

My Ideal TRU of 2030

Increased Research Capacity

My ideal TRU of 2030 is more research intensive.

This would involve TRU having a higher percentage, than it currently does, of research engaged faculty members. There would be a culture of applying for and obtaining external research funding. Having more research engaged faculty would allow for increased research opportunities for undergraduate students as well as support the development of additional research intensive Masters degree programs. Increasing our research capacity and becoming more research intensive will aid in improving TRU's reputation as a high-quality post-secondary educational institution and provide spillover benefits to the region.

Destination University

My ideal TRU of 2030 attracts more students from across Canada.

TRU currently excels at attracting students from the Thompson-Cariboo-Shuswap regions as well as from around the world. However, TRU is not as successful as other Canadian universities at attracting (on-campus) students from elsewhere in British Columbia (Vancouver and Victoria) and elsewhere in Canada. Currently our enrollment trends are at the mercy of regional demographics and fluctuations in demand from other countries. Part of this problem is reputational: as a young university, TRU does not have the established reputation of other older, comparable institutions (e.g., Acadia, St.FX, Windsor, Wilfred Laurier, etc.). However, the other part of the problem is that TRU offers a substandard first year residence experience in comparison to other Canadian universities. I am especially thinking of the students that are 17 and 18. This is not as much of an issue for local students, as they often can rely on family connections to help support them through first year. However, if I was a parent in Vancouver or Calgary and my child was considering TRU, the lack of a residence cafeteria and substantial residence life programming would be a major deterrent. The transition from high school to university is difficult and appropriate supports through residence life (including a cafeteria) can help with this. An improved residence life experience will position TRU to better attract Canadian students from outside the region and to improve the student experience. I am convinced that this will not only help attract students, but will also improve student success, retention, and satisfaction.

Leader in Indigenous Education

My ideal TRU of 2030 is a leader in indigenizing post-secondary education in Canada.

TRU already attracts a larger share of indigenous students than many other Canadian universities and has many supports in place to foster student success. These supports for indigenous students need to be enhanced and expanded. Furthermore, a comprehensive strategy is needed to provide faculty members with the resources and direction needed to incorporate indigenous elements into the curriculum.

Joel Wood, Assistant Professor, School of Business and Economics, Thompson Rivers University