



TOM OWEN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Terms of Reference 2026

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS: April 14, 2026

Introduction

This endowed award was established to recognize the contributions made to TRU by Dr. Tom Owen. Dr. Owen was TRU's first Director of Environment and Sustainability, and he served in that capacity from 2009 to 2013.

Dr. Owen had more than 30 years of experience in the field, and before coming to TRU he was a Deputy Minister with the provincial government in Manitoba. While at TRU, Dr. Owen worked to create significant changes in TRU's culture and practices with respect to sustainability, and he supported local environmental organizations in the region. Dr. Owen placed a lot of emphasis on practical solutions, public engagement with the broader community, and he fought against environmental injustices for marginalized people and communities.

Dr. Owen passed away in May of 2013 and he is fondly remembered by colleagues from around the world.

Rationale

This award is to help recognize **undergraduate and graduate students** who work in the community or at the university to **shift the culture** towards higher levels of awareness with respect to sustainability issues, and who **champion practical sustainability solutions** that can make a tangible difference in environmental footprints.

Award

Each year one student will be selected to receive **an award of \$1000.00** to recognize their contributions to sustainability. Students can only win the award once. Priority for winning the award will be given to students that share Dr. Owen's philosophy of finding practical solutions to environmental issues, engaging publicly with the broader community, and/or fighting against environmental injustices for marginalized people and communities.

Selection Process

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC), which reports jointly to the TRU Board and the Senate, will select recipients of the **Tom Owen Environmental Sustainability Award**.

ESAC will grant the award based on the following:

1. All full and part-time students are eligible for this award.
2. The awards committee will issue calls for nominations in winter each year with a stated deadline. Deadlines may be extended to encourage applications. The call will go out to all TRU faculty members, staff, and students via the wide variety of communication channels at TRU.
3. At least one nominator must sign each nomination. Nominations must include a written submission from the nominator(s) outlining specific reasons for the nomination.
4. Nominations must include (a) A statement prepared by the nominator(s) (500 words or less) describing the nominee's contributions to sustainability and transformation of campus culture. Relevant materials documenting the nominee's sustainability involvement should be included.
5. ESAC's awards subcommittee will make a recommendation to the full committee of ESAC for consideration. The awards subcommittee will meet in spring and recommend to ESAC at the next meeting the successful candidate. Quorum for the committee will be 50% +1 of the committee present, excluding vacancies. If quorum is not achieved, the chair of the committee shall call a special meeting within two days, and a decision will be made at that time based on committee members present.
6. The award will be presented to the recipient at a suitable event prior to the next academic year.
7. Previous award recipients are not eligible for nomination in future years.

Criteria

Nominees should be recognized by staff, students, or faculty as individuals who significantly help to advance sustainability. The Selection Committee will review nominations and recommend the award recipient based on the following criteria:

- **Emphasis on real-world, practical ideas and solutions** that have the potential to make a significant contribution to reduce the environmental footprints of individuals, organizations, or communities.
- **Engaging publicly** with the broader community.
- Examples of **fighting against environmental injustices** for marginalized people and communities.