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## **Native Awareness Week to include pipe ceremony**

This year's Native Awareness Week from March 6 to 10 will pay tribute to the long-held relationship between the University of Lethbridge and Indigenous peoples.

Among the many events taking place, the U of L, currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, will be unveiling its own ceremonial pipe, made by an elder from the Piikani First Nation and engraved with a pronghorn.

"The offer of prayer with a pipe is very significant and powerful for the Blackfoot people," says Ryan Crosschild, a U of L program specialist. "It is a form of Blackfoot law making and therefore, when the University offers prayer for the pipe, it is for the university community so they can continue to be successful."

"During our 50th anniversary year, the U of L is honoured to receive the ceremonial pipe," says Dr. Mike Mahon, U of L president and vice-chancellor. "In the years ahead, the pipe will serve as a symbol of the special relationship that exists between First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and the University."

Native Awareness Week provides a reminder for the University community, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike, to learn more about Indigenous culture and practices and reflect on the history, sacrifices, contributions and culture of FNMI peoples.

"This week reminds us that we have to also acknowledge the tough subjects and negativity that have come from years of colonization and to re-emphasize the importance of reconciliation," says Crosschild. "Native Awareness Week is one of the ways to showcase culture and bring awareness to the issues identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to start a dialogue to figure out the best way to move forward."

The pipe will be unveiled during the opening ceremonies that begin at 11 a.m. on Monday in the University Hall Atrium. The Grand Entry Mini Powwow is scheduled to begin at noon.

Other highlights of the week include a public lecture by Dr. Linda Many Guns, a professor in the Faculty of Native American Studies. The talk, entitled *The Indigenous Collective Mind*, is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8 from 3:05 to 5 p.m. in Room B660, University Hall. On

Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m., Jackson 2Bears, a Mohawk multimedia artist based in Victoria, B.C., will present FNMI Art & Creative Cultural Praxis. A full schedule is available on the U of L [Notice Board](#).

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