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## **Mathematics instructor Dr. Sean Fitzpatrick honoured with 2022 Excellence in Teaching Award**

Renowned for understanding the student perspective and tailoring his teaching to minimize student anxiety and elevate understanding, Dr. Sean Fitzpatrick has been awarded the University of Lethbridge’s 2022 Excellence in Teaching Award.

Fitzpatrick is one of the most popular instructors on campus as he employs innovative techniques and uses open education resources to enhance his students’ understanding of complex mathematical concepts. He will be presented with the Excellence in Teaching Award at Fall 2022 Convocation, Saturday, October 15, 2022, 10 a.m. in the 1st Choice Savings Centre for Sport and Wellness.



### **Dr. Sean Fitzpatrick**

Dr. Sean Fitzpatrick doesn’t mind seeing his students fail. In fact, he encourages his students to take chances and push beyond their comfort zones, accepting that mistakes will happen — and that’s where the true learning begins.

An instructor in ULethbridge’s Department of Mathematics & Computer Science since 2014, Fitzpatrick is comfortable challenging long-held standards of assessment and emphasizing flexibility and availability, both for himself and course materials.

At the core of his teaching philosophy is that mathematics is learned through trying, failing and then learning from mistakes. He trusts his students want to learn, and whenever possible, will allow students to revise and reassess their work for credit — even on tests. The approach reinforces a class dynamic where he and his students learn and advance collectively.

Fitzpatrick is keenly aware of the student experience and has long been a champion of equity in education. Recognizing the cost of textbooks can be a prohibitive barrier for many students, he developed his own website, where he hosts or links to textbooks for 17 courses in mathematics and statistics. Some are available in HTML, which works on any device, have embedded videos, interactive graphics and homework exercises, and even code cells that let students execute live computer code to help with calculations. In addition, Fitzpatrick maintains a free online homework portal for all his classes — something which has been adopted by instructors throughout the department.

Accessibility is another hallmark of his teaching. Utilizing the Teaching Centre while a Teaching Fellow from 2018 to 2020, Fitzpatrick took advantage of the lightboard resource to create hundreds of professional-quality instructional videos and develop his own YouTube channel. Many new students struggle to make effective use of their textbooks, and by augmenting the books with video explanations, students digest ideas they are not used to seeing in print.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/mathematics-instructor-dr-sean-fitzpatrick-honoured-2022-excellence-teaching-award>

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