

The following sections report on work underway and progress being made in relation to executive priorities for the current year against our [four 10-year strategic change goals](#), which are based on TRU's vision and values. There are also sections on Enabling Strategies and Operations, and International Development.

## **Enabling Strategies / Operations**

**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 evaluated 30 applications for ISP funding, based on extensive criteria. We expect to be making announcements regarding successful projects shortly.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDI AND ANTI-RACISM** — Recommendations regarding a preferred candidate were made by the hiring committee, and final steps in the hiring process are underway. We will be in the position to announce our successful candidate 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 continue with existing EDI-related action plans, and develop a collective vision that brings an EDI and anti-racism lens to our policies and services.

**WILLIAMS LAKE / REGIONAL REVITALIZATION** — Efforts to strengthen the role of TRU's Williams Lake campus in regional education continue as we pursue the hiring of a new Academic Director for the campus. The search committee expects to conduct interviews in mid-April with the hope of concluding a successful search by June. There are several strong candidates with significant senior academic administration experience.

Regarding regional development, we are exploring the use of virtual technology classrooms to expand presence throughout the region, and examining new mixes of workforce development and credit programming. We have delivered more than a dozen programs in Indigenous communities this past year and expect that number to increase by 50 per cent this year.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES / ADMIN UNITS** — A number of administrative units at TRU have undergone (or continue to see) transformations in structure or leadership:

- In People and Culture, Theron Reed has been appointed as the Director, Total Rewards, Engagement & Well-Being. Theron has been with TRU since November 2011 when he was hired as the HR Consultant, Disabilities and Benefits, and was most recently the Associate Director, Health and Well-Being. Sandy Scarff has been appointed as the Director, Faculty Relations effective January 1. Sandy has been with TRU since February 2008, when she was hired as a HR Advisor (Labour Relations), and was most recently the Associate Director, Faculty Relations.
- Through the past several months, the AVP of Marketing and Communications Darshan Lindsay has been working to develop new strengths and capacity in the department, especially in relations to strategic communications, which has historically been under-represented at TRU. As well Darshan has hired a new Director of Marketing following a yearlong. Hyder Kazmi comes to TRU from the University of Regina and brings extensive experience in post-secondary marketing. A key marketing challenge emerging is the need to attract more domestic students to counter recent declines.

**HYBRID WORK PROGRAM** — A Hybrid Work Program (HWP) at TRU is moving forward with a pilot program soon to get underway in the IT and P&C departments. It is expected the program will be rolled out to the full university later this spring, with a planned implementation date of August 1 for all staff (except for faculty, who can already work hybrid).

TRU's proposed HWP was developed by a pan-institutional team following extensive research regarding best practices in other institutions. This will be a voluntary program — no employee will be forced to work from home and no supervisor will be forced to have their staff work from home.

Staff will apply through a structured application process designed to ensure that they have the means to work from home efficiently, and that the work they do is appropriate for hybrid arrangements. All applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approvals will be made by department managers to ensure HWP meets the needs of both employees and TRU.

We expect HWP will be of interest to many at TRU, and we are pleased to be able to provide a workplace option that offers our employees flexibility and the ability to pursue work-life balance that makes sense for them.

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS** — Work to develop a more robust GR program at TRU continues with the search for a dedicated Director of Government Relations. That recruitment and hiring process is underway. As that position is developed, we continue to look for opportunities to meet with government and advance TRU's interests with the assistance of a consultant.

Recently, these efforts have resulted in a roundtable meeting with B.C.'s Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Selina Robinson, as well as a visit by the minister to TRU. During her visit to TRU, Minister Robinson met with:

- Marilyn McLean, Chair, Board of Governors
- Brett Fairbairn, President and Vice-Chancellor
- Gillian Balfour, Provost and Vice-President Academic
- Brian Daly, Vice President University Relations
- Baldev Pooni, Dean, School of Trades & Technology
- Kara Lefevre and Faheem Ahmed, Associate Deans, Faculty of Science
- Student Brody Passmore and alumnus and current faculty Jeremy Keighley, Culinary Arts
- TRUSU reps
- Select students for lunch with Minister

Robinson became minister in December 2022, when Premier David Eby announced his new cabinet and changed the name of the ministry from Advanced Education and Skills Training to Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. The name change clearly aligns the ministry more closely with the *StrongerBC Economic Plan*, which is a key foundation and driver of current B.C. government policy.

**BC BUDGET AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION** — The recent provincial budget has made a record investment in higher education and skills training. The budget, which was tabled on February 28, includes a significant investment of \$1.542 billion for three years of supports and programming in the Post-Secondary and Skills Training system. A total of \$821 million is allocated for the *Future Ready Plan*.

The government has indicated that the plan, which is not yet released, will outline a number of initiatives that represent new or expanded programming to support affordable, accessible, and relevant post-secondary education and skills training, including the development and implementation of student spaces in priority programs.

TRU will look closely for funding opportunities in the coming months to ensure our students and prospective students are well-served and able to avail themselves of these initiatives.

**FEDERAL TIK TOK BAN** — Recently, the federal government has banned the use of TikTok on government-issued devices. This ban has been extended to our provincial government. The bans stem from privacy concerns and how TikTok’s data collection methods provide considerable access to the contents of the device.

A [joint investigation](#) is currently being undertaken by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Canada and the privacy commissioner’s offices of BC, Alberta and Quebec. We expect the results of this investigation to provide further guidance to TRU and other public bodies.

Meanwhile, we have encouraged our staff and faculty to look at TikTok on their personal or TRU-issued devices and learn more about the concerns. Any changes to the use of TikTok on TRU-owned devices and/or on our campuses will follow direction by provincial authorities.

## Eliminating Achievement Gaps

**STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT** — Trends indicate that TRU continues to attract 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. 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 11%.

This is due to a change in business practice where offers of admission are being made earlier in the year in an effort to bolster domestic conversion. IPE will monitor domestic activity for any shifts in conversion rates when course registration begins in June.

International applications are currently up 13% from last year, and admissions are up 16%. 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.

Enrolment Funnel This Year to date		Enrolment Funnel Previous Years to date		Enrolment Funnel To-Date % Difference			
Fall 2023	Applications This Year to date	7,455	Fall 2022	Applications Last Year to date	7,062	Applications to-date % diff	6%
	Admissions This Year to date	4,638		Admissions Last Year to date	4,059	Admissions to-date % diff	14%
	Registrants This Year to date	0		Registrants Last Year to date	0	Registrants to-date % diff	
				Fall 2021	Historical Data Coming Soon		

Residency	APPLICATIONS					ADMISSIONS				
	Last Year to-date	This Year to-date	To-date % diff	Last Year total	This Year to-date % of last yr total	Last Year to-date	This Year to-date	To-date % diff	Last Year total	This Year to-date % of last yr total
Domestic	3,111	2,973	-4%	4,699	63%	1,494	1,658	+11%	3,462	48%
International	3,951	4,482	+13%	5,952	75%	2,565	2,980	+16%	5,044	59%
Grand Total	7,062	7,455	+6%	10,651	70%	4,059	4,638	+14%	8,506	55%

Domestic applications are down across most provinces relative to the same time last year. This includes British Columbia (down 3%), which is the source of a substantial majority of domestic applications. The next two highest sources of domestic applications, Alberta and Ontario, are down 15% and 7%, respectively.

Despite having slightly lower applications, admissions from BC are up 13% compared to the same time last year. However, admissions from most other provinces are either down or seeing only small increases.

### Domestic Applications and Admissions by Province

Province (current)	APPLICATIONS					ADMISSIONS				
	Last Year to-date	This Year to-date	To-date % diff	Last Year total	This Year to-date % of last yr total	Last Year to-date	This Year to-date	To-date % diff	Last Year total	This Year to-date % of last yr total
British Columbia	2,549	2,477	-3%	3,875	64%	1,300	1,473	+13%	2,969	50%
Alberta	258	220	-15%	354	62%	92	81	-12%	212	38%
Ontario	136	126	-7%	203	62%	43	42	-2%	117	36%
Unknown (Postal Code Error)	48	41	-15%	61	67%	20	14	-30%	39	36%
Saskatchewan	24	24	+0%	46	52%	8	11	+38%	30	37%
Yukon	22	20	-9%	33	61%	12	11	-8%	24	46%
Québec	15	16	+7%	30	53%	6	5	-17%	16	31%
Manitoba	27	14	-48%	40	35%	5	4	-20%	23	17%
Nova Scotia	8	13	+63%	18	72%	1	5	+400%	8	63%
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	11	11	+0%	17	65%	4	6	+50%	13	46%
Newfoundland and Labrador	4	5	+25%	9	56%	0	2		3	67%
New Brunswick	6	4	-33%	10	40%	2	3	+50%	6	50%
Prince Edward Island	3	2	-33%	3	67%	1	1	+0%	2	50%
Grand Total	3,111	2,973	-4%	4,699	63%	1,494	1,658	+11%	3,462	48%

Within BC, admissions from SD 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) and SD 36 (Surrey), the two highest sources of applications, are down. Applications from SD 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) and SD 22 (Vernon) are showing growth, with admissions from SD 27 more than double their numbers at this time last year.

**FALL 2022 STUDENT CENSUS RESULTS** — The Fall Student Census (FSC) survey was administered to just over 17,000 currently enrolled TRU students this past fall with 3,403 students responding (20% response rate). The purpose of the census was to reach out to all TRU students and invite them to provide their experiences and perceptions of what it was like to attend TRU.

Many of our other institutional student surveys do not provide students in certain programs the opportunity to provide feedback, therefore, this survey was extended to all students with the purpose to capture opinions from the whole TRU student body to identify areas of success and areas of improvements and to allow different operational areas to get direct feedback from current students to inform their practice and services to students.

The FSC was developed in-house by IPE with consultations from other areas within the institution and asked students about their decision to enrol at TRU, dual enrolment, application and registration process, educational goals, academic success, engagement and experiences, campus and student life, use and satisfaction of student services and programs, student finances and responsibilities, and overall evaluation of their experiences. Here are a few highlights from the 2022 results:

- 80% of all students indicated they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their overall educational experience at TRU.
- 3 out of 4 students indicated they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with TRU's commitment to supporting students of all backgrounds to access and succeed in higher education.
- The top three challenges that students reported most negatively impacting their academic success were: 1) balancing work/family/personal obligations, 2) managing finances, and 3) keeping their grades up.
- Students' top educational goals were: 1) to obtain a credential in their chosen field, 2) to upgrade skills and improve job prospects, and 3) to decide on a career or change careers. However, students expressed the lowest agreement with the ability to make a connection to agency, industry, or business they want to work in (36% 'agree' or 'strongly agree').

The results of the survey will provide various teams and departments at TRU information they can use to design strategies to assist with student recruitment and retention.

**MERIT AWARD WINNERS** — Every year, TRU faculty and staff go above and beyond in making a difference to students, our colleagues and our wider community. Through a process involving peer nominations and review, committees from Research, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), and People and Culture recommend a few for special recognition based on outstanding contributions. I am pleased to announce this year's Merit Award recipients:

#### **Faculty Excellence Awards**

- Dr. Bruno Cinel, Faculty of Science
- Dr. Brian Heise, Faculty of Science
- Saskia Stinson, Faculty of Education & Social Work

#### **Award for Excellence in Interculturalization**

- Jenna Goddard, Faculty of Student Development
- Amy Tucker, Open Learning
- PLAR Team, Open Learning (new team award)

## **Distinguished Service Awards**

- Rob Carrelli, IT Services
- Kim Cassar Torreggiani, Office of Advancement
- David Sheets, Faculty of Science

Congratulations to all for their outstanding teaching, research and service! We will celebrate our Merit Awards recipients and all our dedicated colleagues receiving Long-Term Service pins at the President's Annual Merit and Long-Term Service Awards ceremony on May 2 from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Grand Hall, CAC.

**TENURE AND PROMOTION** — The March meeting of the Board of Governors is when the board makes decisions about faculty tenure and promotion. These are critical decisions for the people involved and for the whole academic community — decisions that are literally about the future of who we are as a university. The decisions are prepared with corresponding care and thoroughness.

I worked for more than 25 years in faculty positions, and I recall the trepidation, self-doubts, learning, anxiety, and elation that accompanied academic milestones and career requirements — for me and for others I mentored later. The processes can seem daunting, but there are also communities to help people through and support them.

Tenure and promotion cases are prepared over a long period of time under guidance from chairs, deans, and other academic leaders. Many members of our community have a hand in recruiting promising faculty members and supporting them to be the best they can be. And at the end of the process, multiple committees of academics review the dossiers, letters, and CVs with respect to each candidate's accomplishments, comparing these against the tenure and promotion standards set in advance by the faculty, school, or department. Before bringing the committee recommendations to the board, the provost and I review the files and read the materials.

This is in fact one of the most pleasant and inspiring parts of my job. It is invariably uplifting to see the remarkable cases that come forward and the unique work that has been done by each faculty member to earn these forms of official and lasting recognition.

Those promoted to professor will be invited to give an Inaugural Professorial Lecture, a recent innovation at TRU that has become a runaway success. I attend these lectures whenever I am in town, and I encourage others to do the same. For anyone who wishes to glimpse the insights, drive, and creativity of our newest faculty leaders, these lectures provide a window into the essence of their scholarly pursuits.

My congratulations to those who achieve tenure or are promoted this year. When the outcomes are communicated in the days ahead, I will share your elation, and your relief. My profound thanks, on behalf of TRU, to you and to all those who have inspired, helped, and assisted along the way.

## **Honouring Truth, Reconciliation, and Rights**

**TRU'S KNOWLEDGE MAKERS PROGRAM** in collaboration with the United Nations has been launched as an international online offering, with 23 students participating. This is an Indigenous—TRU/Secwepemc-based—international, online initiative, with funding from the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), United Nations.

Principal Investigator and Project Lead, TRU Professor Dr. Rod McCormick, was invited to attend the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, an expert seminar sponsored by the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division. Rod was recently interviewed by The Globe and Mail's podcast The Decibel on how he helps people connect with communities and nature to find healing. You can find the podcast here: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/podcasts/the-decibel/article-why-we-need-to-think-of-health-as-an-us-not-just-a-me/>

**EXPLORING TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH GLOBAL CONNECTION** — Intercultural competencies and indigenous knowledge are integrated into every student's experience throughout the TRU campus. To honour truth, rights, and reconciliation in work at TRU World, we received Global Skills Opportunity funding to empower students underrepresented in international opportunities to explore the world. The Global Skills Opportunity is the Government of Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Project. Nine indigenous students are participating in upcoming trips to Japan, Italy, and Thailand.

TRU World is also supporting the Indigenous Education Office to provide a program at the University of Waikato in New Zealand in May. Currently, 15 to 17 indigenous students are registered to participate. A TRU elder will accompany the group.

## **Leading in Community Research and Scholarship**

**VP RESEARCH APPOINTED** — I'm excited to share with you that Dr. Shannon Wagner has accepted the appointment to the position of Vice-President of Research at Thompson Rivers University, effective July 1, 2023.

Shannon is currently TRU's Associate Vice-President Academic. She has already proved to be a valuable member of TRU's academic leadership team. Her demonstrated skills and accomplishments as both a scholar and a leader are well-aligned with TRU's vision and values. Her record of accomplishment in research — most notably studying workplace traumatic stress, especially as it pertains to emergency responders — will help TRU lead in community research and scholarship. The search committee positively noted the relationships Shannon has built with Indigenous communities.

I want to thank Shannon for her patience. This search process was initiated in early 2022 but TRU was unable to make a professorial appointment for the VP Research until we resolved an issue related to the

TRU/TRUFA Collective Agreement. Lastly, I want to recognize interim VPR Will Garret-Petts for his outstanding service. His crucial leadership in research through the last several years has helped TRU develop our capacity and reputation as a research university immensely.

The VP Research provides a strategic level of leadership similar to what is found at our peer institutions within the Research Universities' Council of BC, bringing increased attention and support to TRU's development as a research university.

**INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL LECTURES** — TRU hosted another IPL event on March 21. Dr. Lyn Baldwin from TRU's Faculty of Science, gave her lecture titled, "*An unquiet botany: Reconciling plants and people with story and image,*" to nearly 150 people in TRU's Mountain Room in the Campus Activity Centre.

Lyn, who was promoted to professor in April 2022, illustrated a selection of her stories through her field journal art and read an excerpt from her forthcoming book, *Drawing Botany Home: A Rooted Life*. Lyn also explored the colonial distortion of people's understanding of and relationship with plants. She explained how this "plant blindness" can be reconciled by learning not just about plants, but from them through the story, art and science documented in field journals.

Professor Chris Hunt from the Faculty of Law is scheduled to give his IPL entitled, "*Normative Tensions in Constitutional Privacy Rights Adjudication*" on April 4.

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>

**TRU OFFICE OF RESEARCH UPDATES** — Since the last report, the Office of the Vice-President Research has engaged in many different activities. Here are some highlights:

- Ongoing meetings with Bridgewater University and Canadian Studies programs throughout New England and New York, working toward a research MOU to support equitable access to research experiences, including student and faculty research mobility between Canada and the United States. The Office of the VPR has developed a plan for a pan-university Student Research Hub, enhancing hands-on learning and the application of classroom instruction, by linking TRU students to community-engaged research and learning opportunities. The Hub is positioned as a focal point for the Spencer Foundation Grant (\$400,000 US) under development with Bridgewater State University.
- Supported Qwemtsin Health Society with the Everyone Eats! Project, which is centred on Indigenous food sovereignty and anti-racism research. In this capacity, we are administering \$63,000, which includes the hiring of five student research assistants through identified faculty

and regular consultation with the community partner.

- Met with the Arizona Innovation Alliance, part of the larger Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona alliance to discuss partnership opportunities for TRU (and the IURC) to cooperate on key research initiatives, including wildfire science and Indigenous research.
- The research office continues to support the development of TRU's Wildfire and Emergency Management Institute, our first research and training institute. We are focusing currently on development of relationships and partnerships. The office completed the process of linking our Wildfire Emergency Management Institute as a partner organization with Canada Wildfire.
- Finalized and published TRU's Research Data Management Institutional Strategy, including strategic directions for recognizing and respecting Indigenous knowledge. The University's Data Management Strategy will ensure that TRU remains in compliance with best practices nationally.
- TRU continues to work with the region's Community Action Team on the opioid crisis. A new focus is emerging on how the drug overdose crisis is affecting men in trades has just begun, with support from TRU's Trades and Technology program.
- TRU signed an Academic, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation Agreement between TRU and the University of Coimbra's Centre for Social Studies, with the aim of advancing international research initiatives and partnerships in community-engaged research and scholarship, cultural mapping, creative tourism, and sustainable local development. The agreement supports long or short-term visits of researchers and teachers, exchange opportunities for students, development of joint research projects, promotion of joint research events, and joint publication of research findings.

## **Designing Lifelong Learning**

**MICRO-CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE** — Earlier this year, Open Learning (TRU-OL) received \$73,143 to develop a provincial process for the assessment of micro-credentials across B.C.'s public post-secondary system. Micro-credentials recognize short-term, skill-based learning opportunities that align with labour market or community needs.

The original purpose and scope of the project was to prototype, test, and document a repeatable process for assessing micro-credentials to assign possible academic credit. To date the following steps have been completed:

- Researched micro-credential practices across multiple countries, noting key requirements for aligning micro-credentials with credentialing systems (Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South

Africa, European Union).

- Worked with the Micro-Credential Assessment Committee to develop a prototype assessment tool and related processes, relying heavily on the TRU credit bank model and the Australian government's critical information summary as described in its national micro-credential framework.
- Developed a handbook for assessors, conducted orientation sessions, and designed a digital recording method for assessment purposes.

The self-study phase of this project was scheduled to be completed by March 31. In recent weeks there have been some amendments to the project, including adding another level of assessment through the TRU credit bank process. The date for completing this added phase of the contract is June 30. The budget to complete this amendment was increased by \$29,460. A final report and public webinar will be delivered in June.

**WORK TO DEVELOP FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPECTRUM** — Work to develop a flexible learning spectrum across all TRU and Open Learning programs and courses is continuing. Effective Feb. 1, OL teams responsible for curriculum development, course delivery, and educational technology began to report to Shannon Wagner, Associate Vice-President Academic. The remaining areas of OL continue to report to Don Poirier, Associate Vice-President Open Learning.

This change in reporting structure was made to streamline processes and align TRU's efforts to support all TRU students. Overall, the objective is to make OL and TRU more responsive and relevant to students, which is in alignment with our strategic change goal to design lifelong learning.

Through the next few months (prior to her transition to VP Research), Shannon will develop short, mid- and long-term goals to advance these objectives. She will continue to work closely with the provost on this project before and after her transition.

## **International Development / Building Our Community**

**TRU SIGNS MOUs WITH MEXICAN UNIVERSITIES** — TRU recently welcomed a large delegation from the state of Querétaro, Mexico. Multiple memorandums of understanding were during the delegation's visit to TRU. The delegation, led by Querétaro Deputy Minister of Education Orfelinda Torres Rivier, are on a tour of colleges and universities throughout B.C.

TRU Vice-President International Baihua Chadwick met with 11 delegates, including representatives from the Querétaro Universities Consortium. The visit also included university presidents, representatives from the region's international departments and Lara Garza, Canadian federal trade commissioner from the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City.

This initiative paves the way to greater collaboration with the Querétaro Universities Consortium to create more opportunities for TRU students, faculty and staff. These include but are not limited to academic partnerships, short-term intensive programs, visiting students, joint research and student exchange. Representatives from TRU and the delegation recognize the mutual benefits to be gained through a co-operative relationship. These agreements can empower more students to join the TRU community from Mexico.

**TRU WORLD'S INTERNATIONAL DAYS** — After a two-year hiatus from our campus thanks to COVID, TRU World returned this year with International Days, which is a celebration of international education at TRU. As in past years, the event comprised a variety of cultural events, displays and speakers. As one of our longest-standing partners, this represents a great privilege to acknowledge the resiliency and success of our students amidst our 40th anniversary of international education at TRU. As always, the event was popular and well-attended.

During this year's IDays, there were opening ceremonies, a keynote speaker and a speaker series. A showcase eventing filled with filled with music, dance, performances and fashion shows, multicultural food fairs, guest scholars, and many other exciting events.

One of IDays' banner events was the parade of international flags, a true visual display of the diversity of our university. With more than 4,000 students from 101 countries studying on campus this year, we had flags from all these nations present at this year's event, including from Russia. The appearance of the Russian flag at the event caused some in our community concern, which sparked interest from local media.

We appreciate the concerns that were expressed, and understand the sensitivity of the issue and the impact it may have had on students, faculty, and the wider community, including from Russian students, some of whom felt they were being harassed and intimidated on social media because of the presence of the Russia flag at IDays.

Russia's war in Ukraine has been and continues to be horrific, and TRU continues to condemn the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. However, the purpose of International Days is to celebrate the diversity of cultures represented by our students and to foster an environment of inclusivity and respect. In this spirit, it's why we have displayed the flags. We do not use flags to signal agreement or disagreement with the policies of any country. We use them to represent the origins of our students.

Clearly this has been an emotional event for some that has sparked larger discussion. I hope all at TRU will continue to engage in dialogue with others, including those of differing views. We need everyone's perspectives to ensure that our community's actions align with TRU's values of community-mindedness; equity, diversity, and inclusion; curiosity; and sustainability. Our goal is to be a place where everyone belongs.

**CONVOCATION CEREMONIES IN CHINA** — Tianjin University of Technology has invited me to be present

in June for their/our convocation ceremonies. This is a significant resumption in our long-time relationship, and I look forward to the opportunity. As one of our longest-standing partners, this represents a great privilege to acknowledge the resiliency and success of our students amidst our 40th anniversary of international education at TRU.

Currently, TRU has more than 50 partner institutions in 25 countries around the world, including China, Germany, India, Jamaica, Mexico, South Korea, Vietnam and more. These linkages are mainly classed as accreditation programs, where TRU programs are delivered overseas in collaboration with a partner institution, articulation programs, that support the transfer of credits completed at a partner institution to further studies at TRU and pathway programs, where students are admitted to TRU partly based on their successful completion of preparatory studies with a pathway partner.

**BUILDING UNDERSTANDING ABOUT CANADA** — Dr. Will Garrett-Petts was awarded a Killam Visiting Professorship in Canadian Studies for the 2023 spring semester at Bridgewater State University (BSU) in Massachusetts. Will is currently hard at work fostering a positive exchange of information with his American colleagues.

Endowed in 2008, the Killam Visiting Professorship allows BSU's 50-year-old Canadian Studies Program to invite prominent Canadian scholars and public intellectuals to its university and, through public speaking engagements, to enhance an understanding of Canada in southeastern Massachusetts, New England and New York State. Will is the 10<sup>th</sup> holder of the Killam Visiting Professorship at BSU.

Will, who has served most recently as our interim VPR, has formerly held the positions of associate dean of arts, department chair of English and modern languages and department chair of journalism at TRU. He was Research Director of the Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance — a national research program exploring the cultural future of smaller communities. Will currently holds research grants from Mitacs, the Vancouver Foundation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, supporting his work in cultural mapping, undergraduate research and community-engaged research in small cities.

**CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT** — Here is a quick list of recent meetings I attended to advance TRU's interests with external parties as well as important events in our internal community:

- February 28 — Honoring Our Elders Luncheon
- March 1 — Hosted Mexican Consortium from Querétaro Province, Mexico for visit and MOU signing
- March 5 to 8 — Thought Leaders Symposium (APPA) Virginia Washington
- March 10 (IDays) — Introduced keynote speaker Gwynne Dyer and attended the showcase
- March 20 — Minister Selina Robinson's visit
- March 21 — Attended Inaugural Professorial Lecture Series, Lyn Baldwin
- March 24 — RUCBC Presidents' Meeting

## **From TRU's Newsroom**

**[Law faculty member to speak at NATO](#)** — Law Assistant Professor Matt Malone has been invited to speak at the annual International Conference on Cyber Conflict (CyCon), which is held by NATO's Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

Malone presents a paper at CyCon on security opportunities and risks arising from cross-border data flow restrictions. The multidisciplinary conference brings together technical, legal, policy, strategy and military perspectives of cyber defence and security. It is being held in Estonia in May and June.

**[Well-equipped apartment shows donors TRUly care](#)** — The freshly finished TRU Care Apartment on our Williams Lake campus is now providing crucial hands-on learning for health-care students. While a grand opening date hasn't been set, the unit is already being well-used, according to faculty members.

Plans for the fully functional and easily transformable apartment originally included a patient lift, but budget constraints forced planners to take it off the list. Thanks to a generous donation from the Fawcett Family of Williams Lake, the apartment now includes the much-needed lift, a wish-list item faculty are delighted to have received.

**[Day of Giving exceeds goal by \\$6,100](#)** — TRU's sixth annual Day of Giving raised \$54,095 for TRU students at the Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses last week, surpassing the goal of raising \$48,000 in 48 hours.

A total of 116 donors—including alumni, long-time individual supporters, organizations and new contributors—chose from a variety of funds to make their donation during the fundraiser, held March 2 and 3. Organizers were amazed by the community's generosity.

"The most rewarding thing about organizing this event is to see everyone come together and support TRU and its students," says Diana Major, Director of Development, Annual Giving. "The collective support is the difference needed to bring new equipment to nursing and respiratory therapy or to grow the number of bursaries available to Indigenous students. Kamloops is such a giving community, and we are so grateful, and we want to thank everyone so much for their support and generosity."