



President's Report to the Board

March 26 to June 10, 2022

Submitted to the TRU Board of Governors

By Brett Fairbairn, President and Vice-Chancellor

BACK TO CAMPUS

For the first time in two years, TRU staged convocation ceremonies from June 6 to 10 as in-person events. (More on convocation below). It was an exciting step forward and a reminder that we are beginning to live with COVID.

In BC, cases have remained low since peaks earlier in the year,¹ even though COVID continues to circulate in our communities. Despite that, health officials did not alter plans for the reduction or elimination of COVID-related restrictions, including requirements for vaccine passports in April. This was the last of the significant restrictions to fall away, as a requirement to wear masks in most indoor settings was dropped earlier.

As has been our practice since the onset of the pandemic, TRU follows advice and recommendations from the Provincial Health Office, and we will continue to do so. TRU continues to tell our community to exercise caution and adopt safety measures based on assessments of personal risk. We will continue to emphasize that we are a mask-friendly environment, and anyone who feels the need to protect their health or the health of others by wearing a mask is encouraged to do so.

TRU will monitor emerging trends and will continue to be open to new directions from health officials, especially as fall and the next school year approaches and we contemplate the possibility of an autumn or winter COVID season.

CONVOCATION 2022

Convocation is the highlight of a university's year. During convocation, we commemorate the achievements of students, faculty and staff members, and leaders in the broader community.

For the first time in two years, TRU staged a full week of in-person convocation ceremonies (June 6 to 10). We also provided graduates from 2020 and 2021 the opportunity to return and receive their credential in-person, even though we held virtual

¹ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6f23959a8b14bfa989e3cda29297ded>

events through the pandemic years. I was grateful to be able to preside over convocation in person. Recording video messages for virtual events hasn't been the same.

This year, we awarded 2,598 credentials across Williams Lake, Kamloops and Open Learning. Of those, 2,101 are based at the Kamloops campus, 57 in Williams Lake and 440 are Open Learning based programs. The breakdown by Faculty/School is as follows:

Kamloops

- Faculty of Arts: 180
- Bob Gaglardi School of Business and Economics: 655
- Faculty of Education and Social Work: 301
- Faculty of Law: 105
- School of Nursing: 177
- Faculty of Science: 402
- Faculty of Student Development: 31
- Faculty of Adventure, Culinary Arts & Tourism: 108
- School of Trades and Technology: 142

Williams Lake by Faculty/School

- Faculty of Education and Social Work: 9
- School of Nursing: 36
- School of Trades and Technology: 12

Open Learning by Faculty/School

- Faculty of Arts: 116
- Bob Gaglardi School of Business and Economics: 55
- Faculty of Education and Social Work: 17
- School of Nursing: 78
- Faculty of Science: 163
- School of Trades and Technology: 11

TRU also awarded six honorary degrees this spring. Our honorary degrees are awarded by the Board of Governors on the recommendation of the TRU Senate. An honorary degree is the highest form of recognition offered by TRU and awarded for demonstrated excellence in the fields of public affairs, the sciences, arts, humanities, business, law and philanthropy.

Honorary degrees were conferred upon former BC justice and politician The Hon. Wally Oppal, Indigenous leader and advocate Georges Erasmus, former radio host and writer Tom Allen, entrepreneur and author Adam Miron, and staunch community and environmental stewards Anne and Roland Neave.

ENROLLMENT SUMMER / FALL 2022

Enrollment continues to be an exercise in uncertainty. Specifically, there remains a great deal unknown surrounding the ability of international students to obtain study permits and to travel to campus. IPE and TRU World continue to monitor these and other factors impacting international students.

We are expecting Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 to come in higher than last year (mostly due to international growth; domestic is projected to be relatively flat).

Fall 2022 Semester — Total applications and admissions (excluding Nursing, Trades, and Law) are currently tracking higher than last year's numbers at this time and higher than three years ago at the same point. Domestic applications are trending slightly lower than last year at the same time (currently down three percent) and are up three percent from the same time three years ago.

International applications are currently up 18 percent from last year and 37 percent higher than the same point three years ago. Domestic admissions are up 2 percent relative to the same time last year while international admissions are up 25 percent. A portion of these international applications and admissions are from prospective students who were deferred from Winter 2022 due to program capacities and delays in study permit processing.

International applications are split fairly evenly among Undergraduate (29 percent), Post-Baccalaureate (34 percent), and Graduate (35 percent) programs, with a small proportion (two percent) going to University-Prep programs. This distribution is similar to last year at the same time, but marks a shift from pre-pandemic where 41 percent of international applications to-date were to an Undergraduate program and 30 percent and 26 percent were to Post-Baccalaureate and Graduate programs, respectively.

Including Nursing, Law, and Trades programs, international applications currently account for 50 percent of applications, which is five percentage points higher than at this time last year (due in part to the large number of deferrals from Winter 2022). It is important to note that these programs are competitive in nature and the vast majority of seats are given to domestic students.

Summer Term 2022 — It is important to note that the summer enrolment is a small portion of TRU's full year enrolment, and normally only accounts for about eight percent of the on-campus enrolment.

It appears our continuing students are choosing to work over the summer. This is supported by the latest BC Labour Market Statistics, which show that the participation rate for persons aged 15 to 24 are up relative to the same period last year. Summer 2022 on-campus courses in Session 1 and Session 3 began four weeks ago, and Session 2 courses start in three weeks (as of May 31).

Course registrations are down 15 percent relative to last year at the same time (6,198 last year vs. 5,245 this year), and 15 percent lower than two years ago to date (6,195). Student headcount is down 18 percent (3,031 last year vs. 2,487 this year) and 13 percent lower than two years ago (2,867).

Domestic registrants (headcount) are down 37 percent (1,402 last year vs. 882 this year) and 25 percent lower than two years ago (1,175). Last year (Summer 2021) was an anomaly for domestic activity, with registrants up 20 percent compared to Summer 2020, which was similar to pre-pandemic levels.

International registrants are down one percent relative to this time last year (1,629 last year vs. 1,605 this year) and down five percent compared to two years ago (1,692). Some international registrants were admitted to the Winter 2022 term but deferred to Summer 2022 because of program capacities and delays in study permit processing.

Compared to last year at the same time, there are:

- a. More international registrants from India (+10 percent; 760 last year vs. 839 this year), who comprise 52 percent of all international students.
- b. More international registrants enrolled in Post-Baccalaureate programs (+28 percent; 517 last year vs. 662 this year).
- c. Fewer waitlisted registrations (-74 percent, 227 last year vs. 59 this year).
- d. Fewer domestic course registrations across all course departments except Graduate – Nursing (+42 percent; 12 last year vs. 17 this year), Graduate – BGSoBE (+37 percent; 49 last year vs. 67 this year), Nursing (+8 percent; 73 last year vs. 79 this year), and Social Work and Human Service (+3 percent; 70 last year vs. 72 this year).

For Summer 2022 (excludes Trades):

- a. Most new registrants at the Kamloops campus are international students (93 percent; 295 of 317 total new registrants).

- b. Both domestic and international registrants are taking about the same number of courses on average compared to last year (1.9 courses and 2.2 courses, respectively).
- c. Over a third of Kamloops campus course registrations are in BGSoBE (37 percent; 1,951 of 5,150), and another 23 percent are in Arts courses (1,190).

TUITION SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

For the 2022-23 academic year, TRU programs will be offered at domestic (Canadian) tuition rates to Ukrainian students who travel to Canada on the [Canadian-Ukrainian Authorized for Emergency Travel \(CUAET\)](#) federal program.

The goal is to sponsor 50 students — including 20 students currently enrolled at TRU — for up to 60 credits of study. TRU sees an average of 10 students per year enrolled from Ukraine and has the capacity to welcome 30 new students who qualify.

At the same time, TRU will also continue to offer support to others who are affected by the ongoing conflict. We recognize that Russia's illegal war on Ukraine has not only caused unimaginable tragedies on Ukraine and its people, but also on other nations and people in the region, including our current students from Russia.

TRU is committed to exercise our duty of care to support them as we would for all students. We encourage students who are experiencing financial or emotional difficulties to meet with their ISAs (International Student Advisors) to discuss the support needed.

TRU MICROBIOLOGIST JOINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

I am proud to be able to share with you that members of our faculty continue to be recognized for their professional contributions. In May, Naowarat (Ann) Cheeptham was named one of 10 recipients — and the first TRU faculty member — to receive this year's 3M National Teaching Fellowship.

The fellowship is a prestigious honour sponsored by 3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE). Founded in 1986, the fellowship honours exceptional contributions to teaching and learning at the post-secondary level.

Cheeptham and TRU botanist Lyn Baldwin won the STLHE Desire 2 Learn (D2L) award in 2020 and 2018, respectively. And in 2019, more than 40 university faculty, staff, deans and students were named as recipients of the Alan Blizzard Award for excellence in collective teaching.

3M award recipients are invited to a group retreat in fall where they can share knowledge and create connections that will continue to promote leadership and excellence in teaching and learning.

TRU SIGNS FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH FULBRIGHT CANADA

In more good news, I along with other TRU leaders signed a memorandum of understanding with Fulbright Canada on May 5 to establish an annual visiting research chair position.

The Fulbright Chair will bring leading United States scholars, scientists, practitioners and leaders to TRU to build new research partnerships with Canadian colleagues. The Foundation for Educational Exchange between Canada and the United States of America (Fulbright Canada) has a mandate to enhance mutual understanding between the people of the two countries through supporting outstanding individuals who conduct research, lecture or study in the other country.

Each year, under the terms of the agreement, TRU will host a leading US scholar to work with TRU faculty and students in a research area important to the university and to the communities it serves.

The inaugural chair is intended to be an Indigenous scholar recruited to support TRU's world-class research in wildfire management, climate change and Indigenous land-use practices. The five-year agreement comes as TRU launches its new Strategic Research Plan.

DEVELOPING A VALUES-BASED CULTURE

As shared with you previously, TRU is embarking this year on a university-wide conversation about our workplace culture. Led by VPs Brian Day and Baihua Chadwick, TRU's conversation about workplace culture will be an opportunity to talk about what it means to work here, what our experiences are with one another, and how we can improve.

Initially, TRU engaged with The Neutral Zone (TNZ) to help develop our thinking. Based on those discussions, we have now asked Raj Dhasi from [Turning Point Resolutions](#) to be TRU's facilitator for this initiative. Raj is an expert in conflict resolution, with experience supporting various sectors, including post-secondary. Her work also includes designing listening processes that address power and privilege, with a focus on equity and ensuring safety.

We anticipate this to be a year-long process, with the following three phases:

- 1) **Design of the Listening Phase** — Raj has already spent next several weeks seeking input from individuals and groups within TRU on how we engage in this conversation, with whom, and clarifying roles.
- 2) **Listening Phase** — This will be the heavy-lifting, the deep and authentic dialogue about our workplace culture. Based on input during Phase 1, there will be various ways in which individuals can be involved. We want to hear from many voices. This phase will respect the natural rhythms of our university operations and is likely to begin in September when all faculty and staff are able to participate.
- 3) **Actioning Phase** — Based on what we heard in the Listening Phase, we will develop and commit to actions. Along with that is a commitment to evaluation, to gauge our progress.

The result of this effort with Raj will not be a report or a set of recommendations that sit on a shelf. Our commitment is that our conversations about workplace culture will result in initiatives that drive real change at TRU. It will be our shared responsibility to build the workplace culture we want.

NEW MASTERS PROGRAM APPROVED

I'm pleased to share that TRU now offers a Master of Arts in Human Rights and Social Justice. The university received government approval for the new program last month, which launches in September.

The 16-month-long program consists of four core components that include Indigenous ways of knowing and a requirement to do hands-on field study work. Up to 30 students will be admitted each year.

This new program is a natural for TRU, as it aligns perfectly with our vision and mission and what kind of institution we want to be. A program like this intends to make differences in people's lives.

TRU is the kind of post-secondary institution that envisions having social impact, and I am certain the first class of graduates from this program, as well as all who follow in the years to come, will make our communities and our world better. I am proud to see TRU leading the way with this kind of program.

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

The following is a brief list of some of the activities I have attended (or are upcoming) that have allowed me to connect with and engage our staff and faculty, stakeholders, government leaders, other post-secondary organizations, and delegations:

- May 2 & 3 — NWCCU site visit (virtual)
- May 4 — Annual Staff Awards Ceremony - Long Term Service and President's Merit Awards
- May 4 — Luncheon for Retirees and employees with 25+ years of service
- May 5, 12 & 20 RUCBC meetings (virtual)
- May 5 — Fulbright Canada Reception and Dinner – MOU Signing
- May 5, 16, 17 & 18 VP Research search — committee meetings and interviews
- May 13 — TRU Leaders event
- May 16 — TRU hosted TTEs Chief and Council – meeting and lunch
- May 16 — Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow – RUCBC meeting with Minister Kang (Donna attended for Brett)
- May 26 — Alumni Event in Williams Lake
- May 27 — Lunch with the President – Williams Lake
- May 27 — Williams Lake Commencement
- May 27 Donor Wall Unveiling — Williams Lake
- June 2 – Wells Gray Celebration – donor event
- June 6 – TRU Indigenous Graduation event
- June 13 to 16 – VP Research Interviews
- June 21 – National Indigenous Day
- June 22 – TRU hosts the provincial Funding Review Regional Roundtable

As well, TRU was visited by two provincial cabinet ministers. BC Minister of Agriculture and Food Lana Popham visited TRU to speak at the Agriculture and Food Co-op Conference. She met with TRU leaders and discovered that the university is making a difference in local food production through initiatives in Culinary Arts, Retail Meat Cutting and Sustainable Ranching programs.

BC's Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation Bruce Ralston visited TRU for a tour of the School of Trades and Technology as well as the Industrial Trades and Technology Centre, which opened in 2018. The minister met with senior TRU administrators and trades students, as he sought to learn more about programs focused on green technologies.

Ralston's tour took him through several areas to meet instructors and students teaching and learning in programs related to electric vehicles, heat pump technology, solar development and cutting-edge boiler technology. The minister also met with students in

TRU's Women in Trades program, which offers students a sampling of introductory courses across a broad range of trades.

Lastly, on June 7, I made a brief online presentation to BC.'s Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This happens every year, however, the form of this year's consultation changed. All presenters were given just five minutes to share three 50-word bullet point recommendations and 300-word explanations for government to consider.

TRU's submission to the committee is included at the end of my report.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

The work of developing an over-arching strategic plan for TRU continues. [Integrated Strategic Planning](#) (ISP) is a continuation of the TRU Envision work completed in 2020, and is intended to align effort and resource allocation across TRU so that we can best achieve our 10-year strategic goals.

The ISP team has recently completed the work of analyzing lengthy submissions solicited from 27 business units. The team coded these submissions using content analysis methodology to produce a comprehensive document setting out emergent themes aligned to TRU's four strategic goals.

That document will now be reviewed by a larger working group. The executive team recently held a half-day meeting to review thematic summaries developed from the planning templates. A draft of a strategic plan is expected to be completed through the summer, with final consultation with our community happening in the fall.

UNIVERSITY NEWS

Research creates pathway for Indigenous knowledge in nursing education — A team of researchers at six BC universities are the proud recipients of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant, sharing \$683,000 in funding for their Reclaiming and Recovering Indigenous Knowledge in Graduate Nursing Education project.

Led by Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Associate Professor Dr. Lisa Bourque Bearskin and UBC Okanagan (UBCO) Associate Professor Dr. Donna Kurtz, the team will conduct intergenerational learning with communities to reclaim and recover Indigenous knowledge in graduate nursing education

Rockcliffe and Liberty Pointe join the TRU neighbourhood — The two newest residential development projects completed on campus, Liberty Pointe and Rockcliffe, are officially open.

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Vice-President University Relations Brian Daly recently joined the Kelson Group and TRU Community Trust in a ceremony to open the two developments. The developments are part of TRU Community Trust's development, The Reach Neighbourhood at TRU. The Reach was created to enrich campus life and return funds to support university initiatives such as student bursaries and scholarships

Campaign for animal simulators nearly doubles goal — A campaign to raise funds for animal simulators — high-tech training tools for TRU's veterinary technology program — is even more successful than planned.

The goal of this year's Fund-A-Need was to secure \$100,000 to buy interactive horse and cow manikins. In just three months, 23 donors have contributed over \$180,000, ensuring students can practise animal care using lifelike technology.