



Administration Building, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Denise Dick Herr.

# Burman University

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## Background

Burman University is a co-educational liberal arts baccalaureate institution in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada, founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1907. It is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association and offers Campus Alberta Quality Council-approved bachelor degree programs. It is the only

Seventh-day Adventist university in Canada and is sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

Burman University acknowledges that it is located on Treaty 6 territory—the traditional and ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, and Nakota Sioux. It acknowledges that this territory is home to the Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Regions 2, 3, and 4 within the historical Northwest Métis Homeland.<sup>1</sup>

Burman University has grown into its own identity. It began in 1907 as the Canvassers' School, transformed itself into Alberta Industrial Academy (1908) and Alberta Academy (1915). It became Canadian Junior College (1919), Canadian Union College (1947), Canadian University College (1997), and finally Burman University (2015). This article traces the growth of this institution, its quest for degree-granting status in Canada, and the continued dedication to service displayed by its students and alumni.

## Adventist Work Begins in Alberta

Because of a strong desire to spread the gospel message to residents of the young province of Alberta, the institution now known as Burman University began its life on January 1, 1907, as The Canvassers' School in Leduc, Alberta.

Thomas A. Astleford, a Seventh-day Adventist colporteur, was instrumental in beginning the Adventist work to the area, arriving in the Territory of Alberta in 1895. The work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Alberta was organized in 1901 when the Alberta Mission of Seventh-day Adventists was inaugurated under the jurisdiction of the Northern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, then headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. There was one church, and about 60 Adventists lived in the Alberta Mission.<sup>2</sup> These included a few Scandinavians, about a dozen who spoke English, and 35 for whom German was their first language.<sup>3</sup>

James Boynton was appointed as superintendent for the mission. Within three years, there were 150 members in the mission; within five years, there were 330 Sabbathkeepers, six churches or companies,<sup>4</sup> four church schools, and a sanitarium. Boynton believed that the Adventist work would be served more effectively if there were a stronger local administration, so he applied to the Northern Union Conference for local conference status.<sup>5</sup>

On July 11, 1906, the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was formed. Charles A. Burman was appointed president; James Boynton was appointed vice president. Other appointees included Stella B. Lowry, secretary-treasurer; W. O. James, field secretary; and Leona Burman, Sabbath School and Missionary Volunteer secretary.<sup>6</sup>

The church members quickly passed a motion to recommend that “steps be taken to build up the church school work in the conference as fast as possible.”<sup>7</sup> Coupled with this recommendation was the strong desire to spread the gospel. The Alberta Conference leaders decided that the province needed more colporteurs to sell Adventist

literature and to give Bible studies. As discussions continued, Burman urged that the best way to inspire colporteurs was to create a school to train young people. Thus, it was decided to begin a canvassers' school.

On January 1, 1907, the doors of The Canvassers' School opened in Leduc. Nine students enrolled, but before the term ended in March, there were 27 students—a 300% increase. Three faculty members, all conference officers, taught the classes. An additional teacher was responsible for grades 1-6.<sup>8</sup>

The students who attended The Canvassers' School wanted to learn even more about canvassing and to receive an academic education. Burman led a group of 20 eager young people to cut logs on government land west of Leduc; this lumber would be used when an academic boarding school was begun near Leduc. The new school was named the Alberta Industrial Academy, and the bulletin declared that the purpose of the institution was "to give its students a Christian education, and to prepare laborers for immediate service in the work of carrying the gospel to all the world in this generation."<sup>9</sup> The word "industrial" in the name indicated that manual labor was valued along with academic work. The board planned for campus industries to help students learn a trade and to enable them to earn funds for their tuition.

Most students were mature, but elementary schooling (grades 1-6) was available for those who needed it. The focus of the institution, however, was on the grades 7-10. Five subjects were taught for each level. In addition, the students learned about book salesmanship; they could also participate in sight singing, chorus singing, penmanship, and spelling drills. The school year was a success, but in the meantime, the Adventist sanitarium in Edmonton was considering expansion plans that would involve the school.

In 1903, L. Frank Hommel, a graduate of Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, had come to Canada and established a private treatment center in Edmonton, about 33 km from Leduc. This small venture expanded from a single room to a 28-room facility; however, by 1908, it was evident that city rent and utilities were too expensive for the sanitarium to become a profitable business. Because the academic institution showed promise of substantial growth, the medical workers were anxious to collaborate with the academic workers. The Alberta Conference leaders were receptive to the idea; however, the site of Alberta Industrial Academy lacked the beautiful surroundings that were generally associated with sanitariums.<sup>10</sup> It was decided to find a new location for both institutions. A committee with members from the boards of the Alberta Conference and sanitarium found the most favorable location in Lacombe, a town of 1,200, located 126 km south of Edmonton.

On February 2, 1909, property was purchased for the two new institutions: a half section of land 3.2 km north of the town of Lacombe.<sup>11</sup> The land was not especially good for agriculture, but its hills and lakes made the property appealing. The campus would be located on a hill about 30 meters above Barnett Lake; the term "the Hilltop" is frequently used when referring to the campus. Not only was the location scenic, but it was also accessible. It was located between Calgary and Edmonton on the new Canadian Pacific Railway line.

Furthermore, the Calgary-Edmonton Automobile Trail passed the campus just a bit more than half a km to the east.

Although plans were made to build two institutions, the Alberta Conference did not have enough money to construct the school and the sanitarium. Administrators and lay members decided they needed a secondary school to train medical workers. The academy program would take priority.<sup>12</sup> The sanitarium never did move to Lacombe.

## 1909-1919: Early Years in Lacombe<sup>13</sup>

In 1909, the school moved to its Lacombe location, where it remains to this day. There was only one building—a barn—on the campus. That first winter, classes, religious services, and meals all took place in the barn. The boys slept there; the girls slept in a hastily constructed laundry building or in tents while East Hall, their dormitory, was being built.

Construction of West Hall, which served as the men's dormitory and classroom building, was started during the summer of 1910. During the 1910-1911 school year, grades 11 and 12 were added to the curriculum. In 1911, a grade school was built. By 1912, there were nine regular teachers and three assistants.<sup>14</sup> It is not clear whether this number includes the primary school teachers, but records show that there were 98 students in the academic division and 28 in the church school;<sup>15</sup> by 1913, enrollment stood at 175.<sup>16</sup>

By 1913, an assembly hall had been built. It housed the kitchen, dining room, chapel, classrooms, and a bookstore. As the years progressed, enrollment increased, and more classes were offered. During the 1914-1915 academic year, the name of the school was changed from Alberta Industrial Academy to Alberta Academy. No extant minutes give a reason for the change, but it possibly stemmed from the state of the campus industries: although students were working—and working hard—few official industries had been established.<sup>17</sup>

Always there was emphasis on academics: increasing the academic credentials of the professors, creating a more academic library, and developing the types and quality of courses offered. The early *Annual Announcements* needed only one or two pages to outline the academic curriculum. By 1918, 14 pages were required.

In 1914, a two-year normal school, or teacher-training program, was begun although the Alberta Department of Education did not certify the graduates. Shortly thereafter, the principal, Ernest Dick, started looking carefully at the entire system of education offered at the school and resolved that it needed to move from the American to the Alberta curriculum. He was concerned about the large number of students that did not return to Canada after continuing their education in the United States. To try to stem this brain drain, the institution began offering college classes in 1919. Thus, Alberta Academy became Canadian Junior College (CJC). Now students could build another two years on the foundation they had established on the Hilltop.

## 1919-1947: Canadian Junior College<sup>18</sup>

To promote the opportunities available at CJC, administrators traveled through Western Canada telling potential students about the school. Furthermore, railway fares were paid from their homes to the Alberta boundary to encourage students from other provinces to attend. Enrollment, including those in the elementary school, reached 262 in 1920.

More students meant that the facilities needed to be expanded: East Hall, the women's dormitory, was doubled in size; the top floor of the Assembly Hall provided additional dormitory space for the men.

With increased enrollments, the future looked bright for the school, but at 2 a.m., May 28, 1930, the campus was awakened to fire sirens, smoke, and flames. The five-story assembly hall had been set ablaze by an arsonist. Soon the fire was out of control, but thankfully, all the men living in the building escaped. The school records, the financial statements, and the new nine-foot grand piano were saved from the flames. Then the wind changed and the fire spread. Not only was the assembly hall destroyed, but also the men's dormitory and an industrial building that housed \$3,000 worth of brand-new woodworking equipment. In the face of this disaster, there were huge challenges to be faced, but the college community was deeply thankful that no lives had been lost—and they were encouraged when Cecil Shankel, the acting president, boldly announced, "We will rebuild at once."

Canadian Junior College decided that it should build more durable, fireproof buildings, and so it chose reinforced concrete rather than stick frame. S. A. Ruskjer, president of the Western Canadian Union Conference, stated, "Instead of the old buildings, which rocked in the wind and creaked from garret to basement, we shall have a school plant that we can point to with Christian pride."<sup>19</sup> The new classrooms were used for the first time on November 12, 1930.

Even though the school had received generous donations after the fire, it had to concentrate on reducing its construction debt of more than \$75,000 during a time when the Depression adversely affected the institution and its constituents. There was a school-wide effort to decrease expenditures, but in 1933, when enrollment dropped from 210 to 92, some staff members were laid off and the East Hall was closed as a dormitory. During this time, industries were created to try to enhance work opportunities for students. (See "Industries" below.)

According to *Annual Announcements*, the curriculum changed during the 1930s. In 1929-1930, college students could graduate from ministerial, commercial, literary, or scientific courses. By 1931-1932, students who were interested in teaching could take a normal entrance program; however, a few years later neither the normal entrance program nor the commercial course was listed. The commercial course appeared again a few years later, joined by a new classification of scientific courses: pre-nursing, and pre-medical and pre-dental.

The college began the 1930s with a strong foreign language department; in 1929-1930, students could take classes in German, French, Latin, Greek, and Ukrainian. However, by the end of the 1930s, changes in staffing and economic exigencies had reduced the offerings to French and Ukrainian. CJC was the only Seventh-day Adventist school in North America that offered classes in the Ukrainian language. Because there were two

million Ukrainian speakers on the continent, the General Conference established a department at CJC to train ministers and other workers for the Ukrainian people.

By 1937, the high school division of the institution was accredited by the province, but the school administrators, the Board of Trustees, and the constituents were not content to end there. They wanted to offer bachelor's degrees; however, this was virtually impossible because the University of Alberta (U of A) had the monopoly on education in the province, and college courses were recognized only from institutions affiliated with the U of A. Nevertheless, church-supported colleges could offer their own degrees in theology. With this proviso, CJC began offering a 4-year degree in theology in 1945. To acknowledge this change, the name Canadian Union College (CUC) received approval by an act of the Alberta government in 1947.

## 1947-1997: Canadian Union College<sup>20</sup>

After CUC began to offer its theology degree, the institution wanted to expand its offerings of accredited degrees. It was believed that enrollment could increase if the school received provincial accreditation. In 1947, a school publication, the *Annual Aurora*, stated, "The accreditation of the college...is a fond hope for the near future." Although administrators and the Board worked diligently, this hope did not become a reality until 44 years later.

The college knew that achieving degree-granting status would not be easy. If CUC were to become affiliated with the U of A, it would need to upgrade the academic credentials of its teaching faculty and to improve classroom and library facilities. Furthermore, in the 1960s, a rapid increase in post-secondary enrollments had led to the opening of several junior colleges and three universities in Alberta. When enrollments declined in the 1970s, the province was reluctant to expand degree-granting privileges to private colleges; however, an important step in receiving accreditation was achieved when, on September 3, 1971, an agreement was signed with the U of A that allowed CUC to offer several first-year courses that could be applied towards baccalaureate degrees. The courses were in biology, business administration, chemistry, education, English, French, mathematics, music, physical education, physics, and sociology.

By 1977, the institution had received approval to offer second-year university transfer courses in chemistry, mathematics, and physics. By the 1979/1980 academic year, a total of 60 U of A transfer courses were listed in the *Academic Bulletin*; however, degree-granting status seemed to be far in the future, so President Neville Matthews negotiated an agreement for an extended campus program in education with Union College, Nebraska. Students could take classes on the CUC campus and earn degrees accredited by Union College.<sup>21</sup>

For the first time since the college began offering its post-secondary program in 1919, students could obtain an accredited degree in an area other than theology for work completed entirely on the Hilltop. In 1980, students could earn accredited Bachelor of Education degrees (elementary, junior high, and secondary) and Bachelor of Science degrees with a major in biology. Later, students could earn a Bachelor of Arts degree with two majors

and a Bachelor of Science degree with additional majors. Many of the courses offered at CUC were Union College courses: the 1981-1982 *CUC Bulletin* lists 213 Union College courses; 66 U of A transfer courses, and 65 CUC courses.

In addition to the extended campus program, several other special programs have been available to students on the Hilltop through the years. Some of these include the following: Master of Science degree in Marital and Family Therapy offered through Loma Linda University, California; Master of Education degree, offered through La Sierra University, California; Master of Arts degree in International Development and Master of Arts degree in Pastoral Ministry, through Andrews University, Michigan; the first three semesters of the Bachelor of Nursing degree, in association with Kettering College, Ohio; and the Change School of Evangelism sponsored by the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In 1980, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta passed Bill 43, which allowed affiliation agreements between private colleges and Alberta universities.<sup>22</sup> A Private College Accreditation Board (PCAB) was established in 1984 to undertake the accreditation process for private colleges. Eleven years later, on September 3, 1991, the government announced that Canadian Union College could grant its own baccalaureate degrees.<sup>23</sup> With an accredited three-year bachelor's degree, students could now continue their training in a professional faculty or apply for admission to a graduate program after additional undergraduate work. This was a milestone of growth and credibility, but work continued towards additional degrees. Under guidelines established by the PCAB, CUC could add additional concentrations (major fields of study for a three-year degree) in disciplines that had sufficient staffing and curricula. Year by year additional concentrations—then majors and four-year degrees—became available to students at CUC through PCAB accreditation.

However, the province had limited the number of private institutions that were allowed to grant education degrees. The limit had been reached before CUC made its application; thus, CUC continued to work with Union College.

## 1997-2015: Canadian University College

In Alberta, the designation “college” refers to post-secondary institutions that do not offer their own degrees; colleges that have achieved degree-granting status may be called “university colleges.” Because Canadian Union College was authorized to offer its own accredited degrees, its name needed to be changed to reflect its new status. After much debate, on June 18, 1997, Canadian Union College officially became Canadian University College. The institution realized the importance of clearly articulating its long-held goals and principles, centering on the importance of physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth. In 1999, the institution adopted the mission statement “Canadian University College will educate students to think with discernment, to believe with insight and commitment, and to act with confidence, compassion, and competence.”

In 2002, the government agencies involved in higher education in Alberta began an extensive review of their processes. The PCAB was scheduled to complete its work in 2004; a new degree-approval process, one that would apply not only to private university colleges, but rather to all universities and colleges in Alberta, was planned. This would be overseen by the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC). Before this change occurred, President Reo E. Ganson submitted a proposal for the accreditation of the Bachelor of Education program that was taught on the campus. On July 14, 2004, the government of Alberta signed the Order in Council for CUC's Bachelor of Education degree. Emphases in elementary and secondary education were approved, including seven secondary specializations. The privilege of educating educators on the Hilltop had begun in 1916; it had been carried out intermittently for many years and had been given accreditation through Union College in 1980. Finally, CUC could offer its own education degree.<sup>24</sup> In 2011, CUC received permission from the CAQC to also teach an after-degree program. This allowed students who had a previously earned degree to complete the requirements for a Bachelor of Education degree. In two years, they became qualified to teach in their discipline. In 2013, the Scholars program was established. This program is an alternative to the general education requirements for Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees. It offers a discussion-centered "core texts" model of education that allows students to encounter and evaluate significant works of world art and culture in a Christian context.

## 2015- : Burman University

Because the term "university college" was largely misunderstood, CUC and the other faith-based university colleges in Alberta lobbied the government for permission to drop the word "college" from their names; in 2013, permission was granted. After much consultation, CUC's Board of Trustees voted to change the name from Canadian University College to Burman University in recognition of the institution's founders, Charles and Leona Burman, both of whom devoted their entire lives to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Alberta Legislature officially changed the institution's name in December 2015.<sup>25</sup>

The university holds the core values of "excellence, service, spirituality, integrity, and community" and is committed to providing students with "the tools and abilities to navigate the future where they can thrive and serve."<sup>26</sup>

Academic courses, including courses in "service learning," give students tools and abilities, as do the programs sponsored by the Burman Ministry Centre—podcasts, pastoral internships, and conferences.<sup>27</sup> Student growth is enhanced by the Sakala Success Center's services and by Campus Ministries' work. The success center provides personal counselling, career planning, and academic support. The Campus Ministries team, under the direction of the university chaplain, facilitates approximately 20 ministries that focus on students' spiritual growth and development.<sup>28</sup>



In its early history, the institution kept somewhat aloof from the surrounding community; in recent years, it has intentionally worked to increase interaction with the citizens of Lacombe.<sup>29</sup> The Centre for Peace and Justice, with its programs and lecture series, promotes welcoming, harmonious, and inclusive communities.<sup>30</sup> The concert series, "Sunday at 4,"<sup>31</sup> presents music enjoyed by the campus family and community. The School of Business sponsors a lecture series and collaborative services through the Small Business Centre.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Burman serves its community through sports tournaments, summer sports camps, a community health fair, an exercise class for seniors, cooking classes, drama presentations, and collaborations with the City of Lacombe. Albertans with a TAL (The Alberta Library) card obtained from their local public library are entitled to borrow from the Burman library.

## The Academy

For many years, the close historical connection between the high school and the college divisions of the institution was underscored by the fact that both entities were called "Canadian Union College;" however, in 1982, to ensure that both divisions should have clear identities, the high school took on the name Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA). At one time, the academy provided Seventh-day Adventist education for all Western Canada. With the increase of day academies and with decreasing enrollment, PAA faced challenges. Wanting to ensure the long-term viability of the high school, an Agency Agreement, dated September 1, 2020, effectively transferred the operation of PAA to the Alberta Conference.<sup>33</sup>

## Industries<sup>34</sup>

Some of the industries that hired students on the Hilltop were quite short-lived, including a broom factory, a dress-making and tailoring shop, the manufacturing of gloves for coal miners, a commercial laundry, a dried fruit packing industry, a wheat milling operation, and a wheat puffery that created breakfast cereal. Longer-term industries included a leatherworking venture; Parkland Stationery; Parkland Construction, that employed students and taught them construction skills; and an electronics assembly plant, Canutel Industries. More successful was the Parkland Bookbindery (28 years) recorded in 1963 as the largest in Western Canada. But even more important for the students, the institution, and the community were three long-lived industries: the printing press (begun in 1924), the dairy farm (begun in the early 1920s), and the furniture factory (incorporated in 1954).

In 1924, the College Press began in the basement of East Hall. It provided student labor and created printed material for the institution and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the mid-1950s, the press employed four full-time workers and 15 students. Over time, the College Press became the most successful industry on campus and financed all its future building expansion, maintenance, and equipment purchases. In the 1960s, the College Press changed its name to the Parkland ColorPress.

Students had been milking cows and processing milk from the early days of the institution, but when the college acquired a 30-head dairy herd in 1925, the possibility of selling milk and milk products became a reality. Donations of cattle paid for students' bills, increased the herd, and encouraged President H. Martin Johnson to envision a huge dairy barn. When the new barn was complete in 1943, it was said to be Alberta's second largest dairy barn. A milk processing building was constructed in 1943.

In the 1960s, regulations in the milk industry mandated changes. A new dairy barn opened in 1963, and a new milking processing plant was constructed. Most of the milk was processed in Red Deer, 25 km south of campus. College Furniture Products was created by two CJC faculty members, Mel Anderson and Joe Sahly, in 1954. Their goal was to make and sell upholstered furniture and to employ students. By 1956, the factory was Alberta's third-largest furniture factory.

The furniture factory built and expanded its premises nine times over a 25-year period, and many believed that the makeshift structure impeded efficient assembly-line construction. Furniture sales for 1972-1973 amounted to \$1,277,600, but no operating gain existed. To enhance production, a new 6,689 square-meter facility was built in 1979. But despite gains in sales, Parkland Furniture was profitable during only four years of its 42-year history.

To protect the college from incurring debts through its industries, in 1986 Parkland Education Advance Corporation was established to hold the assets of CUC's industrial enterprise. In time, it took over the operation of Parkland Furniture Manufacturing, Parkland ColorPress, the College Dairy, and Parkland Transportation, a corporation that had separated from Parkland Furniture in 1987. Profits and losses were shared among the industries. This sharing principle created difficulties for the industries that were doing well.

By the end of 1991, the dairy was closed, the farm was leased, Parkland ColorPress and Parkland Furniture had been sold. Despite these changes and rising tuition costs, students found the funds to pay their bills. A greater focus on academics encouraged students to spend more time studying than working; in addition, students could more easily access loans and scholarships, including scholarships provided by the institution itself and its generous donors.

## Campus buildings, 1940-2022

Building and renovation projects reflected various academic realities, living needs, and additional interests on campus.

When the aging dormitory, East Hall (built in 1909), needed to be replaced in the mid-1940s, funding from the Canadian Union Conference was available. The groundbreaking ceremony for its replacement, Maple Hall, occurred on April 14, 1946. Supplies for the construction of Maple Hall had been limited and difficult to obtain because manufacturing and production had not yet fully recovered after World War II, but the town of Lacombe

came to the rescue. It had cement on hand to build a memorial center but was not ready to use it. The cement was sold to CUC. Later, when the college received its order, they sold it to the town. When the 1948-1949 school year began, the women moved into Maple Hall and the men unpacked their suitcases in West Hall.<sup>35</sup>

In 1947, a laundry and maintenance building and a new church school were constructed. The Alberta Conference also built an auditorium/gymnasium with the school in mind. When it was not needed by the conference, the college would have use of the building. In 1951, it was gifted to CUC.<sup>36</sup>

By the 1950's, West Hall was cramped—the space dedicated to the kitchen and dining room was needed for dormitory housing. A new building was constructed in 1951 to accommodate the kitchen and dining room. There were some inconveniences—food was cooked and served in the basement, while the dining area was upstairs; nonetheless, students enjoyed panoramic views through the large windows.<sup>37</sup>

In February 1958, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Survey Committee recommended that the church leaders in Canada launch an extensive ten-year \$1.1 million building program to facilitate affiliation with the U of A. They believed that all challenges would be overcome in just a little more than a decade—and affiliation and accreditation could occur. Accreditation would increase enrollment and stabilize finances. The committee recommended that the college remodel the Administration Building, erect a science hall, build a new library, construct more faculty housing, replace West Hall with a new dormitory, build a new bookbindery, and construct new barns and dairy buildings. To raise the required \$1.1 million, it was suggested that each church member give \$10 a year for ten years. However, most of the constituents were not committed to the expansion program. Although insufficient funds had been raised, construction began.<sup>38</sup>

The college did not erect a science hall or a new dormitory, but it did build a new cafeteria, partially renovate the Administration Building, construct more housing for faculty, rebuild all the farm units, renovate the former cafeteria and kitchen for a library, renovate space for the bookbindery, and provide new science research facilities at White Rabbit Creek, 64 km southwest of Nordegg, Alberta.<sup>39</sup>

This massive expansion program taxed the resources of the institution. Five years into the 10-year project, CUC had spent \$488,760 on building projects; however, funds had been used for constructing campus housing and educational facilities rather than for maintenance—and the campus was having difficulties. CUC was on the verge of bankruptcy and a General Conference committee recommended that CUC revert to a secondary school. President P. G. Miller did not agree with the recommendations and assured patrons of the school that college classes would continue. His statements were correct, but the institution continued to struggle to balance the budget.<sup>40</sup>

In 1971-1972, after facing years of bleak budgets and austerity, members of the CUC community were encouraged when they learned that the institution had an operating gain. There could now be some renovations and repairs—and a new physical education center, thanks to the work of the fundraising efforts of the Committee of 100 and the Century Club. The building would provide not only a venue for large social and

spiritual meetings, but also space for basketball, volleyball, tennis, and badminton courts, a racquetball court, saunas, a 25-meter pool, classrooms, and offices.

Since that time, interest in sports and fitness has grown. In 1984, a rock wall was constructed; in the 1990s a weight room was started; and in 2002, durable carpet was replaced with hardwood flooring. Burman organizes intramural games and encourages involvement in sports. Students can earn team scholarships and participate in sports' leagues. In 2009, the PE Centre was expanded: a new suite of classrooms and offices was added, and the weight training center was enlarged and named the Gwen Bader Fitness Centre.

The Acronaires, Burman's acrobatic team, whose members perform in the PE Centre, is committed to advancing and progressing gymnastic skills and community development. The members encourage a healthy lifestyle and promote athletic involvement. They offer a children's acrobatics program designed to foster self-confidence and develop basic gymnastic techniques.

In 1983, to accommodate the influx of students enrolled in the education program, the old gymnasium, built in 1948, was renovated into an education center. Shortly after the work was finished, West Hall was upgraded to meet building and fire safety requirements. The Maple Hall dormitory and the cafeteria were renovated. The former dairy processing building was transformed into a center for Outward Pursuits courses. A Casavant pipe organ, with 2,500 pipes, three keyboards, and a myriad of stops and switches, was created especially for the campus church. Marketing and Enrollment Services moved into the space vacated by the press.

Science courses had been taught in the Administration Building where laboratories were small, plumbing was problematic, and ventilation was poor. Bob Tetz, vice president of College Relations and Development, launched a capital campaign to raise funds for a new science center. Shortly after a fire destroyed the barns that had been built in 1943, construction of the Chan Shun Science Centre began. Ground was broken in 1993; the 2,323 square-meter building was officially opened on September 25, 1994. Students benefit from the well-equipped laboratories, appreciate the window seats in the stairwell, and look out of the atrium windows as they study.

The library remained in the same building—the renovated cafeteria—from 1964 until 2022, when it moved across campus to a new facility, especially designed not only to promote joyfulness and intellectual purpose, but also to echo the mission of the university. Holdings and services feature a specially curated collection of over 65,000 volumes and several dozen electronic databases that support the learning, teaching, and research needs of Burman University. A makerspace encourages hands-on learning and collaboration. Burman is a member of NEOS, a library consortium of government, health, college, and university libraries that share library resources, technology, and collections; for this reason, Burman students, faculty, and staff can access the combined print collection of 17 NEOS member libraries, including resources of the University of Alberta.<sup>41</sup>

## Annexation

Despite the growth of Canadian University College in the 1990s, in 1998 the Administration and Board recognized that revenue needed to increase; one way this could be accomplished was through higher enrollments. It was felt that the institution needed 700-1,000 students. A feasibility study examined whether the school should remain in Lacombe or move to the urban center of Calgary, 175 km to the south. In May 1999, the Board decided that the institution should focus on renewing and revitalizing the Lacombe campus. The school would remain where it had been located since 1909.

In 1998, the Board of Canadian University College voted to request the Town of Lacombe to annex the village of College Heights and some additional college farmland—a total of approximately 800 acres. The town had long requested the land for development. Annexation occurred in 2000. Over the succeeding years, the university has gradually sold land surrounding the campus to finance an endowment fund for school program expansion and capital expenses.

## Enrollment

The institution began as the Canvassers' School in 1907 with seven students. In 1908, Alberta Industrial Academy had 36. In 1973, Canadian Union College had 414. This included 303 students in the high school division.<sup>42</sup>In 2020, university enrollment was 466; however, during the Covid-19 pandemic, numbers dropped. In 2022, a slowly rebounding enrollment stood at 363.<sup>43</sup>

The Burman student body members come from across Canada and worldwide. For example, in the 2012-2013 academic year, 517 students came from Canada, 36 students were from the United States, and 23 from other countries.<sup>44</sup> The university provides housing for many of these students. First-year students find housing in Lakeview Hall, built in 1979-1980. In 2011, with the assistance of a donor, CUC purchased the Milestone Apartments to use for student residences. They were renamed Riverton Hall.

## Vision for Service

The spirit of service burns brightly in the lives of the students on Hilltop and in alumni.

In 1913, Alberta Industrial Academy saw its first grade/12 graduation. The motto, "Ready for Service," characterized the class—which consisted of one member, Walter Clemenson. Clemenson devoted 44 years of service to Canada, with 26 years as president of various conferences. The idea of service is encapsulated in the institution's vision statement: "to provide a transformational university experience that empowers students to serve others and to share hope."<sup>45</sup>

The Student Missionary program began in 1963. Several students spend a year in service overseas almost every year. Typical assignments for these student missionaries are building, teaching, and assisting in orphanages. Others devote a shorter period—Christmas holidays, spring breaks, or part of the summer vacations—to

projects in third world countries. More than 300 students have served in 69 countries. In addition, more than 415 alumni have served fulltime in over 86 countries.<sup>46</sup>

Campus Ministries facilitates service opportunities for students: they work in soup kitchens, collect food for the local food bank, teach in a near-by First Nations community, make prison visits, devote time to Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and raise funds for cancer research. They also help host “Lacombe in Motion,” the city’s annual trail run. In the fall, faculty, staff, and students participate in the annual “Serve Lacombe Day.” They are involved in a variety of activities, such as playing music at the local hospital, sorting donations at a charity store, helping Lacombe residents with yard care, working on trails, and sprucing up a local park.

Because Burman University is the only Adventist degree-granting institution in Canada, its graduates teach in many Adventist schools, lead out in many Adventist churches, and provide administrative leadership in conferences and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. For example, in 2021, there were 166 Burman graduates teaching in Adventist primary and secondary schools in Canada and 148 graduates serving as Adventist pastors, church administrators or support staff in Canada.<sup>47</sup>

But the service of some alumni extends even further. Daniel R. Jackson, former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, was known for encouraging women in ministry. Other alumni who also have added to the administration and vision of the world church are Denis Fortin, former dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and Lowell Cooper, retired general vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Adventist publishing has benefitted from the editorial skills of Myrna Johnson Tetz and Roy Adams ( *Adventist Review*), the scholarship of Don F. Neufeld (editor of many volumes, including the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* and the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*), and the artistry of Harry Baerg. Other alumni enhanced the well-being of thousands of grateful patients: Ellsworth Wareham co-founded the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team which performed heart surgery in 14 countries;<sup>48</sup> Howard Gimbel, recipient of the Alberta Order of Excellence and the Order of Canada, created innovative and effective techniques for cataract surgery.<sup>49</sup>

Alumnus Eric Rajah exemplifies the ideal of service. Rajah received the Alberta Order of Excellence for his outstanding humanitarian work anchored by A Better World (ABW), a project that he co-founded. ABW helps reduce poverty in third world countries through education, infrastructure, health, food security, and income-generating projects. Hundreds of communities and thousands of children in at least 15 countries have benefitted. Rajah sums up how his education at Burman University affected his life: “I saw the dedication and commitment of teachers and other students. From them, I learned that life is about more than earning a passing grade. Trying to model what I learned, I now look at everything I do as service to God and humanity.”<sup>50</sup>

In a central position in the Administration Building stands a statue that portrays the centrality of a vision for service. “The Sower” depicts a farmer sowing seeds. It encourages all who see it to share with others and to

invest in the future.

## Principals and Presidents of Burman University and its Forerunners

Canvassers' School: Charles A. Burman (1907)

Alberta Industrial Academy: Charles A Burman (1907-1909; 1914-1915); J. Irving Beardsley (1909-1914)

Alberta Academy: Ernest D. Dick (1915-1919)

Canadian Junior College: Ernest D. Dick (1919-1922); C. L. Stone (1922-1923); Henry J. Klooster (1923-1927); J. Irving Beardsley (1927-1928); Charles O. Smith (1928-1933); Hubert K. Martin (1933-1937); Leon W. Cobb (1937-1940); H. Martin Johnson (1940-1945); Emil E. Beitz (1945-1946)

Canadian Union College: Emil E. Beitz (1946-1951); Henry T. Johnson (1951-1965); Richard A. Figuhr (1965-1967); Philip G. Miller (1967-1971); Neville O. Matthews (1971-1982); Malcolm S. Graham (1982-1987); Reo E. Ganson (1987-1991); J. D. Victor Fitch (1991-1997)

Canadian University College: Kenneth J. Fox (1997-1998 [acting]); Randal Wisbey (1998-2000); Reo E. Ganson (2000-2006); Andrea T. Luxton (2006-2010); Mark T. Haynal (2010-2015)

Burman University: Mark T. Haynal (2015-2017); Loren G. Agrey (2017- )

Location: 6730 University Dr, Lacombe, AB T4L 2E5, Canada

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