



UNIVERSITY OF
LETHBRIDGE
STUDENTS'
UNION

Executive Council Action Plan For 2021-2022



by Holly, Mark, Amy, Becca, Ryan

Vision

The Students' Union, the University of Lethbridge will deliver extraordinary service, facilities, programs and opportunities that exceed the expectations of our students. The Students' Union will be recognized locally, provincially and nationally as a dynamic and innovative leader in the Canadian University Community.

Mission

The mission of The Students' Union is to provide our students, as well as faculty, staff, and alumni a portal to the unique University of Lethbridge experience. The Students' Union complements the academic programs and enhances the overall educational experience and quality of campus life for students and other members of the U of L family.

As the heart of the student community, we are committed to student success by delivering a diverse program of cultural, educational, social and recreational services. We strive to surpass the needs of our multi-cultural student community, create a positive learning experience, and maintain a healthy balance between academic and leisure activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome



Contained in these pages are the goals of the ULSU Executive for the 2021–2022 year. This document will allow us to focus on efforts, will keep us accountable to one another, our General Assembly, as well as the University of Lethbridge student body, also, it will provide subsequent executives with an idea of things that have previously been accomplished, and what can still be completed. With one–year terms, it is vitally important that every executive understands what happened before them so that a foundation isn't put up one year only to be torn down the year after. Further to that, having explicit objectives allows us to measure our successes at the end of our terms.

Our Executive Action Plan for this year is broken down into the following sections:

- 1) Our Individual Bios & Priorities
- 2) Team Goals
 - Affordability
 - Campus Safety & Wellness
 - Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
 - Student Empowerment

If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of us, our contact information is located on the last page. We look forward to hearing from you!

EXECUTIVE PROFILES

Holly Kletke – President



My name is Holly Kletke, and I am your ULSU President for the 2021/22 school year. I would likely not be saying anything new if I stated that my intentions for running in the SU elections were motivated by my passion for the student experience, or for my love of the organization since my election to it in 2018, or for my fondness of the UofL, or for my desire to advocate for equitable and accessible post-secondary learning in general. That grocery list of motivations is probably not news to the readers of this document. However,

in addition to my grocery list of motivations, I believe that this upcoming year represents a unique turning point for all that this role entails. This year will, hopefully, bring a return to campus, after a year of online schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year will also bring significant change in the structure and systems that govern the institution. With all the change that is certain to come to our home turf; I note an opportunity for change within our organization. Ultimately, I want to drive forward-moving progress for the ULSU. I am entering my term with the perspective that our return to campus, and University restructuring is a tool, abettor, and opportunity that we must leverage for the overall benefit of students. This weird year is an opportunity for us, the students, to seal the cracks in the pavement that have come to light, and to pave new, productive and forward-looking roads for the students of the UofL. With this broad and cautiously optimistic statement, I would be remiss not to further acknowledge the adversity that students have had to weather this past year (which is certainly not guaranteed to conclude with a return to campus). Along with previous topics that could be filed under “student issues”, we now have a whole new stock of never-before-seen topics that need attention and advocacy. As I stated in my campaign, I continue to believe in the value and potential of the ULSU to find and advocate for productive solutions, and contribute to a positive student experience. In writing this, I realize that personifying the ULSU does not accurately represent my declaration of confidence. It would be more accurate to say this: I believe in the value and potential of our students, both our ULSU representatives and the students of the UofL, to contribute to a positive student experience. You

can cash your bingo cards in now. I've exasperated my arsenal of overused student politician lingo, so I will now divulge in what you are all no doubt here for, the juicy details.

My Priorities

1. Student Wellness

Students, study, work, and live while attending University. It is important to strike a balance that ensures the overall wellness of any individual student, and the ULSU has the duty to both provide and advocate for top tier services that support studying, working, and living while at the UofL. I would like to highlight my desire for reliable mental health support and resources for our students, as well as ensuring an equitable, accessible and inclusive campus environment.

2. Student Safety

Tangential to student wellness, student safety is of great importance to me. A return to campus must come with reliable safety measures so that our students can have a predictable and protected semester. As well, I would like to advocate for student safety as it relates to sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. A return to campus also presents the opportunity to “reset” our campus culture, therefore I will be looking for the places where the ULSU can bolster and improve our own policies, services, and initiatives to reflect this. As well, I will be advocating for both proactive and reactive approaches to address the issue of sexual violence in particular.

3. Student Representation

With all of the changes facing post-secondary education, it is of utmost importance that students maintain and continue to reliably represent our interests. It is the duty of the Students' Union to ensure that students are represented accurately and reliably on all topics pertaining to them, especially, I would argue, when it comes to topics that impact affordability and accessibility.

4. Upholding my Role, and Supporting ULSU Initiatives

Overall, I think that my goals culminate in the form of support for my peers. I intend on driving forward and taking the lead on many projects and ideas that accompany my priorities, but ultimately, I view every action of the President as a supporting one. I intend to support the General Assembly to see through their goals for the term and in their advocacy efforts. I also intend on supporting our Executive members on their wonderful goals, initiatives, and advocacy. Finally, I hope that the decisions, initiatives, and projects that I see through in my term are overall received with an understanding of my desire to support us; the students.

Mark Serebryansky – VP Operations & Finance



I am honored to be your Vice President Operations and Finance for the 2021/2022 academic year. The portfolio I oversee has two main components, one half of the portfolio focuses internally on the operations of the ULSU, this consists of but is not limited to: the organization's financials, policies and practices. The other side of the portfolio is outward facing and works with external stakeholders, forging strategic partnerships, and sponsorship and donor relations. Both are equally important and are a big factor in why I chose to run for this position. Ultimately, regardless of what I am able to accomplish this year, I swear to be much more than a Chief Financial Office for the ULSU.

The three main ideas I campaigned on are, innovation, accessibility, experience. Innovation is a necessary force when it comes to creative problem solving, the U of L, and by extension the ULSU is limited by its capacity and budget as we are on the smaller end of Comprehensive Research Universities in Alberta. That being said, we make do with our resources and can make them stretch much further if we rely on innovative forces that we have at our disposal in our university community. Accessibility, in a university setting is a tall ask, but as students and as representatives of the student voice we need to advocate for and organize for as much grass root decision making that our organization and university allows-- this ensures that problems are getting resolved by those closest to the epicenter of the situation. Lastly, my two years on the ULSU and multiple other experiences are important to helping me achieve the goals and satisfy the needs of students, I will not only use my experience on this campus to improve the student experience, but I also I want to open doors for students for more opportunities to have a high calibre experience that goes beyond their education. Whatever the year has in store, these three foundational concepts will be at the forefront of my decision making and representation.

Although I wish to expand and improve this role in every which way I possibly can to support students, the 3 key areas I have personally identified and will spend the majority of my term pursuing, are as follows:

My Priorities

1. Student Union Building Renovation Plan

It is beyond overdue to address the lack of service offerings and the quality of services inside the Students' Union Building, as well what we want this campus destination to offer to students and the rest of the U of L community. This plan will evaluate the Zoo, the SUB Food Court, other services within the building, as well as ULSU offices and club spaces. I will strike up a committee to begin steps of consultation, research, and capital planning to ensure a multi-year plan is approved. The Students' Union building is a very important hub and these upgrades not only improve important services for students but will bring the ULSU more opportunities.

2. Student Representation

This goal has two main components, one of which is related to my pillar of experience. The first goal is to develop more work integrated learning opportunities internal to the ULSU. This is so that we can expand our efforts in terms of having more human capital to achieve goals, such as better events or more successful advocacy campaigns. In addition to this I'd like to add a student employment page to the website where we have opportunities for students for non-course-based employment. The second part of this goal is getting back on the University's Budget Advisory Committee which is one of the most important committees that requires student representation. We mysteriously lost our seat on this committee in October 2019, and have definitely felt the ramifications of not having this important committee to advocate for students on. This involves advocating to upper administration, and utilizing other campus partners in order to work together on getting back on the committee, or any other bodies where student representation is necessary as the face of post secondary education changes in the province.

3. Health & Dental Plan

The current financial model for the Health and Dental plan is unsustainable, and currently the ULSU is doing everything in its power to ensure we have autonomy over our plan as the health and dental plan is synonymous with the ULSU and student support. We have already begun to work on a Terms of Reference for a Health and Dental plan task force in order to begin steps to rectify this situation. Although the future looks grim if we do not adjust course, I am certain with creative solutions and student consultation we will be able to overcome this hurdle and actually come out with an improved service that will benefit as many students we possibly can.

I hope to achieve everything in this plan, alongside the rest of my fellow executive council and student leaders in the General Assembly, we can continue to improve the student experience and make the U of L live up to its name as a Destination University.

Amy Mendenhall – VP Student Affairs



Hello students! My name is Amy Mendenhall, and I am the Vice President Student Affairs for the 2021–2022 school year. I am a fifth year Indigenous Student Pre education major, with a minor in Social Studies and have been in post–secondary off and on for ten years. I started my education in the legal studies program, graduated with an educational assistant diploma at the Red Deer College. After that, I completed a photography program at the New York Institute of Photography, then I headed to the Lethbridge College followed by an acceptance to the University. I am a mom of three kids, five–year–old twins Jubilee and Jayla and four–year–old Willow. I have also been married for 8 years to my best friend Logan.

What I campaigned on and what I am focusing on are both the same and now different as I now have an idea of what needs to be done. First of course is the plan to bring Fun back to campus. Fresh Fest is returning, as is Zombies VS Humans, as well as I am bringing a Haunted House and Fear Factor to campus as well. I have recently been elected to sit on the COCA board of directors, and I am excited to bring Lethbridge representation to a nation–wide organization. Other than the fun part of my portfolio, I am bringing in experience and knowledge regarding topics that while uncomfortable to talk about, are necessary and I can see ways that we as an organization and the University can improve. I have been an activist for over 20 years and have raised thousands of dollars for both local and international needs. I have also worked with the City of Red Deer to get an anti–Bullying bylaw passed. Due to these things, I have been awarded young citizen of the year and the premiers award of excellence. I have protested with Idle No More and Black Lives Matter and thanks to the willingness of BIPOC educators, I am able to see what it needed to make our campus safe and inclusive for all. I also have ADHD, PTSD, Anxiety, and I shown signs of being on the Autism spectrum as well. This has made it, so that I can see the ableism within the University, and now that I have the ability to fight against it, I will. As your student representative I promise to raise your voice in all situations.

Becca Parkkari – VP Academic



Hi folks, I'm pleased to introduce myself to you all! I'm Rebecca Parkkari and I am your VP Academic for the 21/22 term. I'm glad you're taking the time to get to know more about the ULSU! I am an Indigenous Studies major in my fourth year in my degree. I am a fifth-year student, however, I began at the U of L with an English pre-Education major. Throughout my time at U of L I have learned and grown so much, and I have been able to find my passions, one of which is Mental Health awareness and advocacy. As post-secondary

students we experience high levels of stress, not to mention the additional stressors of day-to-day life. It is important to me to provide educational opportunities to students to encourage mental health maintenance and provide students the opportunity to reduce stress. When students' mental health is affected, their academics are often affected as well. By working with students, instructors, and professors I hope to encourage collaboration to ensure that students can succeed academically without sacrificing their mental wellness. An important aspect of the university is work integrated learning which provides students with the opportunity to work within their fields of study, create connections, and strengthen their skills. I would like to work to create a more streamlined process for students to discover research opportunities during their undergraduate degrees. Student support is another aspect of this position I am enthused about. Throughout the year I am looking forward to supporting students with their grade appeals and academic appeals. I would like to provide encouragement and resources to the student who come to me for support. With school being online this past year there are many students who have never been to campus, this can be difficult for finding the resource you need. I aim to ensure students are aware of the supports offered by the ULSU and the U of L to enhance their experience and make certain they have the resources they need to be successful.

Ryan Lindblad – VP External



My name is Ryan Lindblad and I will be your Vice President External for the Academic year of 2021–2022. This will be my second term in this role and I am incredibly excited to be back for another year of advocacy and another year of representing student interests to our external stakeholders. This past year was an amazing experience and I was able to learn so much about the position and about the ULSU in general that I think will help to make this year an even better one and allow for even stronger advocacy projects to our external stakeholders.

For those that may not know, it is the job of the VP External to be the primary delegate and advocate to external stakeholders including to all levels of government. I will have frequent meetings with Federal, provincial, and municipal politicians and advocate for student needs to try and get greater support for UofL students and improve the student experience.

I decided to run for this position again because while I loved my time in the role last year, I also felt like there were certain battles that I wanted to see through into this year and continue to fight for on behalf of Students. This largely surrounded the Alberta 2030 report which came out in late April. This review sets the tone for where the current provincial government wants to take post secondary education over the next 10 years, and shows a clear vision of what they want the sector to look like in the year 2030. My last year in the position involved constant advocacy in this area as the review encompassed nearly every aspect of post secondary education, it included topics such as tuition, board governance, campus safety, internationalization and so much more. One idea that we advocated on throughout the whole year was the idea of tying tuition to the consumer price index, so that both students and institutions will be able to accurately predict the costs of education and make budgeting decisions around that. It will also help to cease the ballooning rise in tuition that we have seen over the past 3 years. When the review came out we were happy to see that they had listened to us on this point but were also disappointed that this tying of tuition to CPI will not take place until 2 years from now, meaning that the more exceptional tuition increases could still be on the table for the next 2 years until that tying of tuition happens.

Many of the priorities that I had in the previous year are ones that I intend to carry forward into this year and continue to press the government on so that students can be receiving the support that they need and deserve. Although I will only be mentioning a few specific priorities here in the action plan, I want to note that this does not mean that these priorities will be the only areas I will be working on, and that I may also need to change up strategy and priorities based on decision made by the government over the course of this year. So much of this job is being able to properly pivot and adjust techniques in response to the government and the projects that they intend to implement. These priorities are based on what I believe are some of the most prominent and pressing issues affecting students at the University of Lethbridge, and are issues that I think if solved or improved upon, will greatly impact the lives of students in a very positive way.

My Priorities

1. Affordability

Post Secondary education in Alberta is becoming increasingly more expensive and less affordable. This is due to a number of factors ranging from tuition increases, the increasing of interest rates of student loans, the reduction of funding to important and vital on campus supports meaning students need to often go elsewhere for more affordable support, and also the housing costs of many students at the UofL who did not grow up in Lethbridge and may live somewhere else when the school year ends. That is why affordability while being a broad goal that includes many different more specific advocacy points within it, is a massive priority and I believe is the biggest barrier stopping Albertans from beginning or continuing their post secondary journey in this province.

2. Mental Health Supports

Mental health has always been a problem for University Students so this priority is certainly not a new one or one that should surprise many people. However sadly we have seen a reduction in mental health support in previous years and the freezing of the mental health grant at a time when I believe funding needs to be increased in this area. The UofL was hit especially hard a couple years back when the out mental health funding was cut and it has not been increased between that time and the recent freeze to this budget line meaning that the UofL is still functioning with less mental health funding then it has years ago, I will continue to advocate to the government that this budget line needs a increase in funding before a freeze can occur to help support student mental health and ensure that students can have access to the on campus supports that they need.

3. Campus Sexual Violence Prevention

This is yet another area I advocated on behalf of this past year but still feel there is plenty of work to be done. Prevention of Campus Sexual Violence is a major issue facing Alberta's post secondary institutions and is a concern for Alberta's post secondary students. We will continue to advocate for an increase in support from the government so that institutions can be able to provide all the support that they need for students, and also continue to advocate for a standardized training for post secondary employees and students to take. We have been encouraged by progress implemented on the UofL campus from our own institution's administration and with support from faculty, but we know that we have a long way to go and that government support and government recognition of this issue will be paramount in making long term meaningful progress.

TEAM INITIATIVES



Our Goals

Here we will outline our goals for our terms as an executive team. We would like to begin by noting that advocacy is one of the words that we wanted to specifically include in our broad goals, however, in drafting and talking about our goals for the year we have come to realize that advocacy permeates everything that we will do in our terms. Fundamentally, all of our roles and responsibilities depend on advocacy in one way or another, and so we would like to begin by stating our commitment to advocacy, no matter what initiative, activity, event, or meeting we are doing in the course of our year as an executive team.

Affordability

Student affordability is certainly an issue that never quite disappears in the realm of student politics. This year, student affordability is a considerable issue. This year marks the end of 3 years of cuts to our provincial operating grant. We have already seen the effects of those cuts be passed directly on to students in the form of a 22.5% increase to tuition over the course of 3 years. In addition to tuition increases, the impact of these budget cuts show up in other different ways for students as well. Such ways are diminishing access to on campus supports, most notably, mental health supports. Provincial cuts have led directly to the elimination of some mental health counsellors on our campus. In the 2021 budget the Government of Alberta froze the Mental Health grant, so although it will not be cut this year, they have continued to ignore student calls for more support to this essential part of our campus.

Furthermore, student debt has become a more expensive part of the Albertan Post Secondary system, due to the new changes to the interest rate on student loans from prime to prime+1. This means that it will take longer for students to pay off their debt, and that they will lose even more money in the process of paying it back. We also will be calling on the government to take the revenue it receives from student loans, to reinvest it into the post secondary system rather than student money leaving the sector entirely. In similar spirit, we plan to strongly advocate to the provincial government to expand student financial support in the form of non-repayable grants, and that revenue from repayable student grants be reinvested into the sector. Alberta has an incredibly low percentage of student financial aid as non-repayable grants when compared to other provinces. Non-repayable grants do not need to be paid back to the government through debt repayment, thus they are a true investment in a student, as opposed to money that will need to be paid back eventually with the addition of interest.

We are encouraged to have seen some promises of relief in the Alberta 2030 review such as the promise of tying tuition to CPI in 2 years, and a promise from the government to invest more in student financial aid, but we believe that there is still a enormous amount of work to be done to make Post Secondary Education more affordable and accessible for Alberta students. Affordability is an issue that risks driving students out of the province. We want to do what we can to ensure that students have access to a quality post-secondary experience right here in Alberta, at the University of Lethbridge.

Campus Safety and Wellness

This year more than any, we have an extraordinary opportunity to boost and improve campus safety and wellness. After being away from one another and from campus for one whole academic

year, the Students' Union executive team and General Assembly is committed to returning to and fortifying a campus that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive. We have a number of initiative ideas in the pursuit of a welcoming campus. We will be reviewing the policies internal to the ULSU to ensure they promote an equitable and inclusive student community. We will continue to work on advocating for sexual violence supports and ways to make our campus safe from sexual violence and safe for survivors of sexual violence. We will look at the bullying and harassment policy to review and find avenues for advocacy so that everyone in the U of L community feels accepted and safe within the environment. We will be adding inclusive Fresh Fest programming and look at ways we can ensure all our programming is accessible and inclusive of our student body. We will be working with the U of L to advocate the bolstering of mental health supports and we will look to the Lethbridge community for various supplementary channels of support available for our diverse student body. Food insecurity is something that many post-secondary students face. We will continue to access support from the Lethbridge community and the U of L community to ensure the ULSU Food Bank can provide support to as many students as possible. We are also looking for events and initiatives such as Swipe out Hunger to bring awareness to food insecurity and support our students. As well, we want to ensure that while a return to campus can feel like going back to normal, Covid-19 has significantly impacted the way students learn, work, and live, and we want academic support to be tailored to the changes that covid has brought to learning. Campus safety is essential to a positive student experience, and is a part of campus life that the Students' Union has a vital responsibility to improve and uphold.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This year, we are identifying equity, diversity and inclusion as a specific principle that we intend to pursue in all activities of our term. We plan on setting a precedent for the long-term implementation of the principles of EDI at the Students' Union. We will be doing this in many different ways, and we will identify some here. We intend to make ourselves available to learn about and advocate for the barriers that face marginalized student groups on campus. The executive team have already attended a number of training sessions, including sessions on sexual violence, gender-based analysis, 2SLGBTQ information, and we will continue to look for and attend valuable sessions to learn how we can best serve all our students. We also intend on engaging more with the student body, via social media, town halls, and focus groups, to learn about how we can focus our advocacy efforts the best on campus. Finally, the executive team is confident and proud of all our general assembly members who have similar priorities for their terms, and we are excited to see the change that our entire team at the SU can bring to the university. We have stricken an inclusive practices committee to conduct a policy review and identify the ways in which we can better pursue our EDI priorities, and ensure the longevity of

our commitment to EDI. While we cannot fix everything, we want to support our classmates any way that we can.

Student Empowerment

We believe that post-secondary education should be as accessible as possible for all students. Further, we recognize that when attending post-secondary, students work, study, and lives, all have important considerations that must be accounted for and looked after in order to have a fulfilling university experience. We are determined to make all aspects of campus life accessible for our students, whether that be de-mystifying policies, encouraging support structures, fostering connections, and emphasizing clear communication. We want to advocate for meaningful work integrated learning opportunities, as well as undergraduate research opportunities, and volunteer and career opportunities. Student empowerment also means making sure that decisions at the University are made with students in mind and with the student voice being heard and being the primary consideration taken into account when these decisions will involve students. Students are the primary stakeholders at the University and without students the University would not be able to exist so we do not think that it is unfair to ask that further and more in-depth consultation with students occurs during the decision-making process at the University.

CONTACT INFORMATION



OFFICE

**The University of Lethbridge
Students' Union**
Room SU180
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4
403-329-2222
ulsu.ca

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President – Holly Kletke

PH: 403-329-2221

Email: su.president@uleth.ca

VP Operations & Finance – Mark Serebryansky

PH: 403-329-2292

Email: su.finance@uleth.ca

VP Student Affairs – Amy Mendenhall

PH: 403-329-5155

Email: su.studentaffairs@uleth.ca

VP Academic – Becca Parkkari

PH: 403-329-2770

Email: su.academic@uleth.ca

VP External – Ryan Lindblad

PH: 403-329-2780

Email: su.external@uleth.ca