

President's Report to the Board

For the period from Nov. 29, 2019 to Feb. 7, 2020
Submitted to the TRU Board of Governors
By Brett Fairbairn, President and Vice-Chancellor

This report summarizes progress to date on priorities of the executive team for 2019/2020. It also includes university highlights since the last reporting period.

Priorities

Organizational development, leadership, people:

Executive Update—The executive leadership team is moving into a period of stability with the December re-appointment of Christine Bovis-Crossen as provost and vice-president academic, and January's announcement of a new vice-president university relations (VPUR). Brian Daly, president and CEO for the University of Winnipeg Foundation, joins TRU on May 1 and becomes TRU's first VPUR, overseeing a new portfolio that combines our current Advancement and Marketing and Communications units. Advancement operations have been well supported by senior leaders with Global Philanthropic Canada since spring 2018.

Meanwhile, our provost's position has been renamed to vice-president academic and research to signal a renewed focus on research at TRU.

Dean searches—Dean of Science Tom Dickinson will conclude his term on June 30 and recruitment for his replacement is well underway. Under Tom's leadership of 10 years, the Faculty of Science has experienced tremendous and positive change—the establishment of a full Bachelor of Engineering program in software engineering, the development of the Canada Research Chair in Applied Mathematics and Optimization and the NSERC Industrial Research Chair in Ecosystem Reclamation, and a 15% enrolment growth across all programs. Following a one-year administrative leave, Tom will return to the classroom as an associate professor in Biological Sciences.

TRU is also in the midst of a search for a new dean of law with the conclusion of Brad Morse's five-year term in December. Dennis Acreman, who has served in several administrative positions at TRU since 2009—most recently as associate dean of science—assumed the position of interim dean of law in January.

Executive director of Indigenous Education—Tina Matthew assumed the role of executive director Feb. 1, a position she held on an interim basis since last November. An education professional with over 20 years' experience working with Indigenous communities, public and private institutions, and industry, Tina holds a Master of Education and an undergraduate degree from Simon Fraser University.

Labour Relations—TRU was pleased to reach a tentative collective agreement with the TRU Faculty Association in mid-January. The agreement is pending ratification. Employees covered by the agreement work at our campuses in Kamloops and Williams Lake. They include faculty, librarians, counsellors and instructional support.

Planning:

Envision TRU—We are closer to establishing a new vision for TRU, which I look forward to bringing to the board for endorsement at our March meeting. The proposed Vision Statement incorporates a new vision, values, strategic change goals and our university mission, all of which will guide us for the next 10 years. The statement is the culmination of many months of consultation with our faculty, staff, students and broader community members. I have been impressed with the level of participation, including the depth of thought. It's clear TRU is a special university that many people care about. The Vision Statement will be posted on the [Envision TRU](#) website after Feb. 11 and will be presented to our other governing bodies, Senate and the Planning Council for Open Learning, prior to the board's review.

Pandemic planning—In light of the coronavirus outbreak in China, TRU is reviewing its pandemic plan to ensure a state of readiness should the outbreak change to a pandemic. This is a precautionary and appropriate measure, noting public health officials in Canada continue to stress the level of risk to Canadians is low. An advisory group was convened in mid-January and includes individuals representing units across campus. In addition to reviewing and updating the pandemic plan, the group is monitoring the coronavirus outbreak and managing TRU's response.

Indigenization:

At TRU, contributing to the success of Indigenous learners and communities has become foundational to who we are—embedded in our Strategic Priorities from 2014-19 and strengthened in our future vision and strategic goals. As part of my regular report to the Board of Governors, I will include a section on indigenization, either updating the board on recent activities or highlighting existing initiatives.

The Coyote Project—This five-year, pan-institution project brings together TRU's nine faculties, Open Learning, the Library and TRU World to develop initiatives that support indigenization, and ultimately, the recruitment, retention and success of Indigenous students. Each area establishes its own goals and their initiatives vary—from creating new courses or altering curricula, to supporting Indigenous research, or finding ways to make spaces more inviting for Indigenous students. We have committed more than \$1 million for the duration of the project. For an interesting read on the Coyote Project, as well as TRU's Knowledge Makers program (which promotes Indigenous student research), I encourage you read the article published by [University Affairs](#).

Relationships:

TRU recognizes the value of relationships to our success as a university. Below is a highlight of some of the relationship-building activities undertaken by members of senior executive or employees over the preceding months.

- Sixth annual TRU Privacy and Security conference—more than 230 individuals attended representing 62 organizations from across the province. The conference brought together experts and practitioners in the areas of privacy, information, security, and audit for learning, networking, as well as engaging students to consider careers in these fields.
- Kamloops campus tour and meeting with Paul Davidson, president of Universities Canada. Universities Canada is a national body representing the interests of Canadian universities.
- Various engagement activities involving the president, including but not limited to the following:
 - Rotary Club of Kamloops presentation
 - Meetings with government officials
 - Meetings with representatives of the Research Universities' Council of BC
 - Tour of the Horizon North Kamloops production plant and the New Gold (Afton) Mine
 - Attendance at the Mayor's Gala for the Arts and the Canadian Home Builders' Association Keystone Awards Gala (Central Interior branch)
 - Donor activities including the Foundation Donor/Student Awards ceremony
 - Envision TRU – presented the proposed Vision Statement to internal and external stakeholders at meetings in Williams Lake and Kamloops (Feb. 10 and 11)

University Highlights

Universities are places of knowledge creation and transfer and achievement. We have much to celebrate. Below represents a short listing of some of our recent activities and achievements. Much more can be found on [TRU's Newsroom](#).

- [Raising the voices of rural youth through research](#)—Dr. Bonnie Fournier's research project, "What we can learn from rural youth" explored what matters to youth, including those right here in our region in Ashcroft and Cache Creek. Youth were active participants in the project and presented their own recommendations to community leaders in January.

- Trades training for Indigenous communities—TRU received nearly \$2 million in government funding to deliver [trades programming to Indigenous students](#) in their home communities. The funding will go to two programs: Careers in Construction Trades (for Kamloops, Chase and Lillooet) and the Transition and Heavy Mechanic Foundation Program (Williams Lake delivery).
- Students—at the Nov. 28 annual [TRU Foundation Awards](#) ceremony, students received a record \$775,000 in donor-funded scholarship, bursaries and awards. It was a gratifying event for all, with donors gathering to present their awards to students.
- Co-op term reaches North—[Bachelor of Science student Patrick Giles'](#) four-month work term in the Yukon shows how far and wide TRU will go to support student success. Giles was TRU's first co-op student to work at Northern Energy Innovation where he served as a research assistant. His advice to students entering co-ops: "Assign importance to your role, and treat it like it's your career—because it is." Well said!