

When we envision our ideal TRU, we imagine a community that is equitable and inclusive, one whose constituents are empowered to productively and respectfully engage across difference. We imagine an institution that is at the forefront of innovation, *precisely because* it is at the forefront of inclusive practices and intercultural learning. For if we cannot communicate and interact with one another, we cannot learn with and from each other. We envision an institution that addresses equity issues in all their complexity, one that engages communities and fosters relationships built on meaningful dialogue, respect and reciprocity. And we believe that taking an enhanced approach to intercultural learning is crucial to building the capacity to accomplish that vision.

A sustained, pan-institutional and properly resourced program of intercultural learning is needed for TRU to address the significant shift towards the internationalization of higher education, as well as to meet our obligations to respond meaningfully to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) *Calls to Action*. Engaging in intercultural learning enhances a person's capabilities to learn and communicate with people who are different from them – skills that are critically important in current educational, social, and political contexts. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on Canadian educational institutions to “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect” (TRC, 2015, Call 63.iii, p 7). We require increased understanding of the impacts of colonialism both at home and abroad, as well as enhanced understanding of global relationships that may impact student, staff, and faculty relationships at TRU. We also need to consider how recent global events, unprecedented migration, shifting political ideologies, and increased acceptance of xenophobic sentiments in the public sphere will impact interactions in classrooms, on-campus, and beyond.

As a result of the rapid internationalization of higher education; as a reflection of the vibrant cultural heterogeneity among Indigenous students, faculty, and staff; and as a function of the rich cultural diversity of the non-Indigenous domestic population, TRU is diverse. The internationalization of higher education is a national trend. Between 2010 and 2018 there was a 154% increase in the international student population in Canada (CBIE, 2018). The number of international students at all levels of the Canadian education has reached 572,415 country-wide, representing close to 20% annual increases in recent years (CBIE, 2018). Notably, this number has surpassed Canada's International Education Strategy goal of 450,000 international students by 2022 (Canada, 2014), five years ahead of schedule. Universities are also experiencing further cultural diversification through the enrollment of Indigenous students from an array of cultural backgrounds. This trend is likely to continue since Indigenous peoples represent the fastest growing population in Canada (Stats Can, 2017).

TRU's demographic shifts in the last decade are similar to those cited nationally. We have seen a rapid increase in international student enrollments and maintain a diverse Indigenous student population. The current on-campus population consists of approximately 27% international students and 10% Indigenous students (IPE, 2018). Both of these populations are well represented in Open Learning courses as well, with over 1000 Indigenous students and close to 1700 international students studying TRU courses online (IPE, 2018). The on-campus numbers alone indicate that, at a minimum, close to 40% of TRU's student population represent equity seeking groups – even without consideration of all 14 protected grounds under the BC Human Rights Code. This 40% represent a variety of protected groups including race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, and religion and may well represent intersectional identities across these and other protected grounds. This fact alone should highlight the need for campus-wide “skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism” (TRC, 2015).

It is naïve to think that structural diversity alone will result in intercultural learning. Research is very clear that increasing diversity in the absence of meaningful supports can entrench pre-existing biases and social divides – and this is an especial concern in times of increasing polarization and inflammatory

public rhetoric. Beyond the numbers, members of the TRU community are calling for change in creating an inclusive and engaged campus culture where all members feel welcome and able to contribute to the fullest of their abilities. If we are going to accomplish this, we need to go beyond diversity as a checkbox or a multi-racial campus photo-op. We must move beyond understanding diversity as representation and seek inclusive and equitable responses to the shifting demographics of our campus community. We note that in the first rounds of Envision TRU consulting, there was a strong focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. Of the 10 major themes identified in consultation report Issue 1 (May 30, 2019), three themes were directly related to intercultural understanding: Valuing Diversity, Pursuing Indigenization, and Pursuing Interculturalization. An additional 4 of the 10 major themes were identified as linked or related to valuing diversity: Role in the Community, Who We Are (Identity), Valuing Employees, and Supporting Student Success. In Issue 2 (June 3, 2019), we read that diversity, inclusion, and equity ranked highest among ways of making TRU accessible. Moreover, a number of the small group discussion summaries highlight a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and supporting culturally diverse learners through curriculum revision and professional development for staff and faculty.

In 2012, TRU was the first institution in Canada to have an Intercultural Coordinator (or equivalent) faculty position. To date, over 100 faculty members have participated in TRU's Interculturalizing the Curriculum professional development program resulting in enhanced pedagogy and intercultural learning outcomes across the disciplines. The institution hosts the bi-annual *Learning at Intercultural Intersections* international research conference, which brings together researchers, experts, and practitioners from all over the world and has resulted in the publication of widely read scholarship of teaching and learning journal articles. In 2012, TRU identified Interculturalization as a strategic priority and set a mandate to "prioritize programs and practices that support diversity, inclusion and intercultural understanding" (TRU, 2012). This mandate was one of the four core themes contributing to TRU's recent accreditation by the North West Commission on Colleges and Universities. As recently as 2016, the accreditation commission commended TRU "...for its commitment to fostering intercultural understanding through its robust international program and attention to the needs of its diverse student body, both of which contribute significantly to efforts to increase diversity and create a culture of inclusion" (NWCC, 2016). For TRU to maintain leadership in intercultural learning, we must continue to build a culture of inclusive education and thoughtful engagement with the diverse populations at TRU.

There was a time when TRU was a leader in the field of intercultural learning. Now, even as intercultural learning has become a mainstay of many other institutions' responses to increased cultural diversity, TRU's capacity and resourcing to deliver programming have not kept up. According to IPE Fact books, the international student population in 1998-99 was 364, ten years later it was 1040 and by 2018-19 had reached 4161. A twenty year increase of over 1000%. In the last five years, the international population has almost doubled: the 2013-14 fact book cites a 10% total with 14.5% on-campus and the 2018-19 fact book cites a 19% total representing 27% of the on-campus population. In 2006, 160 members of the TRU community participated in intercultural learning workshops. By 2014, that number was averaging 1,200-1,300 people per year and has stayed the same despite increases in diverse learners. Despite the ongoing expansion of the intercultural need and workload, there remains only one full time ongoing Intercultural Coordinator position at TRU. Last year there was briefly funding for a part-time sessional position, but that was lost to funding cuts. Among other things, the Intercultural Coordinator position delivers intercultural professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; provides one-on-one intercultural consultations and resources; administers the Intercultural Development Inventory; teaches pan-institutional classes and student workshops on intercultural skills; delivers supportive programming for the Study Abroad and Mobility programs; implements the Intercultural Ambassadors Peer Mentorship Program; administers GLBL 1000: Global Competency; develops programing and curricula; serves extensively on committees (including but not limited to the TRUFA Equity Committee, the Senate International Affairs Committee, IDAYS Core Planning Committee, NWCCU Accreditation Steering Committee – Intercultural Understanding; the Focus on

First Year working group; and sitting on the General Education Task Force), provides consultation to external institutions; as well as supervising research assistants, Co-Op students, and student research projects. This work is, of course, in addition to meeting requirements for scholarly activity, including ongoing professional development, conducting research, attending conferences, and publishing.

Despite this workload, we are striving to accomplish a vision of inclusive intercultural engagement at TRU. We dream of a TRU that builds on the institution's legacy of intercultural learning; one that draws on the considerable cross-campus expertise on intercultural and equity issues, and one that engages existing communities of practice that are dedicated to equity and inclusion work. We hope that this submission will re-ignite the discussions of these issues that were reflected in the initial stages of the Envision process. We recognize that there are many competing priorities and visions. However, we maintain that all other initiatives and efforts could be frustrated if we fail to commit to valuing diversity *at the level of practice* with theoretically and empirically-based training. Students, faculty and staff require intercultural capacities as citizens and professionals in an increasingly complex, globalized, and sometimes polarized contexts. If members of the TRU community do not feel valued and included, they cannot contribute to their fullest. If policies, processes, and curricula do not reflect the needs of a diverse campus population, then our capacities for innovation and supporting student success will be undermined.

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