



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF EXTENSION



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UAlberta partners with Drayton Valley to support career development in rural Alberta

Alberta's economy has been through dramatic changes in the past few years. Some towns took notice—and started to reinvent themselves to keep up. The Town of Drayton Valley, an entrepreneurial and innovative community dedicated to growth and development, has just signed an agreement with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension to support and invest in learners as they begin, grow, or transition in their career pursuits.

Beginning in the new year, residents of Drayton Valley and surrounding communities will be able to take continuing education courses offered by the faculty in the areas of business, environment, and technology. What's best: thanks to the town's Zero Fee Tuition Program, eligible residents will be able to pursue a post-secondary education through this partnership without the cost of tuition being a barrier.

An important component to Drayton Valley's education model is the Zero Fee Tuition program, which seeks to create a sense of hope by removing barriers that prevent prospective students from obtaining a post-secondary education.

"We're truly excited to begin this partnership with the Town of Drayton Valley," says Faculty of Extension interim dean Maria Mayan. "It fits very well with our mission here at Extension, which is to work in and with our surrounding communities to support lifelong learners throughout their careers. We know that close, mutually-beneficial relationships with industry, our rural partners, and our learners are key to a sustainable and thriving shared future and we're looking forward to building these relationships further."

Created in recognition of the evolving educational needs of rural Albertans as they journey through their careers, this new university-community partnership will seek to support and invest in learners as they begin, grow, or transition in their career pursuits. Drayton Valley and surrounding community residents will be the primary beneficiaries, but the program will also welcome new international learners to study in the area.

"This key partnership with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension will help position Drayton Valley as the education hub for west-central Alberta," says Drayton Valley Mayor, Michael Doerksen. "Drayton has always been an entrepreneurial-minded community and we're focused on finding innovative ways to expand industry development and, ultimately, job creation through improved access to and investment in education."

During COVID-19, programming will be delivered remotely, with options being explored to move to in-person delivery at Drayton Valley's new Clean Energy Technology Centre when it is safe to do so.

The University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension is widely regarded among business and government leaders for its ability to provide professional education that responds to evolving industry needs. With over 40 programs and 300 courses, Extension is committed to delivering transformative learning experiences that are tailor-made for adult learners. For more information on Extension's programs, visit ext.ualberta.ca.

The Town of Drayton Valley is a dynamic community with a vibrant and active population focused on family and opportunities that provide stability in a changing economy. Drayton Valley is looking to become a leader in providing high quality education, training, and skills development for its residents. Recognizing that education is a key element in overcoming barriers and increasing employability, the Town has made a commitment to investing in education in the community to serve the broader region. For more information about Drayton Valley, visit draytonvalley.ca.

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To arrange for media interviews with Extension's Interim Dean Maria Mayan, please contact Rita Espeschit at rbraga@ualberta.ca.

To arrange for media interviews with Drayton Valley's mayor Michael Doerksen, please contact Jennifer Stone at jstone@draytonvalley.ca.