and services.

To see the line-up of activities and to register, please go to freshfest.ulsu.ca. All events are free and open to all members of the U of L community to join. I am extremely grateful for the Fresh Fest Committee and the many hours we have collectively put in. Without everyone's effort and creativity, Fresh Fest 2020 would not have happened.

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COCA Virtual Student Life Summit

COCA also hosted a Virtual Student Life Summit from August 10-13. Typically, this would be an in-person conference where campus programmers, club coordinators, and marketing folk would gather together for education sessions, networking with talent agencies, and bringing back fresh ideas to our own campuses. With the virtual format this year, we were able to send multiple delegates. Especially between myself and William, the Clubs and Student Involvement Assistant, we were able to attend most of the education sessions and get a broader perspective on programming and clubs at other institutions. We will be implementing and adapting some of the ideas we saw, such as having a clubs orientation in the Spring, so outgoing/incoming club executives have relevant information for planning as they go into the summer.

Clubs

I initiated a Clubs Committee during this summer, which is an internal committee for the SU staff to coordinate and make decisions about clubs for the Fall. We have continued to meet to discuss matters such as club banking, Clubs Week, Clubs' Council, and club activities for the Fall. For the latter, we have submitted a formal proposal to the university outlining our guidelines for sanctioning off-campus club activities. As of this report, this is still pending approval from the university, but if approved, it would allow clubs to still have off-campus club activities subject to COVID-19 health and safety procedures. Another idea we got from COCA was having Club Townhalls, which is an informal platform for clubs to share their questions and concerns. We tried 3 sessions, with varying attendance, and it is an idea we will continue into the Fall semester, along with optional clubs training and networking nights. We are also looking into expanding the year-end awards ceremony so that it includes more categories for clubs.

Online Programming

Online programming continued steadily over August, with highlights being hockey watch parties with VP External Ryan Lindblad, and a webinar hosted by VP Academic Liam Connel as he chatted with our Counselling Services office and explained their services for students - the livestream recording is archived on our SU Facebook if you want to rewatch. I have begun to map out my schedule of programming for the Fall, so you can look forward to some new activities.

Pride Centre

Over the summer, I have been supporting the Pride Centre to get up and running again. This month has included meetings to revise the Pride Centre Constitution and outline election procedures for a new executive team. Katie, one of the Co-Coordinator for the Campus Women's Centre, are overseeing the election



Office of the Vice President Student Affairs

process, which will be completed in early September. It is still my intention to support the Pride Centre after elections are done to ensure that it is sustainable.

New Student Orientation

The highlight of my month were the several presentation opportunities I had. These included the Indigenous Student Success Cohort (formerly the First Nations Transition Program), a "Stay Involved with the ULSU" session for New Student Orientation (NSO), and talking to parents at the NSO Family Lounge. Big props to Asheley Cowie and her team for executing an online NSO and supporting students in this transition to a primarily online semester.

Committee Meetings Attended

- Student Support Working Group - August 6
- Student Experience Transcript Committee - August 11
- CKXU Board of Directors - August 24

These are some of the meetings that I have attended to represent the student voice. If you have any questions or want to chat more about this report, please send me an email!

With gratitude,
Richard Lee-Thai