

# College engineering program still top of its game

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Photo credit Lethbridge College Photo

Photo caption

*Lethbridge College Geomatic Engineering Technology graduate Sheri Souther uses a total station instrument as part of her land surveying training while enrolled as a Lethbridge College student.*

The Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals in Alberta says Lethbridge College engineering technology grads are in high demand.

“Even in the worst of times, employers are still looking for engineering technologist. It’s an occupation that is in high demand. And I am not sure that potential students generally understand that. It’s not only in high demand, but also well paid,” said ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh.

He believes the graduates will continue to be in high demand. And while colleges worry about having low enrolment, he worries that there will not be sufficient graduates to meet the needs.

“It wasn’t difficult at all finding a job after I graduated. Within about two weeks I had found a job that was paying above average wages at the time,” said Dene Gott, a Lethbridge College geomatics engineering technology graduate and member of ASET.

Gott graduated from the Geomatics Engineering Technology program in 2004.

According to ASET while the hiring of Lethbridge College engineering technology graduates may have initially slowed with the emergence of COVID-19, faculty are now being inundated with job postings for program graduates.

When it comes to the three engineering technology programs offered at the Lethbridge College, Civil Engineering Technology typically has and continues to draw the most students, while Geomatics Engineering Technology draws the least.

Lethbridge College’s chair, school of engineering technologies, Edith Olson believes the difference in enrolment for the Geomatics program is due to the fact that people do not know much about it.

Olson said that Geomatics is more than just land surveying which is what people know about it.

“It is land surveying but it can be writing computer programs for data processing. It can be used to analyze huge data sets to solve problems, to make predictions and to risk and damage assessments in the landscape,” said Olson.

She said Geomatics can also be used in health sciences, where they can use data from where diseases cropped up and by using geomatics, and computer software and mapping they can often pin point the source of where the disease originated and they can make predictions where it's going to show up next.

On the world stage, geomatics engineering technology professionals were instrumental in strategizing a way to rescue the soccer team that was trapped in a cave in Thailand in 2018.

Geomatics also factored into predicting where to locate the wreckage of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 that went down in 2014.

Some geomatics engineering technology grads work in the field gathering data with survey instruments, GPS and drone imagery which is the reason why Gott decided to enrol in the Geomatics Engineering Technology program as he enjoys math, science and being outdoors.

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