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Dr. Digvir S. Jayas named as seventh University of Lethbridge president & vice-chancellor

Dr. Digvir S. Jayas, an internationally renowned agricultural engineering researcher, decorated professor and experienced academic leader, has been chosen as the University of Lethbridge’s seventh president & vice-chancellor. Dr. Jayas will assume his new role on July 1, 2023.

Jayas comes to ULethbridge from the University of Manitoba where he most recently was vice-president (research and international) for the previous 12 years. An accomplished researcher, Jayas is a former Tier I Canada Research Chair in Stored-Grain Ecosystems, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and in 2018 was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for “his advancements to agricultural practices worldwide, and for his promotion of academic and scientific research in Canada.”



ULethbridge Board of Governors Chair, Dean Gallimore (BMgt ’84), chaired the search committee for the new president, saying Jayas excelled in all the areas the group identified as priorities.

“Throughout this process it became readily apparent that Dr. Jayas is an outstanding relationship builder who has an innate ability to bring people together, whether it be as a professor, researcher or administrator,” says Gallimore. “That he also conducts a research program of vital importance to the southern Alberta region and has continually gravitated to leadership roles within a comprehensive research university as well as external national agencies made him the ideal person to be at the forefront of the next era of the University of Lethbridge.”

Jayas conducts research related to the drying, handling and storing of grains and oilseeds and digital image processing for grading and processing operations in the agri-food industry. He sees his background aligning with the strategic directives of ULethbridge.

“Firstly, when I look at the University of Lethbridge, I see values that align with my values. This is a place that is committed to liberal education, committed to creating a respectful work environment for students, faculty and staff, and committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion,” says Jayas. “I also see a desire to continue to grow research and further impact society through this valuable work, enhancing opportunities for researchers and the undergraduate and graduate students they mentor.”

Born in India, Jayas earned a Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, India. He came to Canada for his graduate schooling, first at the University of Manitoba (master of science, agricultural engineering) and then the University of Saskatchewan (doctorate in agricultural engineering). He began his professional academic career at the University of Manitoba as an assistant professor in the Agricultural Engineering Department in 1985.

As his career progressed, his reputation as an influential researcher and leading voice in agrology grew. He collaborated with researchers in several countries and has had significant impact on the development of efficient grain storage, handling and drying systems in Canada, China, India, Ukraine and the United States. He has authored or co-authored over 1,000 technical articles in scientific journals, conference proceedings, and books dealing with issues of storing, drying, handling and quality monitoring of grains and foods.

All the while, Jayas says he is guided by the simple principles imparted by his grandparents while growing up in India.

“I grew up on a farm and spent a lot of time with my grandparents. My grandfather instilled in me a strong work ethic and a desire to serve my community,” says Jayas. “Growing up on a farm, I learned of the issues farmers were facing so I wanted to work in an area where I could help solve some of those problems. My research has always been driven from the user perspective, the impact my work would have on the users of the results.”

Jayas and his wife Manju have been married for 40 years and have three sons and five grandchildren, all living in Winnipeg. He says he’s looking forward to connecting with the southern Alberta community upon his arrival in Lethbridge.

“Coming from a small town and a farming background, I’m really interested in coming to southern Alberta and an agricultural community,” he says. “I want to engage with the

local community and continue to build the strong relationship the University has within southern Alberta. When our students come to university, through their education their lives are transformed, and they become global citizens and contributors to the betterment of society. That is something I am excited to be a part of and something the entire community can take pride in.”

The presidential search committee consisted of representatives from the Board of Governors, administrators, faculty and students. Jayas follows the tenure of Dr. Mike Mahon, who has served as president and vice-chancellor since 2010. A community welcome event for Jayas will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. in the Science Commons Atrium. The official presidential installation will take place as part of the Fall 2023 convocation celebrations in October.

NOTE: Phonetic pronunciation of Dr. Digvir Jayas is DIG-veer JA-yes

Media are invited to utilize the following assets:

Dr. Digvir S. Jayas [feature](#)

Dr. Digvir S. Jayas [video interview](#)

President & Vice-Chancellor [web page](#)

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.