What a tremendous year of change for our Polytechnic community! Indeed, the pressure and process of real change has been profound this past year, both for the evolution of our institution and for our region.

This galvanizing pressure has refined so many of the ways that we work and live together. I’ve been proud to see my colleagues supporting our local entrepreneurs, my neighbours take care of one another during times of isolation, and our Polytechnic community rally together to adapt the ways we learn, work and collaborate in a constantly changing public health environment.

These key features of our community will be what drives our success as Red Deer Polytechnic. It is also part of what makes our new polytechnic designation feel so appropriate for our vision for the future of post-secondary education in Alberta and our place within that landscape.

The polytechnic designation is unique, as we are. It brings elements of arts and humanities learning together with practical approaches like hands-on, simulation and work-integrated learning. The immersive nature of a polytechnic learning experience builds on our reputation and tradition of small class sizes, attentive instruction and industry networking opportunities.

The polytechnic designation is new, and it provides room to influence and shape the future of post-secondary education in Alberta. This is true of us, too, and of the people who make up our region and community. We are entrepreneurial and adaptable. We ask questions and find solutions. We think across boundaries. We work together. Our institution will have a lasting impact on the way that higher education is delivered in Alberta because of the work we are doing now, as Red Deer Polytechnic.
Finally, the polytechnic designation is greater than the sum of its parts. As Red Deer Polytechnic, not only can we continue to offer all of the program types our students have depended on for more than fifty years, not only can we begin to offer our own Bachelors’ Degrees, but we can also work across interdisciplinary lines to create unique and meaningful experiences for our students.

In the same way, I’m proud to be able to connect with so many individuals to find creative and new ways to support Red Deer Polytechnic and the important role this institution plays in our social, economic and cultural richness. Truly, the work of all of these individuals - volunteers, instructors, community leaders, alumni, donors, students and more - comes together to create an impact that is greater than the sum of all of our individual work.

Red Deer Polytechnic is unique, it is future-focused and it is truly a reflection of who we are.

Kevin Beattie

We Are Red Deer Polytechnic

I am excited for the opportunities that the change to Polytechnic status at the college will bring to both the students and the community to explore increased partnerships in learning. I see a platform for practical, relevant and timely education through outreach programs, internships, job shadowing etc… in many fields of study through partnering with local business and industry assisting the businesses with their part time personnel needs while training the students in “real life” employment situations relevant to their field of study. Collaboration like this will strengthen both Red Deer Polytechnic and the Central Alberta community. - Marty Vellner

The Red Deer Polytechnic Foundation Board of Directors is

Chair - Kevin Beattie
Past Chair - Tim Wiltzen
Director - Gail Bellanger
Director - Matt Brown
Director - Paula Law
Director - Colleen Manning
Director - Ryan Metzger
Director - Gustavo Nogareda
Director - Marty Vellner
In a nutshell, Reading College is a fantastic literacy program designed to help future Grade 3 students increase their skills and confidence in reading and writing. This Reading College program helps give these students the little push of help that will help them feel more successful in September when they enter Grade 3. For 20 days in July, students are immersed in a literacy-rich environment that feels like a summer camp! Each morning we focused on reading, writing and word work. In the afternoons we brought in engaging activities and presenters, such as Mr. Jason Zackowski from Lindsay Thurber High School. An example of something I coordinated was a reading of my mother’s first children’s book. I surprised my students at the end of the story by sharing she was my mother, and the students were astonished. They couldn’t believe that my mother wrote a book! It was a fantastic learning experience in that students saw that anyone can be an author. When we think of people that do big things, we assume they are big people from big places. It was neat to show them that they can chase their dreams no matter how big or small they are. Experiences like this made Reading College exciting.
This year, Reading College was different than in previous years because of COVID. We were in a new building (Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre) and we kept students separated as much as possible, to adhere to social distancing. In previous years students would gather in three groups to experience reading, writing and word work. Due to the pandemic, we had separate cohorts of students who stayed in the same classroom each day. I was given eight students to teach all areas of literacy: reading, writing, word work, etc. I was with my eight students from the moment they stepped off the bus until the moment they stepped back on at the end of the day.

When I reflect back on July, it felt like I taught these students for an entire year, but it was only twenty days. It felt like a year because it was my first time implementing classroom rules from scratch, nailing down routines and establishing a cohesive schedule. During the last three days when I was slowly cleaning up the classroom, it felt like the end of the year. As a new teacher, it was a valuable experience to fast-forward through a mini-school year with our own eight students.

The highlight of my time at Reading College was definitely our Graduation Ceremony. Each student walks across the stage in their grad cap and shakes hands with some special people. It was a very real experience for these students which I believe helps increase their confidence even more. It takes real drive and commitment to get through those twenty days and to grow in their literacy skills. The small-grouped cohorts worked very well. It helped us to form stronger relationships with each of our eight students.

Another rewarding part of this opportunity was the learning we received on how to work through a literacy program. We led Leveled Literacy Intervention with our students, which is essentially small group work with students that focus on the entire scope of literacy. It’s quite immersive. Being trained and having practice in this has definitely helped me in my current teaching position at Aspen Heights Elementary in a Grade 4 / 5 combined classroom setting. I saw excellent results with my students at Reading College in their reading, writing and spelling. Some students moved from a reading level H to an M over 20 days. This intensive environment of teaching and learning has 100% helped prepare me for my own classroom this year.

Being fully immersed in a literacy-filled environment with kids in July felt like a third practicum, in a way. I was still learning but I was enhancing my teaching craft even further before my first official teaching contract. When I think back to the teacher I was before July, I can barely recognize her! Both the students and us graduate teachers experienced growth. It truly was the best summer job I could have as a future teacher.

What I love about this program is that families incur no cost for their child to attend. Thankfully, this program is fully funded by donor support through the Foundation for Red Deer Public Schools. Each day students are picked up by a school bus, get fed breakfast and lunch, and return home on the same bus at the end of the day. I really appreciate that financial barriers are removed so that every child has equal access to attend the program.

Read more about Tosha and her experience as a learner and teacher these past 4 years at rdpolytech.ca/differencemakers
What it means to be resilient

Meet Bret Nederlof

Business Administration Diploma, Class of 2011

RDC Foundation Annual Report
Curbside pick-up and home delivery were always going to be key features for Brindle Pet Supplies when Bret Nederlof and Megan Oshust developed their business plan in the Summer of 2019. The market they had planned to enter would shift significantly just a month after they launched, but Bret and Megan stayed committed to their vision.

Both Bret and Megan grew up in the small business world, in families of independent small business owners. At the same time, these young alumni are adept creatives, digital natives and comfortable social media marketers. Bret has a Business Administration Diploma with a Marketing concentration; Megan started her post-secondary journey at Red Deer Polytechnic, but went on to receive a Marketing Diploma from NAIT. This unique and shared experience gave them a particular perspective when starting their own small business: bringing the convenience and ease of online shopping to customers who appreciate the sense of community that only local businesses can build.

“We both grew up here in Red Deer. We love this city and we want to see it thrive,” says Megan.

Brindle Pet Supplies is a natural extension of their passions for pets, animals in need, and community. Brindle is named in honour of Charlie, their past rescue pup, while their newest rescue, Cali, serves as greeter in the brick-and-mortar storefront to customers who want to shop in person. Both Bret and Megan volunteer often with Saving Grace Animal Society, doing everything from dog walking to kennel care.

“It’s always different, it’s always chaotic and it’s always rewarding, because there are so many animals with different needs. It’s something that we’re very passionate about,” says Bret.

It was with these joint objectives in mind that Bret and Megan created Brindle Pet Supplies. They developed a beautiful and sophisticated website that would create convenient easy shopping for pet parents. They serve their online customers with the same attention to detail that customers appreciate from local, mom-and-pop shops. By using modern tools, they can get to know their pet customers more quickly, and add personal touches like birthday boxes, even for new customers. “The online format gives us the time and space to do these personal touches well, like recording sensitivities and allergies, so that we can make great recommendations, and ensure that Welcome boxes, free samples and treats are something that pets will really enjoy,” says Megan. Into the online store, they built methods of donating food or funds to local animal shelters. As a business, they support fundraising events and activities and Brindle donates 5% of all profits to local shelters and sanctuaries. From nose to tail, Brindle Pet Supplies marries the best of online shopping with the best of locally owned small business.

The challenges Brindle faced during COVID-19, then, were in stark contrast to their competitors. While others were racing to move their business online, Brindle was already there. At the same time, Bret and Megan had designed a business plan which filled a specific gap. “When we came up with the idea, we knew that there were businesses like ours in larger centers, and that it was something that appealed to us as pet owners – online shopping, automated reorders and delivery – but there wasn’t anyone in our area that was really doing this,” says Bret.

When the pandemic hit Western Canada, Brindle was already running a sophisticated online store, offering curbside pick-up and free delivery. What they couldn’t have foreseen was the breadth of competitors who would suddenly prioritize entering the corner of the market that they had identified.

“The COVID emergency situation presented some challenges, but it also helped to change the way that people shop,” says Bret. Local retail landscapes moved online, including many independently owned small businesses, which hadn’t had online presence in the past. “COVID definitely opened people’s eyes to shopping more online, and helped people understand and accept that, just because it’s online doesn’t mean it’s not still local. That an online store can still be an independently owned company,” adds Megan. “It’s a very competitive market, but we’re really proud to be one of few independently owned pet supply stores in Red Deer, and to be offering something unique to Central Albertans.”

“I think that growing up in Red Deer, there are many ups and downs because of our key industries like farming and oil and gas. We have an attitude sort of engrained in us, when we’ve grown up here, that there’s going to be ups and downs, you’re going to face challenges, and to just persevere,” says Bret. “I think that’s somewhat engrained in Red Deer Polytechnic as well, and in getting an education there: at times it’s going to be hard, it’s going to be easy, it’s going to be fun and it’s going to be tough, just keep going.”
Leslie and I were married in 1954, both having been raised on family farms. We lived for 25 years in a small bungalow, which we built on the Wadey farmstead across the driveway from Leslie’s mother who lived in the original Wadey home, and who everyone in the community called Mamie. Leslie and I took over the original farming operation and raised our three children harmoniously in Mamie’s yard. In those 25 years, there was never a harsh word between she and I - to her credit.

We all worked hard, and Leslie and I expanded our farming operation by purchasing farmland east of Blackfalds. After my kids were all in school, I continued in my chosen career as a Legal Secretary at a law firm in Lacombe. In those years, few farmers’ wives worked away from home, but with the support of my husband, Mamie, my mother, and three responsible kids, we made it work.

We were involved in many activities and were part of a warm community. Luckily our kids enjoyed school and were good students. As parents, top marks were not mandatory, but homework, study habits and reading were.

Living on the edge of Blackfalds, our kids had lots of friends and playmates. However, few children’s activities were offered, and as parents we had to be very diligent and creative in keeping our kids safe and out of trouble. They played cards with Mamie at her house, watched a lot of favourite TV shows and sporting events with their dad, read books, and had many wiener roasts at our land along the Blindman River with family and friends. As the family grew older, the kids assumed more duties, like lawn mowing at our house and Mamie’s, weeding, raking, running errands for Mamie, babysitting, grooming the dog, and cooking meals.
Our family “survived”, and we remained close and respectful of each other. We are happy and the memories of the past are so precious to me now.

Red Deer College was such a positive thing for Red Deer and district. It allowed our children, who just graduated from high school, to live at home, or close to home, to transition into post-secondary education in a more secure and familiar environment with family support nearby. Through some personal friendships, I learned more about the college and garnered a better understanding of its impact on the city and the district.

When deciding where I would make a memorial donation in memory of my late husband, I was faced with so many great causes and needy cases. In addition to other donations, I made in the community, I wanted to look into the future, and our young people are our community’s future. During my generation, if you worked hard, had ambition, initiative and loyalty, you could advance and have a fulfilling career. Today, in order to succeed you need to be highly educated with the ability to learn very quickly. Advanced education equips you with the knowledge and confidence that you can succeed. Employers are prepared to train you for a specific position; however, they need to be assured that you are capable of learning and have the fortitude to finish what you start and the ability to work as part of a team. A credential provides them with that assurance.

Education is expensive and few parents are in a position to fully educate their entire family. Many students receive no assistance. My hope is that this donation is a stepping stone on the road to success. We decided to support the Student Emergency Bursary because, in today’s volatile environment, many well-laid plans go amiss. If some financial aid can keep students focused on their goals and not give up hope and quit, then that has to be a win-win situation for the students and society, and it makes me feel good!

As a young person, I did not dream of being an airline stewardess, a teacher, or a nurse, but always pictured myself in a place of business. I took the three-year business course that was available to me in high school, an alternative to business college in Edmonton or Calgary. When I graduated from high school, I had a job waiting for me in a Lacombe law firm, working for a friend of my uncle’s. The lawyer was an ex-army corporal and a perfectionist who didn’t tolerate errors. He dictated letters very quickly and used very big words. I wore out a Webster’s dictionary in the years that I worked for him. He was a very responsible teacher and that training proved so valuable as I continued working in the same field for many years.

I trust that the current students at Donald School of Business are getting a much broader and extensive education and are attentive. If my donation has assisted some students to attain their goals, then I am rewarded.

Over my lifetime, many people supported me in achieving various goals in my life. My parents and grandparents, who were such excellent role models, set high standards of conduct but overlooked my flaws. My husband, who encouraged me to follow a dream, helped me to expand my role as wife and mother to include a career path I yearned to return to. Mamie, who thought I was so clever to be working in a city office, had her door always open to my kids. So many people I worked with took time to assist me and showed confidence in my abilities to do things on my own. When I did encounter difficulties, they helped me rectify my error rather than humiliate me.

I can only hope that I will always show respect for a person who is truly sincere in their endeavours.

I have lived a happy productive life. I didn’t have to send a father, a husband, or a son off to war, not knowing if they would return. I was blessed with loving good parents, a husband who ensured that our entire family was well cared for and never in need, a close-knit community where we were surrounded by people that cared. We worked hard, had good luck, and capitalized on that luck and we prospered. What more can you ask from life?

Our donation to Red Deer Polytechnic is our way of saying thank you for the rewards our family has received and is indicative of our faith in the future.
Amanda Trimble is making a real mark on the film industry. As a video coordinator, Amanda has made her mark for her work on Fargo, Ghostbusters, Blackstone, Let Him Go and Jurassic World, to name a few.

Instructor, James Wilson, who is himself an alum of the Motion Picture Arts program, is not at all surprised at how quickly Amanda has established herself in the film industry in Western Canada, and emerged as a leader and go getter. “She always pushed the limits and asked ‘Why can’t I?’ We took a group of students to the Toronto Film Festival one year, and many students were intimidated by the city itself, but Amanda was laser focused on films and connecting with filmmakers. She was right in the mix, networking, introducing herself, taking business cards and asking questions.”
Creatively, she is equally brazen. “In her fourth year, she really pushed the limit of what we had ever done for student films,” says James. “In one film, she got one of the stars of CBC’s Heartland to come out for a day. She filmed at Castrol Raceway and had professionals help her do car crashes and things. She just always pushed the limits.”

Staying connected and giving back, is another consistent theme of her professional life. She returns to her roots by volunteering at Morinville Community High School where she discovered her passion for the arts. She runs workshops at Red Deer Polytechnic for both credit students and summer campers. She shares the importance of networking, work ethic and initiative within the industry, highlighting that these are the skills that will help you get the job, keep the job and get referred for future jobs. She stays engaged and involved with the professional organizations that support her and her colleagues, and has worked behind the scenes in the health and wellness industry. In all of these pursuits, Amanda leads with passion wherever she is involved.

There are many ways for alumni to contribute to student learning, like the Teen Film Camp that James helped to develop in 2003. “Amanda and her husband, Shawn Knievel, have worked at Film Camp for many years, and they meet kids at those camps that they can become mentors to, even those that don’t pursue post-secondary education.” Amanda met Shawn (Motion Picture Arts, Production, 2012), a lighting technician who also works in the industry, at Red Deer Polytechnic. To summer campers and credit students alike, they provide guidance and advice, answer questions and provide references, to try to make it attainable for students and newcomers to get their foot in the door in the film and TV industry.

Part of what’s meaningful about having alumni in the classroom is providing students with an opportunity to see success at the local level. Students aspire to study at Red Deer Polytechnic because alumni make those possibilities feel real. James notes that it also underscores the value and utility of what he’s teaching. “When I bring someone in and they show that what I’m teaching actually has purpose in the industry, and will be something they actually use, students will really listen. It’s funny because alumni are saying the same things I said – I’m the one who taught them – but it really adds a level of validation.” Finally, it also serves to shape further dialogue with students. Using alumni presentations as a point of reference, students find they have new questions, and James can design future workshops in these areas.

As Creative Arts programming matures at Red Deer Polytechnic, so do alumni within the industry. “We’ve been around long enough now that probably every production that’s been filmed in Western Canada for the last five or ten years has had RDP alumni on the film set, working in some capacity. These alumni connect with others in the industry, and the industry has started to take notice. So, this helps us bring established, higher-level professionals in as well, that maybe predate our film program, and they further contribute to the learning experiences of our students in the program,” says James.

For Amanda, she has been busier than she has ever been at any point in her career. When the pandemic hit Western Canada, industry work halted overnight and she spent countless hours working with International Cinematographers Guild (ICG) of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the professional union of camera departments for Western Canada to support her colleagues within the industry by navigating new public health orders. By July of 2020, Amanda stepped in as President of ICG 669. Within the union, she works with the young workers committee, promoting health, openness and outreach to new members in the film industry. She also dedicates time working with industry and organizations to help train and retain talent within Alberta and Western Canada.

“She’s had to step into this role really quickly, with all that has happened during COVID. She’s negotiating with Netflix and Apple and major movie studios about COVID protocols on set across Western Canada – BC to Manitoba. It’s a huge role, and a lot of work, but I think a lot of people are taking notice. And, you know, when she comes to talk with students, they start to see that maybe they can have a voice too. Especially for the women in class. This industry has a lot of challenges for women and I think that for students that’s a concern. To hear someone like Amanda say it’s not a perfect industry but things are getting better and we need your voice to help? That’s powerful.”
I was thrilled to volunteer as a department champion for Red Deer Polytechnic’s Workplace Campaign for United Way Central Alberta. The United Way is such a big part of our community in central Alberta, and I wanted to help be a part of it.

I’m so proud that together we raised more than $11,000 during a time when our community really needed that help and support. We also gathered hundreds of items, including baby supplies, food items and winter clothes for community organizations in our community. This year, more people had to depend on the services these organizations provide, and at the same time, traditional fundraising activities had to be cancelled. It was truly an honour to be able to help our central Alberta community.

Working with our campaign co-chairs and the other department champions made me feel proud to be a part of our Red Deer Polytechnic community. I have never witnessed such creativity and passion from everyone involved to help our community during these trying times. At the time of the campaign, many of us were working entirely remotely, and others were working in a hybrid model. All of our campaign activities had to be delivered online in order for all of us to participate. All of my colleagues were creative in finding meaningful and fun ways to connect in a virtual environment.

There were many activities and as the Champion for the People and Culture, Marketing and Communications, and Institutional Research departments, I was able to get to know colleagues who I don’t usually get the chance to work with directly. As a small group, we put together a baby-photo guessing contest and a movie night gift basket raffle. As part of the organization-wide activities, I personally taught two Lunch & Learns on art projects that are dear to my heart and bring me joy. I wanted to pass my creative passion along and I was able to connect with others at Red Deer Polytechnic who I have never met.

This year was trying for me, as human connection is my oxygen. Shared laughter soothes my heart and hugs are the tether that hold me together. At a time when we needed to be apart from one another, the Workplace Campaign for United Way was an opportunity to connect with my coworkers in a personal way, to share the things we care about and to work together to support our community. I continue to practice patience as we wait to get back to a place where we can see each other smile, face to face and unmasked, where we can work together, side by side, and be thankful to be together again.

I’ve volunteered to be a champion again, for our 2021/2022 Workplace Campaign to support United Way Central Alberta. I’m excited to begin to incorporate some in person activities with our online campaign, and to watch how the campaign grows each year as we get closer to that place.
Scholarship Report

In 2020-2021, Red Deer Polytechnic awarded $1,474,275 to students. Scholarships are awarded at all levels of study and are available for learners according to a wide range of criteria. Scholarships can be awarded as an acknowledgement of hard work, personal challenges or a student’s potential. In addition to the financial relief a scholarship provides, these awards motivate our learners, inspire them to achieve more and set them up for success in their careers.

Number of awards distributed:
- Athletics
- Entrance
- Apprenticeship
- Continuing (2nd and beyond)
- Graduate – Credit Students
- Extended Education

* 59 for Continuing Apprentices and 
14 for Graduate – Apprenticeship

Visit rdpolytech.ca/support-scholarships to learn more about contributing to the sustainability of our scholarships program, including expanding it to meet the needs of third- and fourth-year learners.

Visit our campuses!

In June, Red Deer Polytechnic launched a new virtual tour that gives prospective students, visitors and community members the opportunity to explore more than 100 areas of our campuses.

Future students can familiarize themselves with learning, gathering and living spaces, learn more about the facilities that they’ll use in their programs and imagine themselves in the halls.

Community members can learn more about event and conference spaces, as well as the expansions and improvements that donors like you have helped us to achieve.

Take a virtual walk through our spaces at rdpolytech.ca/virtual tour and give us a call if you’d like to see our campuses in person. We’d love to grab a coffee at the campus Starbucks, walk you through these halls and share more about how Red Deer Polytechnic students are using all of the unique learning and social spaces on our campuses.

Call Erin Schulha at 403.357.3647 to book your tour today.
Thank you to our donors

Anna Appel
Don A. Armstrong
Mike Babcock
Jessica Baker
Rachel E. Bates
Robert S. Bennett
Paul G. Boultbee
Heather J. Brandt
Samuel T. Brisbane
Cindy L. Brooks
Kenneth B. Brown
Nancy L. Brown
Becky Campbell
Jevil F. Castro
Andrea Christie
Cody Clermont
Matthew Cornall
Kelly H. Coulter
Jacqueline L. Cowan
Christine A. Dach
Josselyn DeMarco
Wanda Dempsey
Carrie L. Dennett
Jagdev S. Dhillon
Terri Dick
Michael J. Donlevy
Douglas G. Doran
Victoria M. Dueck
Michelle E. Edwards Thomson
Louise Erickson
Paule Ferland
Morris F. Flewwelling
Angela Flinn
Caitlin A. Fox
Lauren Gagnon
Constance E. Gallant
Joel D. Gingrich
Ann Goldblatt
Trudy E. Golley
Krystal Grant
Lindsay J. Gustafson
Bev Haverstock
Joe Henderson
Lucas Hetze
Rodney Holt
Rachael A. Hoppins
Rosemary J. Ignacio
Marilyn M. Jewell
R. B. Jewell
Tanya Jewell
Deborah K. Jones
Melissa Jones
Mark A. Kenney
Aileen Koster
Curtis D. Kroschel
Barbara J. J. Lee
Pam Liptak
Kara Marshall
Jeffrey T. Maser
Marily Masters
Glen I. McRobbie
Judy McRobbie
Laura McRobbie
Neil McRobbie
Tyler I. McRobbie
Ysrael M. Milanes
Arun K. Mishra
Linda I. Moore Martin
Liesel Morin
Jason J. Mudry
Carolyn R. Neufeld
Rayanne N. Nicodemus
Julie Oliver
Guy A. Pelletier
Amanda Pinno
Kristine L. Plastow
David L. Pye
Shelley Ralston
Nav Rattan
Krista D. Robson
Stephanie Rogers
Priya Samuel
Douglas N. Schierman
Dale Schulha
Christine E. Skutar
Jean C. Smith
Elaine C. Spencer
We’re working together to make sure more students have access to the education they need to achieve their dreams. The Red Deer Polytechnic Student Bursary Fund is a community funded program to provide $1,000,000 in financial support to students who need it.

Make your gift today and it will be matched 100% by an anonymous donor, doubling the impact of your gift. Every gift makes a difference, no matter the size, and we can’t wait to show students how many members of our community are invested in their success.

For more information visit rdpolytech.ca/giving