

The following report reflects work underway, and progress being made in relation to the executive's priorities for the current year, which are based on TRU's vision, values, and strategic change goals.

Vision/Values in Action

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING — Two years ago, TRU created new vision and mission statements and identified four 10-year strategic change goals. This year we are creating priorities and project teams to implement our vision and goals systematically.

Under the leadership of Provost Gillian Balfour, a call for project proposals closed on February 15. We received 30 applications for ISP funding. The applications will now be evaluated to provide formative feedback by the Mission Fulfilment Executive Committee. That committee has completed a full day of assessor training that included implicit bias training. Each project proposal will be required to reflect the following guiding principles. Projects are expected to:

- Be multi-year projects that are aligned with some or all the strategic priorities,
- Be collaborative and inclusive of a wide-range and diversity of units, including academic unit(s),
- Demonstrate authentic community engagement,
- Embed a student experience lens across all aspects of the project, including design, implementation and evaluation,
- Ensure a strong evaluation and assessment process is included in the project design. Cyclical reporting to the Provost/Senate will be required,
- Demonstrate capacity building (scalability and sustainability) beyond the life of the project.

Integrated strategic planning is the way we will put our university vision into practice, take practical measures to cultivate our values, and make measurable progress towards all our strategic change goals. It's expected that all evaluations will be complete and funding decisions made by March 31.

INTERVIEWS FOR AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDI AND ANTI-RACISM were completed in early January. Recommendations were made by the hiring committee, and next steps in the hiring process are underway. It's hoped that we will be in the position to announce a successful search and hiring process shortly.

Reporting to the Provost and Vice-President Academic, the Executive Director will be a key strategic leader at TRU who will work collegially across the university and externally to take up the existing EDI related action plans, and develop a collective vision that brings and EDI and antiracism lens to our

policies and services. The provost will provide the new ED with TRU's first EDI-ER office with administrative and project coordination support.

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT — TRU supports students of all backgrounds to access and succeed in higher education. Trends indicate that we are attracting and supporting growing numbers of international students, which adds to the diversity and intercultural experiences of our student body and our region.

However, we have seen declines in domestic enrolment, including from our local region. If the latter trend persists, it could undermine our access and inclusion goals. TRU is currently looking into the reasons for the domestic declines. Here is IPE's analysis of applications and admissions for the upcoming Fall 2023 term.

Total applications and admissions (excluding Nursing, Trades, and Law) are currently tracking higher than last year's numbers. Domestic applications are down 4% from the same point last year, but admissions are up 17%. This is due to a change in business practice where offers of admission are being made earlier in the year to bolster domestic conversion. IPE will monitor domestic activity for any shifts in conversion rates when course registration begins in June.

Three program divisions (TRU Gaglardi, FACT, and Arts) are currently seeing higher domestic applications compared to the same time last year. However, nearly all program divisions are witnessing a higher number of domestic admissions compared to the same time last year (except for No College Designated). Total domestic admissions are currently up 17% (1,282 this year vs. 1,094 last year).

International applications are currently up 29% from last year, and admissions are up 33%. A portion of these international applications and admissions are from prospective students who were deferred from Winter 2023 due to program capacities.

In an effort to manage international headcount to the SEM goal of 4,000 students, Fall 2023 applications from certain high-volume regions have been closed early for some programs (TRU Gaglardi post-baccalaureate programs, the Bach. Computing Science and Computing Science Diploma, and the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies). IPE and TRU World will continue to work closely together to monitor factors that may impact the Fall 2023 international student intake.

With over 100 countries and regions represented on TRU's campus, a foundational element of TRU World's mission is to encourage and empower a diverse and inclusive community and their experiences. In centring our recruitment efforts on the diversification of the home country and of the program, we ensure that our community is enriched with diverse perspectives while promoting in-demand and underrepresented programming.

Our international marketing and recruitment team have renewed focus on the markets for developing new and emerging student sources, such as Vietnam, Philippines, Egypt, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Latin American countries, among others. Additionally, they have adapted strategies to recruit students to the new and underrepresented in programs such as ARET, culinary arts, data science and more. These efforts are yielding results. In the winter 2023 intake, we saw a 3% growth in the number of countries, with noticeable increases in Zimbabwe, Nepal and Sri Lanka and continued growth in students from Nigeria, India and Bangladesh.

Conversely, there has been a drop in students from China. Regarding program diversity, there was a decrease from last winter in the percentage of new international students entering Gagliardi SoBE Programs, with slight increases in the attraction to the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Education and Social Work, and the Faculty of Adventure, Culinary and Tourism.

TRU WORLD

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS — Partnerships and their agreements play an essential role in growing the diverse experiences and perspectives of the TRU campus while providing more opportunities for students to fulfill their dreams of studying overseas. For example, through collaboration with Kenya partners and the High Commission of Canada, in November 2022, TRU signed an MOU with four counties in Kenya to sponsor and empower their students to pursue their academic dreams in Kamloops. This agreement sets the stage for TRU to welcome more students from Kenya through county government support and funding. The Uasin Gishu county has a newly approved budget for 39 students to study at TRU in the summer and fall semesters in 2023, with the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet, Nandi and Murang'a expressing interest in similar scholarship programs.

Additionally, as a direct result of an agreement signed with the American University of Caribbean (AUC) School of Medicine, we have two TRU graduates now studying at AUC, one in the Caribbean and one at the campus in the United Kingdom. These efforts enable our students to rise to the demand of a highly competitive and urgent need in the healthcare industry. Furthermore, this pathway program with AUC allows our Science Program graduates direct entry to the AUC medical school, thereby contributing to the global and local physician shortage.

RESUMPTION OF INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAMS: EXCHANGE, FIELD SCHOOLS, GSO — As the world reopened, TRU approached the return to international mobility with cautious anticipation and excitement. Guided by best practice, our international mobility programs, such as international exchange and faculty led international field schools, have resumed with over 25 outbound students and 21 inbound students in the Fall of 2022 and 12 inbound students and 35 outbound students in the Winter of 2023 in our study abroad program.

Our Field School Programs have renewed energy with students experiencing their academic journeys enhanced in the field in places like Japan for geography, Italy for tourism, Nepal for nursing and Mexico

for trades. Finally, the Global Skills Opportunity (GSO) project proposal by TRU World received \$500,000 to break down barriers to domestic students studying abroad. This short-term mobility project aims to introduce global citizen competencies, such as language and intercultural skills, to a more diverse range of students. Our project sent its inaugural group of students to Spain last May and is getting ready to send another group of 20 students to Japan this Spring. Working with Indigenous Education, plans are being worked out to send an elder out with a group of indigenous students in 2024. In addition to the \$500,000 GSO funding, we also received another \$325,000 funding to support students participating in international field schools.

RETURN OF IDAYS — In March 2020, IDays came to an abrupt halt right as hundreds of students prepared to bring their excitement, culture and performances to the Showcase Stage due to the global pandemic. March 8 will mark the return to IDays with a renewed anticipation to explore the cultures, performances, foods and experiences of our international student community and the entire TRU campus. With keynote speeches from inspiring individuals like Sarain Fox and Gwynne Dyer, food festivals showcasing our local restaurants and events focused on different traditions and experiences like the West Coast Lumberjack Games and the World Tea Expo. Join us in the celebrations once again.

40 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION — 2023 marks 40 years of international education at TRU. In the Fall of 1983, TRU’s connection to the world was formalized in a department created to centrally coordinate the international activities for the Institution in House 8, with Charles Mossop as the first coordinator for international education and Joan Wright as the first secretary. In 1985 the International Office was officially established by President Jim Wright.

Since then, TRU has been a home for students, faculty and staff from around the world, whether for weeks, years and sometimes even decades. TRU World’s legacy has been founded on building a diverse, innovative and globally minded environment for students from all perspectives and backgrounds. This legacy has been curated and guided by students, faculty and staff, and we took our 40th anniversary to reflect on our past, present and future together.

Honouring Truth, Reconciliation, and Rights

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS — The Special Adviser to the President on Indigenous Matters, and the Executive Director of Indigenous Education, are working on expanding the number of partnership agreements with TRU. Discussions are at various stages with T’exelc, Skeetchestn, and the Tsilhqot’in nation. The T’exelc (WLFN) partnership agreement is high priority, as this is the second partnership agreement with TRU with our second house that hosts the Williams Lake TRU campus.

Prior to Christmas, a TRU team was invited to Williams Lake by the T̓silhqot’in nation to explore possibilities for an “Indigenous Researcher-in-Residence Model.” The Office of VP Research is continuing the dialogue and building this relationship as we move forward.

TRU'S KNOWLEDGE MAKERS PROGRAM has been launched as an international online offering, in collaboration with the United Nations. Principal Investigator and Project Lead, Dr Rod McCormick, has been invited to attend the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, an expert seminar sponsored by the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division.

HON DOC TO MARY ELLEN TURPEL-LAFOND — TRU Senate's Awards and Honours Committee has begun the process of considering whether the hon doc awarded to Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond in 2009 should be rescinded. TRU reached out to Turpel-Lafond to ask whether she wanted the opportunity to make representations to the committee. A response has been received from legal counsel on behalf of Turpel-Lafond. TRU will respect and follow our internal protocols regarding this process, which is outlined in our [honorary degree policy](#).

Recent media reports indicate that Turpel-Lafond voluntarily returned hon docs awarded to her by Vancouver Island University and Royal Road University. The University of Regina announced February 14 it will rescind the hon doc it awarded to Turpel-Lafond.

Leading in Community Research and Scholarship

New research location coming to the Kamloops campus — TRU's first research institute will soon be established, with the arrival of a new modular building at 1274 McGill Road adjacent to the Early Childhood Education Centre.

The new modular building will house TRU's Wildfire Science Emergency Management Institute, which will work closely with governments, First Nations, the Interior Universities Research Coalition, Canada Wildfire, and other stakeholders and partners to explore new pathways through focused research. You can learn more in President Brett Fairbairn's most recent submission to the [View from TRU column in Kamloops this Week](#) on February 15.

The new research modular will be home initially to the work of Drs. Michael Flannigan, Jill Harvey, and Lauchlan Fraser, whose postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and research assistants will work out of the space. Meeting space for community partners will enhance possibilities for collaboration and co-creation. It is anticipated that additional complementary research units will be added as the Institute develops its training and innovation mandates.

The modular building will arrive via crane installation, after which necessary hook-ups, connections, inspections, and furnishing will take place before move-ins can begin. Overall, the new location, research and forthcoming partnerships will support our strategic change goal to lead in community research and scholarship. We look forward to sharing more about the Institute's important work in research-informed training and about the discoveries that take place.

TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO STUDENT RESEARCH training and community engagement through research, the Office of Student Research and Community engagement has completed an extensive two-

year consultation with students, faculty, staff, and community. An Integrated Strategic Planning proposal is under review to introduce a pan-university undergraduate student research and community engagement Hub.

THE OFFICE OF VP RESEARCH IS INTRODUCING A NEW “RESEARCH ROOKIES” PROGRAM for those students with limited research experience, offering an opportunity to learn about research culture, research methods and connect with student mentors and faculty. The program is designed to build capacity for students from non-traditional backgrounds, providing opportunities to participate in research. (This pilot project will also be studied over four years to measure the impact of student engagement in undergraduate research on student success generally.)

FOLLOWING AN EXTENSIVE TWO-YEAR CONSULTATION with students, faculty, staff, and community, the Office of Student Research and Community Engagement has developed plans for a pan-university undergraduate student research and community engagement Hub.

AN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH LAB HAS BEEN OPENED temporarily (co-created by students) to gather data to inform the development of a new Research Hub space. The lab and Hub will facilitate university relations and community engagement through research. All are welcome to visit and explore the space in OLARA 209.

INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL LECTURES — TRU hosted another IPL event in February, with two more lectures scheduled in March. Dr. Bruce Martin talked about his research in the areas of social enterprise. Bruce has research interests in the creation and growth of next generation ethical organizations — businesses that produce social, environmental and commercial value for society. His lecture can be viewed here: [Watch on YouTube](#)

On March 21, Lyn Baldwin (Faculty of Science) will give her Inaugural Professorial lecture.

TRU’s Inaugural Professorial Lectures publicly celebrate this major milestone in the academic careers of the university’s newly appointed tripartite professors. TRU saw six promotions to full professor in 2021, and nine more in 2022. Past lectures in the IPL series can be viewed online here:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ThompsonRiversUniversityOfficial/streams>

ACCELERATE 2023 — VP of University Relations Brian Daly attended a Universities Canada event in Ottawa on February 7 and 8 called Accelerate 2023. The event convened thought leaders, experts and changemakers from a range of sectors to discuss how to accelerate Canada’s transition to a sustainable and prosperous future. Participants from government, civil society, the private sector, and Canada’s universities gathered to envision Canada’s social and economic renewal.

TRU Master of Science in Environmental Sciences student Natalie Maslowski also attended the event to participate in a “reverse town hall” that featured graduate students sharing insights from their areas of study. Natalie studies wildfire ecology at TRU under the supervision of Dr. Jill Harvey, a Canada Research Chair examining how wildfires and drought impact forests in the B.C. interior.

Designing Lifelong Learning

MICRO-CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE — Open Learning (TRU-OL) has received \$73,143 to develop a provincial process for the assessment of micro-credentials across BC’s public post-secondary system.

Micro-credentials recognize short-term, skill-based learning opportunities that align with labour market or community needs. TRU-OL will be assessing up to 15 provincially funded micro-credentials that have been awarded to post-secondary institutions (PSIs) for possible academic credit.

TRU-OL has formed a committee of senior PSI representatives to develop and test a process to assess these micro-credentials. This committee will report on findings with recommendations for repeatable and sustainable processes that expand PSIs’ current skill validation.

NEW DATA SCIENCE DIPLOMA — A new two-year [Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Applied Data Science program](#) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) trains students in skills that get them job-ready for the rapidly growing field of data science.

Designed for mature students who already have an undergraduate degree, the program is set to welcome its first students in the fall of 2023. The university currently offers a [Master of Science in Data Science](#), which provides the theoretical knowledge needed to be an expert in the field. The Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Applied Data Science program, the first of its kind in the BC Interior, provides different tools.

TRU OPEN LEARNING (TRU-OL) CHANGES — To help TRU evolve to better serve our students, changes have been made regarding reporting structures in TRU-OL. Effective Feb. 1, OL teams responsible for curriculum development, course delivery, and educational technology will report to Shannon Wagner, Associate Vice-President Academic. The remaining areas of OL will continue to report to Don Poirier, Associate Vice-President Open Learning.

This change in reporting structure will streamline processes and align TRU’s efforts to support all TRU students. Overall, it will set up TRU to be more responsive and relevant to students, which is in alignment with our strategic change goal to design lifelong learning. Shannon and Don will continue to work closely and collaboratively on shared responsibilities and initiatives that move us forward.

Enabling Strategies / Operations

TRU RESPONSE / FOLLOW-UP TO BOARD INVESTIGATION — On January 17, TRU released the results (to the extent permitted by privacy legislation) from a Board of Governors-led investigation into allegations of misconduct against two senior leaders at Thompson Rivers University. The news release and supporting materials for that public release can be found here: <https://www.tru.ca/board/board-of-governors-investigation.html>.

Subsequently, we have been working to help the TRU community understand the report and its findings. TRU would like to release the full report and if we are able to secure the consent of the complainants and respondents under privacy legislation, we will release all that we have consent to release.

To date, we have met with TRU leaders and responded to faculty and staff questions. In early February, however, Matt Milovick exercised his right as a private citizen and filed a lawsuit against the eight complainants involved in the investigation. TRU has reviewed his claim and understands that his lawsuit alleges defamation not for statements made in the investigation but for comments made to the media or to others who were not part of the investigatory process.

The lawsuit and an ensuing GoFundMe campaign from the complainants have generated new media stories and fresh discomfort in the TRU community. People are processing the impacts of these events. There are a variety of opinions being expressed, and strong feelings are being shared.

We know that the investigation and now the aftermath have been difficult and stressful for many members of the TRU community. It will take time and patience to move beyond this chapter, but I am hopeful we will be able to work together to improve our workplace culture so that it that better reflects our values and mission.

TRU REACHES TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH TRUFA, CUPE — TRU and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 4879 have reached a tentative agreement under the government’s Shared Recovery Mandate. CUPE Local 4879 represents the support staff at TRU.

As well, TRU and Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association (TRUFA) have reached a tentative agreement under the BC government’s Shared Recovery Mandate. TRUFA represents the faculty members at TRU’s Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses.

Further details of the agreements will become available once the agreements are ratified by all parties.

AVP DIGITAL STRATEGIES / CIO APPOINTED — I am pleased to announce the appointment of Matt Norton as TRU's new Associate Vice-President, Digital Strategies and Chief Information Officer. After an extensive national search assisted by Stanton Chase (the search consultant), we have selected Matt Norton, who comes to TRU from Lethbridge College where he has served as Director, Information Technology Services since December 2012. As AVP Digital Strategies and Chief Information Officer, he will play a key role in developing, implementing and directing a digital strategy for all IT initiatives at TRU.

Matt has over 25 years of professional information technology and systems experience, including 15 years in K-12 and over 10 years in post-secondary education. He has a strong focus on personal and professional leadership and development of people in all his roles, including his own training and development in a variety of leadership and digital subject matters.

In his role with Lethbridge College, Matt provided vision and leadership for developing and implementing digital transformation initiatives to support teaching, learning and research. Among other appointments and in service, he served as a Board Member with Cybera (Alberta's BCNET equivalent) and currently serves as the ShareIT Oversight Committee Chair which provides leadership to all senior post-secondary IT leaders. Matt holds an MEd in technology integration and IT leadership from the University of Lethbridge.

BUILDING AWARENESS AROUND PERSONAL SAFETY — TRU is aware that there has been an increased activity of break-ins on the Kamloops campus and around the city. To help people be and feel more secure, we have been communicating with employee and student groups to provide relevant information about actions we are taking, and steps they can take.

To address vehicle break-ins, last November we increased our overnight surveillance with an additional security guard to patrol the parking lots. However, we are also reminding individuals they play an important role to decrease crime on campus, in the following ways:

- If you park on campus, lock your vehicles and please keep valuables out of sight or ideally out of your vehicle altogether.
- Before leaving workspaces for the evening, please lock all doors, take valuables home and close blinds on ground-floor windows.
- Overall, please be more vigilant everywhere on campus and report any suspicious activity to Campus Security.

Campus Security is available 24/7 on the Kamloops campus at their kiosk in Old Main, by telephone or [emergency phones](#) located inside buildings and in locations across campus and through the [TRU Safe app](#). A security officer can quickly access security camera footage and/or quickly visit the scene.

TRU will continue to make the safety of our community a priority and we thank everyone's collective efforts to decrease crime.

CANADA-IN-ASIA CONFERENCE — By the time of the February 24 Board meeting, VP International Baihua Chadwick and I will have returned from the Canada-in-Asia Conference in Singapore, which ran from February 21 to 23. The trip set out the following objectives:

- Participate alongside RUCBC and other Canadian institutions,
- Draw attention to TRU as a university that belongs in this company,
- Participate in the Canada in Asia conference, including as a panelist in one session,
- Connect with TRU alumni and possible new partners in Singapore, and,
- Support Canada's and BC's foreign policy and trade policy, which is pivoting towards Singapore as a new hub for access to Asia.

TRU faculty are active in a research network on Canada and Asia. The following is from Prof. Rob Hanlon:

“I wanted to share with you a research project that we have established at TRU entitled "Canada and the Asia Pacific Policy Project (CAPPP)' which is an interdisciplinary network of around 40 scholars and policy practitioners in Western Canada (and beyond) whose research focuses on the Indo-Pacific region. Our website with bios of several of our collaborators can be found here: <https://cappp.trubox.ca/contributors/>”

The Singapore conference was a collaborative undertaking of Universities Canada and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. It brought together Asia-based alumni of Canadian universities alongside major actors across the Canada-Asia university, business, and innovation landscapes. It was an unprecedented opportunity to establish and re-kindle relationships and networks with TRU’s Asia-based alumni, to connect or re-connect with partners in Asia, and to fly our institution’s flag internationally.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT — Here is a quick list of recent events and meetings that have allowed me to connect with stakeholders:

- Hosted a dinner with donors
- Kamloops Rotary meeting
- Kamloops and District Chamber of Commerce Business Social
- Universities Canada Roundtable with Vance Badawey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services
- Introductory meeting with Advanced Education and Future Skills Minister Selina Robinson
- New International Students’ Orientation
- New Faculty Orientation
- Introductory meeting with Advanced Education and Future Skills Deputy Minister Bobbi Plecas
- Meeting with Ttes Chief and Council
- RUCBC presidents’ meeting
- Words of Welcome – January New Employee Orientation
- Attended the Williams Lake First Nations (T’exelc) announcement regarding preliminary geophysical results at the site of St Joseph’s school
- Meeting with Michael McEvoy, Information and Privacy Commissioner
- Words of Welcome – TRU Privacy and Security Conference 2023
- Meeting with Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir
- Presentation to Rotary Club of Kamloops Daybreak
- EAB Presidential Roundtable, Washington DC
- Joint SD73/TRU board dinner meeting
- Universities Canada – Canada-in-Asia Conference, Singapore

From TRU's Newsroom

TRU Gaglardi signs accreditation agreement with Supply Chain Canada — The Bob Gaglardi School of Business and Economics (Gaglardi) and Supply Chain Canada have signed an accreditation agreement that enables students who graduate with a BBA degree majoring in supply chain management or a post baccalaureate diploma in supply chain management to earn advanced standing toward the Supply Chain Management Professional (SCMP) designation, Canada's principal designation in supply chain. Graduates who achieve a grade of 70 per cent or higher in specific courses and have completed their program in the last five years are assured of advanced standing toward the SCMP designation.

There are three components required to earn the SCMP designation: education, a program exam and practical work experience. This agreement helps students meet the education component by reducing the number of courses they need to take after their program at TRU.

Nursing student wins scholarship honouring diversity — Sarah Buck always knew she'd end up in the medical sciences, but her passion for nursing and community-based research came into her life unexpectedly. So did the news that she was one of the first recipients of a new national scholarship encouraging diversity and equity in health care.

Buck is a second-year nursing student at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and one of 19 recipients of the national fund, which provides scholarships to nursing students and researchers. The Tylenol Fund to Advance Diversity in Nursing and Health Equity Research for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) is a result of a partnership between the Canadian Nurses Foundation (CNF) and Johnson & Johnson Inc, makers of Tylenol.

As an undergraduate, Buck received \$3,000 toward her studies. She says the scholarship is motivating her to keep moving forward in her involvement with Hearts and Minds, a non-profit that designs and builds temporary, collapsible homeless shelters.