

## Envision TRU – The Issue with Sustainability On Campus

Thompson Rivers University has an amazing Green Team, sustainable ideas, and a great zero-waste initiative. They do a great job of trying to get students to engage with the zero-waste initiative, by making videos explaining which items belong in which bins and offer stickers to track how many plastic water bottles you avoided by refilling your own. These are all great things in my opinion, and even the City of Kamloops could learn from this, as they do not yet have a community compost system. However, TRU is unintentionally creating a lot of the waste they are trying to avoid.

One example of this is the food services that are provided on campus. Aramark is the main company that takes care of the food on campus and with their food services they bring lots and lots of packaging, single-use plastic, and coffee cups. TRU can advocate as much as they want for people to bring their own lunch, their own containers, coffee mugs, etc. However, if the main industry that is providing the food services is not cooperating, the initiatives that TRU has may not be as impactful as they can be.

Common Grounds, the only student run coffee shop on campus, is the only exception to this. Their coffee cups and containers are compostable and biodegradable, and they offer a 50-cent discount as an incentive for everyone who brings their own mug. They think about the choices they make in regard to the waste they create, as well as the products they offer. They sell organic coffee, support a local catering business, and offer more affordable prices for students. (info found at <https://trusu.ca/services/common-grounds/>). Truly thinking about the four pillars of sustainability; social, cultural, environmental, and economic.

If Thompson Rivers University truly wants to be a sustainable campus, I believe they have to change their food service provider or make Aramark comply with campus regulations on sustainability. These regulations could include not offering single-use plastic or single-use coffee cups. Not allowing these products on campus will help the zero-waste initiative work properly and create an overall better environment.

The student run coffee shop is the most sustainable on campus. This shows us that the students truly care about the environment. I am therefore confident that many other

students on campus would agree that the current situation needs to change. Both TRU and the world would greatly benefit from a more sustainable future, where changing the way we package is only the beginning.

Thank you,

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