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University of Lethbridge equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives boosted by federal grant

The University of Lethbridge is one of 12 post-secondary institutions from across Canada receiving a highly competitive two-year grant to help identify and overcome systemic barriers that impede the career advancement, recruitment and retention of underrepresented and equity-deserving groups.

“We’re very pleased the granting agencies recognized the progress we’ve made towards enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the University community and our plans moving forward,” says Dr. Mike Mahon, U of L president and vice-chancellor. “Our success is dependent on how well we include, value and engage a diversity of students, staff, faculty, administrators and alumni.”

Today, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, announced the 12 institutions sharing close to \$4.8 million in funding as part of the 2020 competition of the EDI Institutional Capacity-Building Grant. The U of L will receive \$400,000 over two years to support the implementation of equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives throughout the University.

“This vital funding will support a foundation of important initiatives that will truly move our university forward in terms of operationalizing our commitments and our responsibilities to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion,” says Dr. Robert Wood, the University’s interim vice-president (research).

The University, which is currently in the process of hiring its first Executive Director of EDI, strives to create a diverse and inclusive community where students, faculty and staff feel welcome, are treated equitably and can thrive in their various endeavours. Achieving this requires intentional and systemic action. This means creating policies, procedures, programs, events and interventions that work to eliminate systemic barriers and establish the conditions and culture that enable the career advancement, recruitment and retention of equity-deserving individuals.

“Guided by the expertise and leadership of our next Executive Director of EDI, and with the support of this important grant, we will look to generate a culture of equity,

diversity and inclusion throughout the academic, administrative and research domains of the university,” says Dr. Dena McMartin, the U of L’s incoming vice-president (research) and the first woman to hold a full-term appointment as VPR. “A commitment to EDI and belonging in the context of creative activity, teaching and learning benefits all of us, enriching and elevating our experiences and our perspectives.”

The Government of Canada is committed to tackling challenges encountered by underrepresented and equity-deserving groups in Canadian research institutions and their impacts on the whole of the research ecosystem.

This pilot funding program is supported by the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada \(NSERC\)](#), the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#), and the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#). NSERC is administering it on behalf of the three federal research granting agencies.

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