

# STRATEGIC CONSULTATION |

Research and Graduate Studies



**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**





## History and trajectory of Research and Graduate Studies

As an open access research university, Thompson Rivers University (TRU) boasts a comprehensive set of assets — including trades training, Open Learning, TRU World, career and vocational ladder opportunities, and outstanding faculty in all the traditional academic areas. The interdisciplinary research potential of these assets continues to produce impressive results, including the creation of enhanced and often unique student training possibilities. TRU was originally founded in 1970 as Cariboo College, evolving to a university-college in 1989, gaining degree granting authority in 1995, and then full university status in 2005. Because of its size, structure, and evolution, TRU has been able to approach research in novel ways that are distinct from BC’s and Canada’s older and larger universities. TRU is a comprehensive university committed to facilitating student access to a university education that provides a range of opportunities for learners and faculty to reach and exceed their potential. These opportunities include the career benefits of an applied, modern and comprehensive approach to academia, and the more traditional academic benefits afforded by a research-informed university. There is a strong focus on undergraduate research, and graduate programs are established in key areas. Since 1989, research has been part of Thompson Rivers University’s institutional mandate, and over the last two decades (and the last 14 years,

in particular, since becoming a university), the institutional environment to support researchers has grown steadily. As identified in the Thompson Rivers University Act of 2005, the purposes of TRU are:

1. (a) to offer baccalaureate and masters degree programs,  
 (b) to offer post-secondary and adult basic education and training,  
 (c) to undertake and maintain research and scholarly activities for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b), and  
 (d) to provide an open learning educational credit bank for students.
2. The university must promote teaching excellence and the use of open learning methods.
3. In carrying out its purposes, the university must serve
4. (a) the educational and training needs in the region specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and  
 (b) the open learning needs of British Columbia.

In 2014, the University’s Strategic Priorities, 2014 – 2019, identified “research capacity building and knowledge mobilization” as key institutional priorities. Institutional governance structures, new and enhanced research facilities, new internally- and externally-funded research chairs, an increased focus on graduate and

undergraduate research, and new graduate programs are all contributing to the culture of research, inquiry, and innovation at TRU. The University's commitment to research was officially recognized by its peer institutions in 2011 with an invitation to join the Research Universities Council of British Columbia—situating TRU as one of the six “research intensive” universities in the province. In order to be competitive nationally and globally, TRU has placed its strategic focus on research areas where the University has a critical mass of research activity and can develop regionally-focused, community-driven, and world class research programs.

Woven throughout TRU's strategic themes (in the Academic Plan, the Strategic Priorities, and the Strategic Research Plan) is an awareness of the importance of place, relationships with community and, in particular, a mandate for awareness, appreciation, and cooperation with Indigenous communities. TRU maintains critical links to these communities, with its main campus in Kamloops, a secondary campus at Williams Lake and a number of satellite campuses located in Indigenous communities throughout the BC Interior: the Kamloops campus is situated in Tk'emlups territory; the Williams Lake campus is situated in the T'exelcenc; the 100 Mile House

regional centre is situated in Tsq'escenenc; the Ashcroft regional centre is situated in the Ashcroft First Nation, belonging to the Nlaka'pmx Nation; the Barriere and Clearwater regional centres are situated in Simpcw territory; and the Lillooet regional centre is situated in the St'át'imc Nation, which includes Bridge River (Nxwisten), Pavilion (Ts'kw'aylacw), Cayoose Creek (Sekw'el'was), Mt. Currie (Lil'wat), Seton Lake (Chalath), Lillooet (T'it'q'et), Fountain (Xáxl'ip), Anderson Lake (N'quatqua), Douglas (Xáxtsa), Skatin and Samahquam. These established relations with diverse Indigenous communities across the province make TRU a unique educational institution. The university has received national and provincial recognition and funding for its work on the preservation and promotion of Indigenous language, culture and history, as well as for establishing leading protocols for the ownership and protection of cultural knowledge.

Because of its size, structure, and evolution, TRU sees itself as uniquely situated to cultivate relationships that encourage community involvement and facilitate community-based research.



# Institutional structure supporting research and graduate studies

In 2005, TRU established an Office of Research and Graduate Studies led by the Associate Vice-President of Research and Graduate Studies. This office provides leadership in all areas of research and graduate studies development, including providing dedicated support for grant and contract facilitation and management, knowledge mobilization, ethics review, Tri-Agency compliance, sabbatical allocation, integrity in research and scholarship, provincial and national advocacy, student research training, graduate studies programming and quality assurance, approval of graduate supervision, and the promotion and administration of student research scholarships. TRU's Office of Research and Graduate Studies defines its role publicly as one of ...bringing teaching, scholarly activities and research, creative practice and innovation together to deliver research-informed learning to students regionally, nationally, and internationally. To promote excellence in these areas — and to support faculty progression, faculty renewal, student engagement and recruitment, and enhanced graduate programming — we recognize that future development in research and graduate studies requires significant institutional commitment to an institutional research infrastructure, with appropriate levels of staffing to scaffold steadily increasing research activity;

new and enhanced research facilities (capital investment in research space, including research centres); internal research funding; internally and externally funded research chairs; knowledge translation and mobilization resources; and an increased focus on graduate and undergraduate research, including development of new graduate programs; and expansion of student research and scholarship support.

Support from the British Columbia Innovation Council funds the innovation transfer function of the university, and the development of linkages with the public and private sector for research collaborations.

The University's Senate has created a faculty-led Research Committee that advises the Research Office, promotes research internally, and guides policy development; and a Graduate Studies Committee that reviews and advises on new program development and has established the specific criteria for faculty participation in graduate studies. The University Sabbatical Committee, chaired by the AVP, Research, reviews and approves sabbatical applications; and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies provides administrative support and leadership for over 20 peer review committees annually. The AVP, Research and Graduate Studies reports to the Provost and to Senate.







## Collective agreement provisions affecting research

TRU's faculty Collective Agreement distinguishes between tripartite faculty (those with workload responsibilities in teaching, research, and service) and bipartite faculty (those with workload responsibilities in teaching and service). Most tripartite faculty carry a five-course load (three in the fall semester and two in the winter); and bipartite faculty carry an eight-course load (four courses each semester). At present, tripartite faculty number 160 and make up approximately 1/3 of TRU's ongoing faculty complement.

While tripartite faculty are contractually obligated to engage in research, many bipartite faculty are also research active, publishing, presenting, mentoring students, and integrating Research-informed Learning activities into their classes. With the support of area chairs and deans, and in accord with Article 5.2.3.2 of the TRUFA Collective

Agreement, tenured faculty may apply for a change of status, moving from one workload grouping to another—that is, bipartite faculty with an active scholarship plan and record may, where approved, take on tripartite roles. Conversely, those tripartite faculty who decide to focus more exclusively on teaching can, where approved, take on bipartite roles.

Other Collective Agreement provisions affecting research include Article 10.3.2.7, which provides for one 3-credit course reduction during the first year of a faculty member's tenure-track appointment; Article 6 (Tenure and Promotion); Article 14 (Sabbatical Leave); Article 15 (Professional Development and Allowances); and Letters of Understanding on Research Chairs, Research Associates, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Visiting Scholars.



# Strategic Research Plan (2014-19)

The major objectives of the current SRP are as follows:

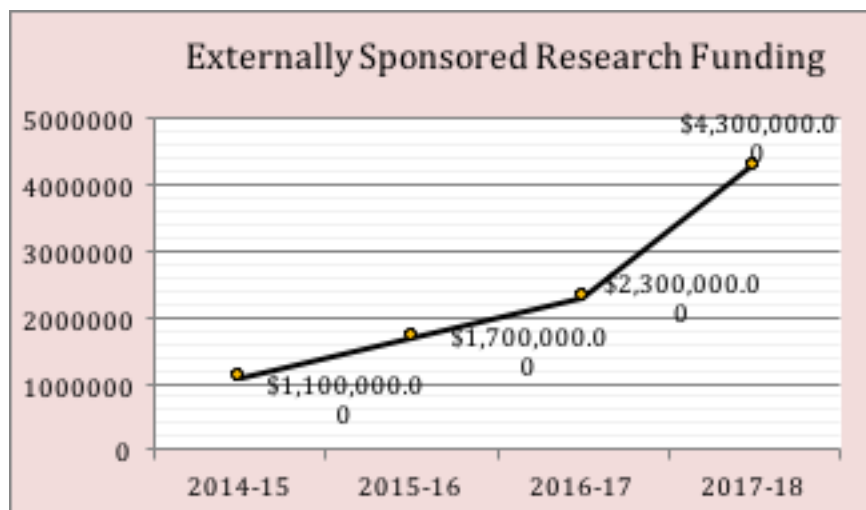
- Be inclusive of individual research programs, recognizing the importance of intellectual freedom for researchers to pursue their interests and passions without undue constraints and interference, and valuing the research results from individual endeavours, while providing an instrument for encouraging collaboration institutionally and externally.
- Support and build upon existing and emerging research strengths where TRU is well-positioned to develop national and international leadership, and make a real difference to the world, both in terms of providing excellent opportunities for attracting and training the best students, and through the application of research in ways that improve quality of life for all.
- Reinforce and facilitate TRU's role and leadership in the linking of research to community social, cultural, scientific, educational, technological and economic development.
- Facilitate the development of partnerships with communities, scholars, non-profits, cultural organizations, industries, institutions, government ministries and agencies for pursuing mutual objectives.
- Provide a map for establishing and supporting research centres, research leadership chairs, collaborative research facilities, and graduate programs of the highest caliber.
- Ensure effective knowledge mobilization, including support for faculty and student publication, dissemination, knowledge translation, technology transfer, commercialization, and application of research results.
- While the SRP encourages and recognizes research in all disciplines, the plan identifies five key areas of collaborative excellence and emerging strength:
  - Education, Health and Diversity
  - Community and Cultural Engagement
  - Sustainability, Environment and the Physical World
  - Aboriginal Understanding, and
  - Technology and Optimization
- The strategy includes a commitment to understand and explain TRU's developing research culture by (1) establishing indicators of a successful culture, and (2) determining measurements for these indicators. Key measures for success include increases or expansion of activities in the following areas:
  - Number and percentage of active tri-partite faculty holding external funding (contract and grant)
  - Total dollar amount of Tri-Agency grants and external contracts
  - Total dollar amount of external grants and contracts supporting student research training
  - Number of students involved in supervised research projects
  - Number of students enrolled in research-based graduate programs
  - Research space as a percentage of total available university academic space
  - Number of internal research workshops, presentations and dialogues designed to support the development of research capacity annually
  - Dollars committed to internal grant awards to support faculty
  - Number of peer-reviewed publications, scholarly works and exhibitions as a percentage of total tri-partite faculty
  - Number of TRU-hosted, peer-reviewed journals
  - Number of papers presented at regional, national and international conferences by research faculty and students
  - Number of completed student undergraduate research experience projects
  - Dollars leveraged from collaborative partnerships with industry, business and community groups

Annual Accountability Reports employ these indicators and provide detailed measurement and a public accounting (see Appendices A and B);

and the Annual Research and Graduate Studies Reports, the monthly Research Newsletter, social media platforms, and the Research and Graduate Studies Website provide a more narrative accounting of research achievements generally.

Toward these ends and at the present time, the implementation of the Strategic Research Plan is focusing on four primary objectives:

- Increased faculty participation in research and increased success in external funding (with the aim of further developing the university’s “research culture” and building research capacity in an “open access research university” environment)
- Focused attention on the development of the Interior Universities Research Coalition: with an inter-institutional MOU signed in December 2017, the University has jump started several initiatives—e.g., the implementation of a major collaborative research grant designed to establish tri-university research teams, coordination of efforts regarding CFI applications and the sharing of resources among research offices, the exploration of possible collaborative graduate programming, and the pursuit of joint funding requests to Province (See Appendix C)
- Undergraduate research leadership and development, including expansion of our Research-informed Learning programing, the establishment of an online Undergraduate Research Clearinghouse in collaboration with Vancouver Island University and Bridgewater State University, and publication of research on UR (See Appendix D)
- Community-engaged research development, with focus on “social innovation” via the introduction of community-driven research project grants, support for Indigenization, enhanced collaborations with the City and Interior Health, and co-location and a significant research presence tied to the United Way’s XChange Lab (See Appendix E)



Between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018,

**28%** OF TRIPARTITE FACULTY **78** PERCENT currently hold external grants. Overall, in 2017/18 were research active (a single year snapshot of refereed publications, exhibitions and grants).

# Strategic Consultation executive summary

**D**uring the 2017-18 academic year, TRU engaged in a major Strategic Consultation on Research and Graduate Studies with stakeholders within the University and among members of the larger community. The results of these discussions are designed to help guide future decision-making and further define “research excellence” and our commitment to “research-informed learning” in terms of their relevance and impact.

Highlights drawn from the Consultation include an increasing recognition of how TRU’s success in securing federal research funding support has a cascading effect, in 2018 felt through the allocation of two new Canada Research Chairs, two new CFI-funded labs in Genomics and Remote Sensing, and an expansion of our Indigenous research networks; through

the establishment of the University’s first Industrial Research Chair (in Ecosystem Reclamation); through new health science funding, and continued support for groundbreaking work in the Sciences,

the humanities, the social sciences, law, education and business; through national recognition for our work in undergraduate research training, an increased allocation of Canada Graduate Scholarships, and, in 2018, through the first allocation of the new Provincial Graduate Scholarships.

The Consultation further reinforced the importance of linking research to student training; the importance of partnership development and the ideals of community-driven research (with special reference to TRU’s partnership with the City and with United Way and the social innovation research possibilities associated with the development of the United Way’s Community XChange Lab); the harmonization of research ethics protocols across British Columbia; a renewed research focus on social and technological innovation; increased institutional support for early-career researchers; an institutional commitment to increased research space; and a continued commitment to

**... the consultations spoke to the importance of a shared strategic vision for integrating research, scholarship and creative inquiry into all areas of the university...**

indigenizing research and graduate studies at TRU. Above all, the consultations spoke to the importance of a shared strategic vision for integrating research, scholarship and creative inquiry into all areas of the university, including enhanced faculty and school administrative support, coordinated departmental and divisional research planning, and the development of enhanced research experience opportunities for students at all stages of their studies.

In the coming years TRU’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies has been tasked through the consultations with contributing to this shared vision by maintaining the level of excellence in pre- and post-grant support; by working with our partner universities to increase research

opportunities; by continuing to host an appropriate array of graduate supervision, grant development, and academic writing workshops; by seeking to support new graduate program

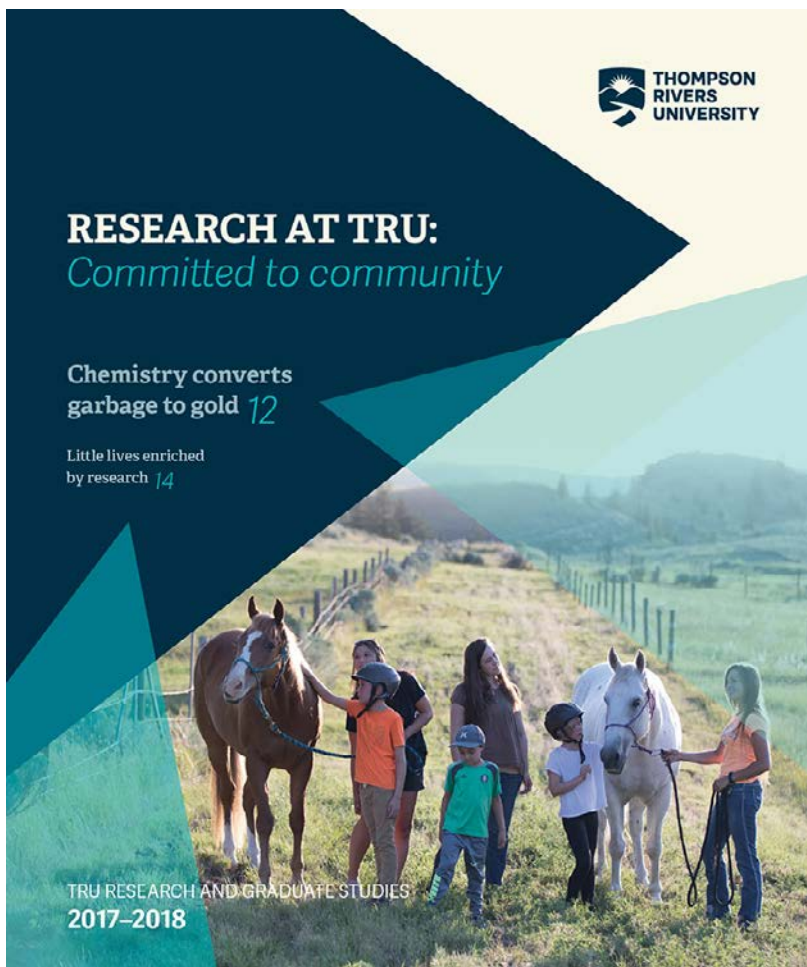
development and engaging in a continuing review of graduate studies policies; by expanding our undergraduate research training programming with an eye toward creating equitable access for underserved students, principally by integrating research-informed learning experiences into the first- and second-year curricula; by creating new research workspaces; by hosting visiting scholars, workshops, and conferences; and by seeking to raise still further the profile and impact of TRU’s research.

The consultations confirmed that an interdisciplinary ethos fostered by what faculty see as the relative absence of academic silos at TRU continues to inspire, and that the University’s relationship to the communities we serve remains strong. The people of the Interior of British Columbia tend to see TRU as *their* university; and, there is strong faculty support for the spirit of inter-institutional collaboration, with the University seeking to extend its reach by signing a research agreement with the University



of British Columbia, Okanagan (UBCO) and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Together the Research Coalition members are intent on developing complementary research partnerships with their host cities, seeking to address issues of common concern by developing research capacity with a regional lens in natural disaster management, including flood/fire/drought prediction and response, interface fuel management, evacuation management, snowpack monitoring, community health and ecosystem impacts; rural and regional health (including mental health), cannabis, social innovation and development, place promotion and tourism

development; and a host of problems related to homelessness and affordable housing. The alignment of resources across institutions and communities to tackle priority issues points toward a new definition of research excellence that TRU seems increasingly proud to champion. This Consultation Report is offered as a reflection on the University's strategic plan for supporting research and graduate studies—on the accomplishments, strengths, opportunities, and on the areas where further work is required.



# Mandate of the Strategic Consultation

The Provost's Office and Provost's Council endorsed the establishment of a Strategic Consultation Task Force on Research and Graduate Studies—to help with the implementation of TRU's Strategic Research Plan and to align that implementation with the new Academic Plan (under development) and with Space Planning. The Task Force was comprised of the following members:

- Brandon Turner, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Denis Powers, AVP, Human Resources and Chair of University Space Committee
- Donald Lawrence, Chair, Research Committee of Senate
- Heather Price, Canada Research Chair, Faculty of Arts
- Lincoln Smith, Director, Research Partnerships and Enterprise Creation
- Michelle Harrison, Instructional Designer, Open Learning
- Natalie Clark, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Work
- Richard Brewster, Professor, Faculty of Science
- Rod McCormick, Professor and BC Regional Innovation Chair in Aboriginal Health
- Samta Dhanjal, Graduate Student Representative
- Star Mahara, Associate Professor, Nursing, and Chair of Senate Graduate Studies Committee
- Sukh Heer Matonovich, Manager, Graduate

## Studies and Student Research

- Tina Block, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts
- Tom Dickinson, Dean of Science
- Troy Fuller, Director, Research and Graduate Studies
- Will Garrett-Petts, Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

While the principal focus of the consultation was on strategies for successful implementation of the SRP, the task force also considered questions of research and graduate programming renewal. The consultation addressed the following five areas:

- Strategic planning and implementation, identifying unique areas of strength and opportunity, and alignment with University Priorities and TRU's Academic Plan.
- Best practices for governance, organization, and integrated academic support of research and graduate studies.
- Strategies for ensuring faculty renewal, recruitment, and retention.
- Strategies for advancing TRU's reputation and impact through research training, collaborations and partnerships.
- Resource requirements.

The Task Force worked with and advised the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, and through that Office is empowered to make recommendations to the Senate Research Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee of Senate, and the Provost's Office.

# The consultation process

## Creation of Task Force Website

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Review of key documents: SRP, Strategic Priorities, Academic Plan, Divisional Planning Documents, Strategic Research Plan Survey Consultation, the TRU Space Planning Study—Kamloops Campus; the Graduate Studies Internal Audit Report, Program Review Guidelines for Graduate Studies; Williams Lake research planning documents, and Open Learning research planning documents

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Convene Task Force: September 2017: Overview of mandate, objectives, key documents, initial questions, and identification of stakeholders and focus groups. Possible creation of subcommittees.

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Creation and distribution of faculty/student survey (to be approved by Task Force): Survey to be distributed October – November.

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Environmental Scan, SWOT analysis, identification of key issues

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November meeting

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Plans and update to be presented during the September Research Day.

Objective: to check in with research community re: whether we have identified the right key issues and whether we are consulting both fully and wisely

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Focus Group Meetings:

October 2017– January 2018

Invite presentations + dialogue; focus group meetings. Presentations and meetings recorded and loaded, along with key documents, onto the public Website.

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November meeting of Task Force:

Full Day review of data gathered to date.

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Internal Report to be prepared by Committee by March 2019. Site Visit by External Review Team toward the end of the winter 2019 semester. The reviewers will be invited to visit campus for two days to meet with key stakeholders, including members of the senior executive team, faculty members, administrative staff, faculty deans, student leaders, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and research associates. Final Report to be prepared by External Review Team (with support from Research Office staff) and submitted to Research Office by June 30, 2019.

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Presentation of Internal Report to Senate Research Committee, Graduate Studies Committee of Senate, Provost's Council, March - April 2019; followed by publication on research website, April 2019. Publication of external report following review by Senate Research Committee and Provost's Council. A Town Hall Meeting to report out on both the Internal Report and the External Review, August - September 2019.



# Consultation highlights

**C**onsultation Highlights: The following notes represent a digest of key points extracted by the Task Force from the 12 consultation meetings. For each meeting, participant comments were documented by three note-takers, with key responses identified as those represented by multiple participants and/or repeated in multiple meetings. Points of emerging consensus, along with the preliminary results of a faculty/student survey, were presented at the March 2018 University Town Hall meeting as meriting further discussion and consideration—and formed the starting point for the Task Force’s analysis and clustering of responses into the five principal areas of consideration.

During the Town Hall, the Committee solicited further feedback both oral and written, asking the 53 participants to consider and add to the points of emerging consensus by clustering the feedback into the five areas that defined the original terms of reference. The following five groupings provide verbatim feedback labeled to distinguish the Town Hall responses from the constituent stakeholder groups:

(1) Strategic planning and implementation, identifying opportunities for aligning strengths and opportunities with TRU’s Priorities, Academic Plan, and Space Planning

## Town Hall

- There should be more opportunities like UREAP and Research Apprenticeship without the limitations that they can only be done once or twice
- Creation of a Master’s of Arts program to continue tourism education. Currently tourism graduates are going into MSc program, which is difficult to accommodate non-science background students

## Community

- Relationships with the community are important

## Indigenous

- Indigenous learner’s research space, development of an Indigenous research ethics work space, Indigenous knowledge space-library and archive. Need to be able to access that information
- All of the Indigenous projects across campus are in one faculty (All my Relations, Coyote Project and Knowledge Makers)
- Research themes- “Aboriginal understanding”: move it along to “Indigenous Advancement” investment in rethinking where to next with this phrase and then collecting and sharing the stories so we have a virtual community

## Graduate Students

- Availability of space for graduate students to work is low (need space in close proximity to faculty supervisors). Might swing the student vote on where to go if one project offers office space and the other doesn’t
- Not enough space for students to work after hours
- Create a more prominent research culture, pride
- Research assistantships are important- offer opportunities to publish outside of your discipline: important component to be able to publish outside of thesis, create sense of contribution
- Supervisor/ student guidelines needed
- Statistics support is important resource issue we should be aware of

## Undergraduate Students

- More of a test to see if would enjoy doing grad school and a more research-based curriculum as opposed to course-based
- Integrate research experiences into the general curriculum
- Getting the information out there to more first- and second-year students, ambassadors to classrooms, etc.

## Graduate Program Coordinators

- Study space- we need to plan for the future and make sure there is enough. Programs call space ‘research space’ rather than ‘graduate

research space' so that future planning can include both graduate and undergraduate

### Full Professors, CRCs, and Research Directors

- Research mandate should be incorporated into all new graduate programs
- Successful research agendas are supported by graduate and PhD students, and this contribution cannot be undervalued by the university
- Research focus/ mandate imperative for new president
- Master of Arts program is long overdue and important for the new Dean and the faculty
- Need to reach meeting of minds between the tri-university to want to move forward with PhD- all about interest and drive of faculty involved
- It is challenging to get adjunct status at other universities and the tri-university would be beneficial and a high priority as a researcher
- Concerned moving as an institute that the only undergraduate students who will get the research experience are the top students. Like to see the way that research experience is embedded in the curriculum

### Open Learning

- More graduate programs, more options for OL. Could do a lot of micro graduate programs
- There are opportunities for research in Open and Distance Education practices and blended learning that could be expanded more if there were more bridging between OL and face-to-face faculty participating in these endeavors

### Librarians

- Space: more rooms to book, presentation space, library workshop space, more joint and collaborative space, quiet study space. Full capacity in main library. Do not want to stay in main library [the 1970 building]: aspirations of the future of graduate studies will not be met with current library.
- Three pillars for library: collections, services and spaces (individual & collective space) — need to have flexible plan for growth within these pillars

### TRUSU

- Dedicated research spaces for undergraduate

students. Have them located in areas where students can have access to faculty they're working with. Have tools necessary to work on particular things — systems, dedicated software, statistics programs available on more computers across campus

- Arts students aren't aware of research opportunities that are available to them. Make sure Arts faculty are promoting these opportunities
- A lot of value in both a curricular and co-curricular perspective on research opportunities
- Specializations needed for master's programs. ie., MBA does not have a specialization — finance, marketing, etc.
- Research centres on campus are not very visible. You don't hear about them after their public launch

(2) Best practices for governance, organization, and integrated academic support of research and graduate studies.

### Town Hall

- Support for graduate supervisors to hire teaching assistants to lecture in lower level courses
- As a research institution our chemistry lab is not equipped to run an honours program for chemistry students

### Community

- Research and classroom learning are not two separate things

### Indigenous

- Indigenous knowledge space — library, archive. Have some Secwepmec knowledge. Students, elders, everyone would benefit. Indigenous researchers, intersectional researchers, etc. need to be able to access this information. This information should be housed in a university.

### Graduate Students

- Financial stability is a big one. Teaching Assistantships would be important
- Academic supports that are necessary are very different between international and domestic students
- Predictable funding

## Undergraduate Students

- Time [for program completion]: culture around not taking 5 courses and taking longer to do your degree is a bit negative, take [fewer] classes to accommodate research — but that immediately excludes you from Dean's List
- Professors can only have so many students that they take on for research, so they're hesitant to let everyone know about it and have to turn down so many students

## Graduate Program Coordinators

- Creating academic supports. Examples: how to write or use the library at a graduate level, executive course, supervisory skills, more extensive orientation, etc.
- Build infrastructure for graduate programs
- Help with stats across all of the programs and ongoing support (workshops & drop-in center)
- Create teaching assistantships to support international students with their writing. Students are not accessing support from the writing centre.
- Graduate studies advisors [should be] centralized university-wide. Students could drop in and ask where to get help for certain things.
- Room for improvement in terms of structure in Graduate Studies Committee

## Full Professors, CRCs, and Research Directors

- Support staff for researchers and graduate programs is paramount to success and has been all but eliminated
- Provide more library resources for researchers and students
- Dedicated research space and infrastructure for faculty and students alike
- Department secretaries and administrators should be well trained [in research support]. There is a need for people who are well-versed in all levels
- Graduate students are the [means] to increase research capacity. Cannot get the top graduate students without something to offer them

## Early and Mid-Career Professors

- Support staff [needed] for researchers
- Library resources
- Contract related topics (collective agreement)

and infrastructure support for research engagement and retention

## Open Learning

- Explore what OLFM relationship should look like as part of the university. Bring online and in class faculty closer together to be seen as one faculty
- Representation of OL not on all councils. Ties are not as strong as they could be. Technology has to become the norm for any meeting to make it more inclusive. Huge distance campus: this has to be [considered] fundamental.
- Assimilation and recognition without categorization and division. Different delivery models but one is not superior over the other

## Librarians

- Resources: need specialized support for specific graduate programs. [We] don't have funding for specialized licenses and databases, ongoing funding is required (journals, etc., annual renewals)
- Thesis programs put more demand on library resources
- Stronger form of consultation should be included with all new programming
- Average university budget that goes into library funding = 4-4.5%; TRU is currently at 1.6%
- Specialized programs require specialized librarians
- Have the capacity to facilitate the [online data] repository
- [Need] to provide the supports and incentives needed to make taking on large-scale Undergraduate Research appealing and sustainable for instructional faculty- and making use of instructional support partners such as the library was identified as being part of the answer
- In addition to growing support for the increasing number of graduate programs, and recognizing an institutional need to better resource the library if we're truly to support campus research, and build collaborations to increase undergraduate research opportunities and capacity on campus

## TRUSU

- Library resources



## Services

- Someone in each faculty that knows the systems inside and out and are able to assist members within that faculty
- Dedicated research account is really helpful, helps the accountant be knowledgeable
- Institution needs to make a conscientious commitment to supporting research
- [Research] needs to be embraced as a shared opportunity for continued development
- [Need to develop a] sense of integrated responsibility for supporting research activity
- To what extent is research a part of the mandate of the university? This message hasn't fully been known throughout the university. [It is] going to take a long time to clarify roles, [and will] need a lot of buy-in from the deans

(3) Strategies for ensuring faculty renewal, recruitment, and retention:

### Town Hall

- Apply a diversity and equity lens to the [Consultation] report — [consider processes leading to] promotion to full [professor] and [introduce] merit awards

### Community

- Recommendation [funding] to provide release time for faculty to engage in research in the community
- Sabbatical time for faculty [provides opportunities] to be invited to community to do research

### Indigenous

- A pathway [needed] to be engaged at higher levels- bipartite, tripartite, opportunities for moving upwards. Have an intentional approach to grow Indigenous researchers to full professor
- Innovative ways of recruiting and retaining Indigenous faculty — being culturally appropriate in terms of tenure, promotion, etc. Look at it with a cultural lens as well.
- Who is the go-to person in Indigenous research and graduate studies at TRU? Somebody needs to call the circle together and have the skill to do that

## Graduate Students

- Not much motivation for a professor to put it out there for students to get involved in research. [It can be] a lot of extra work that they [professors] don't necessarily get anything from
- Need to get more faculty involved so it's not always the same people — and have more opportunities

### Full Professors, CRCs, and Research Directors

- Administrative functions of research have been downloaded to researchers, leaving little time for the actual research
- Overly complex administrative processes inhibit successful programs and creation of new programs

### Early and Mid-Career Professors

- Provide mentorship opportunities for faculty to connect with other researchers
- Faculty of Graduate Studies as a separate entity to assist with government lobbying, internal processes, program development, funding of graduate students, research engagement support and retention of faculty
- Maintaining faculty and school ownership of graduate studies is important
- Dedicated research time for engaged faculty members is required for success
- Start-up funds/ additional PD funds for new faculty to assist in supporting their research agenda at TRU — labs, disciplinary specific needs, ability to hire more research assistants, etc.
- Designated research time should be added to the Collective Agreement
- Start-up faculty club or centre, space to converge and collaborate as faculty
- Issue of bipartite and tripartite [faculty] — taking time off as a bipartite to do research is difficult

## Services

- Finding the right hiring process, develop some proper policy: e.g., have a guideline on how to bring post docs in, need to be proactive rather than reactive

(4) Strategies for advancing TRU's reputation and impact through research training, collaborations

and partnerships:

#### Town Hall

- Prioritizing graduate students as teaching assistants/ lab instructors. This provides funding to grad students and frees up time for instructors and associate professors who could be doing research with their extra time
- Create/ build physical research spaces (e.g., labs) for the social sciences and humanities
- Have graduate students' research offices in each building that houses departments with graduate programs
- Collective agreement issues: workload numbers between bipartite/ tripartite don't make sense: tripartite faculty end up teaching more upper level courses (more work). [They] need one day per week minimum blocked off for research time
- Develop a sustainable strategy that acknowledges and counts thesis supervision as part of teaching workload

#### Community

- TRU can help the community with mutually beneficial research projects by connecting researchers with community organizations
- Offer a half-day workshop to community on how research works as well as the opportunities. Clarifying that research does not exploit the clients- [explain] how ... research benefits the people we serve?
- What is research and what is legitimate knowledge and how do we drive community research away from the traditional way of doing research. There needs to be understanding from the community [about] what they want and what TRU can offer.
- Undergraduate research and community engagement are our advantages: the strength is there, we just have to leverage that
- What is knowledge? Where does that come from? What is legitimate knowledge?
- Quarterly meeting with all the communities, not for profits, etc. [Encourage] active facilitation of meeting and getting everyone in the same room to have dialogue on a regular basis
- Building momentum and demonstrating what this looks like. "Pop up" research. Get other organizations excited about it. Mini projects

will go a long way because they are legitimate.

- High level evaluation of impacts, not just outcomes
- Defining research in terms of liberal definitions — separating research from a box that others do and we don't do
- Historical strength from a grassroots organic level of the culture of undergraduate research is one of our advantages, along with community engagement. That strength is there and we need to continue to leverage that.

#### Indigenous

- Trying to get other parts of campus to understand what community-based research is, in particular Indigenous research
- [Develop] partnership agreements with Indigenous communities

#### Graduate Students

- Mentorship program works really well. First-year students getting hands on support from second-year students
- [Need] support with securing supervisors and how that happens
- Research supervision needed in some programs where there is a perception that not enough faculty are willing or able to supervise

#### Undergraduate Students

- [We sometimes] get more guidance from the student ambassadors than from a faculty member — more one on one, more relatable, follow up that takes place, more personal/ personalized. Positive experience, important aspect. Faculty pass on information to students to get in touch with ambassadors that they know. Ambassadors go over and beyond to make it possible to speak with the students. [Students are] able to ask questions that would not necessarily be comfortable asking professors.
- At the end of the day it has to be a professor that you have to make a connection with to get going. [The professor] plays a big role in getting the student to do research. Professors can bring in prior students to talk about their UREAP research.
- Intimidation factor is big — going to see students who have recently gone through the process is easier than approaching a prof, but

would like to see faculty push UREAP more.

- [Developing] skills in particular for some programs is most attractive part [of university education] as opposed to the CV building
- Want some undergraduate research opportunities to be formally recognized by the school, but when you do the extra stuff you can add it to another part of the application- [you can] show engagement and relationship with the school. Being able to put that you got a scholarship and were identified for that on your CV is what is hugely beneficial.
- Knowing about [research] in your first- and second-year: engagement at that point, [so you] can begin to differentiate yourself

#### Graduate Program Coordinators

- Graduate mentorship program is strong. More possibility for more mentors as programs grow
- Collaboration with industry is an important and key piece
- Consistent profiling of what workshops there are and better coordination for them- communication with students: send information in a way that can be added to Moodle.
- Students feel like they never have enough information on how to choose a supervisor
- Offer supervisor training- type sessions once or twice a year. Build it in that supervisors should have to go to one of the sessions. [The recent workshop was a] great information session, well attended, left feeling excited about it

#### Full Professors, CRCs, and Research Directors

- Undergraduate research has greatly improved and we are excelling
- Funding of graduate students needs to improve vastly
- Tuition waivers, scholarships, teaching assistantships, entrance scholarships all play a vital part in recruiting good students and we need to improve
- Tools that we have now could be improved: grad students are the tool, [and we] need access to top students

#### Early and Mid-Career Professors

- [Preserve] small university strengths- maintain and enhance the community aspect
- Funding for hiring more student research

assistants is key

#### Librarians

- Libraries are becoming more and more community-based. i.e., SFU launched a program to provide library access for not-for-profit organizations

#### TRUSU

- Post-graduation work experience: Co-op style program for Master's program
- Find a place for TRU to be really top of the line in our research, a niche research campus in BC

#### 5) Resource Requirements

#### Town Hall

- There should be more opportunities like UREAP and Research Apprenticeship without the limitations that they can only be done once or twice
- Creation of a Master's of Arts program to continue tourism education. Currently tourism graduates are going into MSc program, which is difficult to accommodate non-science background students
- Support for graduate supervisors to hire teaching assistants to lecture in lower level courses
- As a research institution our chemistry lab is not equipped to run an honours program for chemistry students
- Prioritizing graduate students as teaching assistants/ lab instructors. This provides funding to grad students and frees up time for instructors and associate professors who could be doing research with their extra time
- Create/ build physical research spaces (e.g., labs) for the social sciences and humanities
- Have graduate students' research offices in each building that houses departments with graduate programs
- Collective agreement issues: workload numbers between bipartite/ tripartite don't make sense: tripartite faculty end up teaching more upper level courses (more work). [They] need one day per week minimum blocked off for research time
- Develop a sustainable strategy that acknowledges and counts thesis supervision as part of teaching workload



## Community

- Recommendation [funding] to provide release time for faculty to engage in research in the community
- Sabbatical time for faculty [provides opportunities] to be invited to community to do research
- Quarterly meeting with all the communities, not for profits, etc. [Encourage] active facilitation of meeting and getting everyone in the same room to have dialogue on a regular basis

## Indigenous

- Indigenous learner's research space, development of an indigenous research ethics work space, Indigenous knowledge space—library and archive. Need to be able to access that information
- Indigenous knowledge space — library, archive. Have some Secwepmec knowledge. Students, elders, everyone would benefit. Indigenous researchers, intersectional researchers, etc. need to be able to access this information. This information should be housed in a university.
- A pathway [needed] to be engaged at higher levels- bipartite, tripartite, opportunities for moving upwards. Have an intentional approach to grow Indigenous researchers to full professor
- Innovative ways of recruiting and retaining Indigenous faculty- being culturally appropriate in terms of tenure, promotion, etc. Look at it with a cultural lens as well.

## Graduate Students

- Availability of space for graduate students to work is low (need space in close proximity to faculty supervisors). Might swing the student vote on where to go if one project offers office space and the other doesn't
- Not enough space for students to work after hours
- Supervisor/ student guidelines needed
- Statistics support is important resource issue we should be aware of
- Financial stability is a big one. Teaching Assistantships would be important
- Academic supports that are necessary are very different between international and domestic

students

- Predictable funding
- Mentorship program works really well. First-year students getting hands on support from second-year students
- [Need] support with securing supervisors and how that happens
- Research supervision needed in some programs where there is a perception that not enough faculty are willing or able to supervise

## Undergraduate Students

- Need to get more faculty involved so it's not always the same people--and have more opportunities
- Professors can only have so many students that they take on for research, so they're hesitant to let everyone know about it and have to turn down so many students
- Integrate research experiences into the general curriculum
- Knowing about [research] in your first- and second-year: engagement at that point, [so you] can begin to differentiate yourself
- More of a test to see if would enjoy doing grad school and a more research-based curriculum as opposed to course-based
- Getting the information out there to more first- and second-year students, ambassadors to classrooms, etc.
- Want some undergraduate research opportunities to be formally recognized by the school, but when you do the extra stuff you can add it to another part of the application — [you can] show engagement and relationship with the school. Being able to put that you got a scholarship and were identified for that on your CV is what is hugely beneficial.
- [Developing] skills in particular for some programs is most attractive part [of university education] as opposed to the CV building

## Graduate Program Coordinators

- Study space — we need to plan for the future and make sure there is enough. Programs call space 'research space' rather than 'graduate research space' so Creating academic supports. Examples: how to write or use the library at a graduate level, executive course, supervisory skills, more extensive orientation,

etc.

- Build infrastructure for graduate programs
- Help with stats across all of the programs and ongoing support (workshops & drop-in center)
- Create teaching assistantships to support international students with their writing. Students are not accessing support from the writing centre.
- Graduate studies advisors [should be] centralized university-wide. Students could drop in and ask where to get help for certain things.
- That future planning can include both graduate and undergraduate
- Graduate mentorship program is strong. More possibility for more mentors as programs grow
- Offer supervisor training- type sessions once or twice a year. Build it in that supervisors should have to go to one of the sessions. [The recent workshop was a] great information session, well attended, left feeling excited about it

#### **Full Professors, CRCs, and Research Directors**

- Research mandate should be incorporated into all new graduate programs
- Master of Arts program is long overdue and important for the new Dean and the faculty
- Concerned moving as an institute that the only undergraduate students who will get the research experience are the top students. Like to see the way that research experience is embedded in the curriculum
- Support staff for researchers and graduate programs is paramount to success and has been all but eliminated
- Provide more library resources for researchers and students
- Dedicated research space and infrastructure for faculty and students alike
- Department secretaries and administrators should be well trained [in research support]. There is a need for people who are well-versed in all levels
- Graduate students are the [means] to increase research capacity. Cannot get the Administrative functions of research has been downloaded to researchers, leaving little time for the actual research
- Overly complex administrative processes

inhibit successful programs and creation of new programs

- Cannot attract top graduate students without something to offer them
- Funding of graduate students needs to improve vastly
- Tuition waivers, scholarships, teaching assistantships, entrance scholarships all play a vital part in recruiting good students and we need to improve
- Tools that we have now could be improved: grad students are the tool, [and we] need access to top students

#### **Early and Mid Career Professors**

- Support staff [needed] for researchers
- Library resources
- Contract related topics (collective agreement) and infrastructure support for research engagement and retention
- Faculty of Graduate Studies as a separate entity to assist with government lobbying, internal processes, program development, funding of graduate students, research engagement support and retention of faculty
- Maintaining faculty and school ownership of graduate studies is important
- Dedicated research time for engaged faculty members is required for success
- Start-up funds/ additional PD funds for new faculty to assist in supporting their research agenda at TRU- labs, disciplinary specific needs, ability to hire more research assistants, etc.
- Designated research time should be added to the Collective Agreement
- Start-up faculty club or centre, space to converge and collaborate as faculty
- Issue of bipartite and tripartite [faculty]- taking time off as a bipartite to do research is difficult
- [Preserve] small university strengths- maintain and enhance the community aspect
- Funding for hiring more student research assistants is really key

#### **Open Learning**

- More graduate programs, more options for OL. Could do a lot of micro graduate programs

- There are opportunities for research in Open and Distance Education practices and blended learning that could be expanded more if there were more bridging between OL and face-to-face faculty participating in these endeavors
- Explore what OLFM relationship should look like as part of the university. Bring online and in class faculty closer together to be seen as one faculty

### Librarians

- Space: more rooms to book, presentation space, library workshop space, more joint and collaborative space, quiet study space. Full capacity in main library. Do not want to stay in main library [the 1970 building]: aspirations of the future of graduate studies will not be met with current library.
- Three pillars for library: collections, services and spaces (individual & collective space)- need to have flexible plan for growth within these pillars
- Resources: need specialized support for specific graduate programs. [We] don't have funding for specialized licenses and databases, ongoing funding is required (journals, etc., annual renewals)
- Thesis programs put more demand on library resources
- Average university budget that goes into library funding = 4-4.5%; TRU is currently at 1.6%
- Specialized programs require specialized librarians
- In addition to growing support for the increasing number of graduate programs, and recognizing an institutional need to better resource the library if we're truly to support

campus research, and build collaborations to increase undergraduate research opportunities and capacity on campus

- Libraries are becoming more and more community-based. i.e., SFU launched a program to provide library access for not-for-profit organizations

### TRUSU

- Dedicated research spaces for undergraduate students. Have them located in areas where students can have access to faculty they're working with. Have tools necessary to work on particular things — systems, dedicated software, statistics programs available on more computers across campus
- A lot of value in both a curricular and co-curricular perspective on research opportunities
- Specializations needed for master's programs. i.e., MBA does not have a specialization-finance, marketing, etc.
- Post-graduation work experience: Co-op style program for Master's program
- Library resources

### Services

- Someone in each faculty that knows the systems inside and out and are able to assist members within that faculty
- [Need to develop a] sense of integrated responsibility for supporting research activity
- Finding the right hiring process, develop some proper policy: e.g., have a guideline on how to bring post docs in with equitable pay and benefits. Need to be proactive rather than reactive

## Results of 2018 faculty/student survey

As part of the Consultation, and as a complement to the focus groups, discussions, and town hall meeting, in January 2018 faculty members, graduating undergraduate students and graduate students were invited to provide survey feedback on different aspects of research at TRU (see Appendix F). The Survey mirrored another distributed five years earlier, thus providing the Consultation Committee with an initial sense of how attitudes toward research at TRU had changed

since 2013.

The quantitative survey results produced important insights into the development of TRU's research culture from 2013 to 2018. Among faculty, 96% indicated that research was important to them professionally (+14%) and this belief was more strongly held as "very important" responses rose to 71% (+31%). The personal importance of research moderately increased for faculty to 93% (+4%) and students 90% (+7%). On the

question “are you actively engaged in research,” 81% of faculty (+15%) and 51% of students (-2%) responded in the affirmative. Seventy-two percent of faculty (+15%) and 59% of students (+12%) indicated that involvement in faculty research activities contributed greatly to student growth and development. The questions related to research support services highlighted the importance of continued support for students. Importantly, the survey results suggest a change in faculty priorities from a desire for internal seed funding and communications support in 2013 to increased individual research program support and grant and proposal writing support in 2018.

The following analysis provided by TRU’s Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness examines the qualitative (open-ended) responses to the 2018 survey. A total of 324 respondents participated in one or more of the nine qualitative portions of the survey, providing a total of 1,250 comments. Each comment was analyzed and categorized by question into common topics using a general inductive approach. Some comments were categorized using more than one topic. Upon review and analysis, it became apparent that similar topics were present and consistent across all questions and respondent groups (faculty and students). In order to produce a report that would facilitate discussion on the subject area, it was determined that the similar topics easily lent themselves as sub-themes which could be organized major themes. Sub-themes and comments could be highlighted for faculty and students separately. This is the approach that was taken.

Efforts were made to reflect the percent of respondents (faculty and student, undergraduate and graduate, domestic and international) in the

number of comments highlighted under each theme and sub-theme. As well, in order to include as many “voices” as possible, efforts were made to choose comments from different respondents. All efforts were made to be unbiased in the analysis of the comments and the writing of the report.

#### **Representative comments from faculty:**

*“Research impacts all aspects of TRU. It helps grow TRU’s reputation, regionally, nationally, and internationally; it provides many opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students... it brings a tremendous amount of money to the community, and it offers solutions to pressing needs of the community.”*  
*“...I also greatly value the opportunities that research provides to our students. It is probably the most effective way in which they can gain practical experience and develop the critical thinking skills to really exceed beyond university.”*

#### **Representative comments from students:**

*“I felt professors who were involved in research shared greater knowledge and brought more value to my learning.”*  
*“Research and teaching are closely related at TRU, as many professors are involved in their own research as well. I feel this bolsters their teaching.”*

The four major themes identified from the qualitative responses were:

- **Recognizing the Importance of Research**
- **Supporting Research**
- **Growing Research**
- **Becoming a Centre of Research Excellence**

Sub-themes are listed for faculty and students separately or listed together when the theme was shared by both respondent groups. (See Appendix F for the full report on survey data.)



## RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

### Faculty

Research and *teaching* are mutually beneficial

Research is my passion

### Students

Research and *learning* are mutually beneficial

Research provides relevant learning opportunities

Research helps me reach my goals

### Shared

Research is beneficial to society

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH

### Faculty

Reduce teaching loads

Improve administrative support

### Students

Improve recognition

### Shared

Increase funding and grant monies

Expand mentorship opportunities

Create dedicated research spaces

## GROWING RESEARCH

### Shared

Cultivate research expertise

Build new graduate programs

Advance partnerships and collaborations

Raise awareness of research contributions

## BECOMING A CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

### Faculty

### Students

Fostering better opportunities for students

### Shared

Strengthening our reputation

Leading local and regional innovation

Positively impacting our communities:

# Conclusions and recommendations

The preceding sections of this report are designed to speak for themselves. By quoting individuals directly and extensively, we are aiming to give voice to the full range of input received. The following conclusions and recommendations reflect the Committee's synthesis and elaboration of the comments, suggestions, and critique offered. The Committee presents these conclusions and recommendations as specific calls for action — and as a guide for updating and refreshing the university's Strategic Research Plan.

## 1. Strategic Planning and Implementation, Identifying Unique Areas of Strength and Opportunity, and Alignment with University Priorities and TRU's Academic Plan.

While the importance of peer-review and publication remain acknowledged as constants in maintaining legitimacy and reputation, the Committee heard advocacy for a broader conception of research that values and promotes creative inquiry, practice-led research, knowledge creation through theory building and the interpretative arts. We also saw evidence of a remarkable increase (as measured over the last five years) in those recognizing the importance of research to the continued development of TRU's mission. The shared aspiration (among students and faculty, but also among staff and administration) to become recognized as a centre of research excellence marks a significant shift in the University's research culture.

Some discussion during the consultation focused on the TRUFA Collective Agreement, particularly whether the guidelines for tenure and promotion were consistent across departments, schools, and divisions, and whether the provisions for movement between tripartite and bipartite faculty designations were well understood and supported by transparent administrative processes. In addition to the five areas of research concentration detailed in the University's Strategic Research Plan, a new or renewed interest was expressed regarding the importance of undergraduate research, community-engaged and community-driven research, Indigenous research, health research, and the pos-

sibilities emerging from the Interior University Research Coalition (especially in the area of research on disaster management and disaster response).

- The Committee Recommends continued investment in and development of the Interior University Research Coalition (TRU, UNBC, and UBCO) as a regional engine of research, research training, and graduate program coordination and development. (See Appendix G)
- The Committee Recommends increased institutional support for innovative graduate programming, noting the Faculty of Arts' proposed Masters in Human Rights and Social Justice as an example with the potential to advance community-driven and engaged research, to create enhanced student research training internships, to strengthen and expand Indigenous research practices, and to bridge into allied academic areas such as Law, Tourism, Creative/Critical Inquiry, and disciplines exploring Community Health and Quality of Life
- The Committee Recommends that access to participation in research be considered an equity issue for students, faculty, staff and administrators—that the creation and co-creation of new knowledge and research-informed practices be encouraged through curricular and co-curricular opportunities; through enhanced student training and faculty mentoring; through enhanced recognition of applied research in the community; and through a review of University policies, including collective agreements, to ensure equitable access to research opportunities and equitable recognition for/evaluation of research achievements.

## 2. Best Practices for Governance, Organization, and Integrated Academic Support of Research and Graduate Studies.

There is consensus that we need to champion Research-informed Learning at all levels. Consistently, undergraduate students identified the desire to engage in hands-on, meaningful forms of academic inquiry; and faculty expressed commitment to integrating Research-informed Learning—typically through a project approach and an inquiry-based

approach to learning—into the general curriculum. Community members outside the University indicated that, from their perspective, “research” and “in-class research” should not be understood as separate or necessarily separable. A consistent refrain throughout the consultations and from virtually all stakeholders: that the culture of undergraduate research and associated community engagement is one of the advantages at TRU.

- The Committee Recommends that a signature research experience be integrated into the undergraduate curriculum for all students as a graduation requirement.
- The Committee Recommends that we intentionally build and support more graduate programs and embed research within.
- The Committee Recommends consideration of more flexible pathways for learners through multiple delivery models, leveraging the expertise of open learning staff and faculty to help build research into the design of these programs.
- The Committee Recommends consideration of how research could support the design of micro-credentials, personalized learning pathways and the ethical use of learning analytics in supporting excellence in teaching and learning.

The Committee heard loud and clear that the current administrative and clerical supports for research are unevenly distributed and often found insufficient. There was consensus that the enterprise of research at TRU should not require individual faculty members to become experts in managing the campus services involved in supporting research. Faculty administrative offices, human resources, Finance, Purchasing, the registrar, Facilities and IT services were identified as highly professional, collegial, and willing to engage, but that the protocols currently in place frequently end up downloading the gathering of information, the preparation and submission of web requisitions and forms, and project management responsibilities onto faculty members. This situation typically results in shared frustration, for with few exceptions, faculty members are not using the forms and online systems regularly enough to become expert users; and support staff are repeatedly sought out to repeat instructions already given or shared via

workshops months earlier. The Committee heard how a realignment of service areas to support research as an institutional strategic priority would enhance research as a shared enterprise.

- The Committee Recommends that expertise in supporting research be evenly distributed among faculties and schools, with qualified support staff familiar with the disciplinary research needs of both faculty and students well identified and available.
- The Committee Recommends that service units evaluate their current processes, work with faculty and schools to coordinate efforts, and seek to take on the co-management of requested services while moving the role of the researcher to that of a client.
- The Committee Recommends that TRU review existing policies and systems with the goal of creating an environment that invites and celebrates new knowledge creation and knowledge sharing for all TRU employees and students.

The Committee fully understands that graduate programming must be committed to excellence and built upon a research foundation, with students supervised by faculty with active research programs. It is also understood that the Office of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee of Senate needs to work with each faculty or school to identify governance roles and responsibilities as new programs are developed, including areas where increased administrative and teaching support is required.

- The Committee Recommends continued attention to academic rigor and teaching excellence when approving faculty as graduate supervisors and associate supervisors.
- The Committee Recommends increased supports and resources for supervisors, including further guidelines, mentoring workshops, and incentives to encourage faculty to serve as supervisors.
- The Committee Recommends increased support for graduate programs, especially for coordinators in handling issues arising between students and supervisors.
- The Committee Recommends consideration of an Ombudsperson position or role to facilitate dispute resolution and consistency in decision making and equity within and across programs.

- The Committee Recommends improved academic supports for international students, particularly related to knowledge and skills in reviewing the academic readings and articulating ideas in writing.
- The Committee Recommends that TRU conduct a study of best practices in graduate education governance and policy, with the aim of ensuring the graduate studies area is well positioned to support future growth.

### 3. Strategies for Ensuring Faculty Renewal, Recruitment, and Retention.

The Committee heard repeatedly of the need to see increased public commitment to research. The Committee listened to cases where faculty efforts were not effectively championed and how the culture of research at TRU needs to be more effectively promoted and celebrated within faculties.

All members of the University community are encouraged to work in a more concerted way, with faculty, chairs, deans, Advancement, HR, the Library, Finance, Purchasing, secretarial and administrative support staff, senior management, and others taking true ownership of research as an institutional priority. Without a university-wide, conscious and public commitment, it is argued, we will be unable to nurture a sustainable research culture.

One of the first steps is to remove infrastructure impediments by providing adequate dedicated research space; appropriate workloads responsive to funded research needs; hiring practices that, where appropriate, prioritize research excellence as a key criterion for faculty recruitment; and greater departmental and divisional expertise and familiarity with research among those directly supporting faculty and students.

- The Committee Recommends that recruitment and retention of quality researchers be enhanced by routinely providing or increasing access to start-up funds, laboratory/research space (if needed and even if shared), and protected time for research and course development at initial appointment.
- The Committee Recommends that chairs, deans, and senior administrators lead by example through their active engagement in

research and scholarship, and the regular promotion of research opportunities within faculties and schools.

- The Committee Recommends that consideration be given to the formal recognition of time devoted to graduate student research supervision and undergraduate research mentoring.

### 4. Strategies for Advancing TRU's Reputation and Impact through Research Training, Collaborations and Partnerships.

There is considerable consensus among both faculty and students that undergraduate research remains an area of significant strength and opportunity well aligned with the University's mandate and history. Community members and faculty have identified community-engaged and community-driven research practice as historic strengths of TRU; and they link this to a grassroots organic development of undergraduate research at the university. Further, the "Traditional Foundations" of TRU's Strategic Plan situates community engagement alongside such interests as Indigenous education, scholarly research and creative activity. The University's Knowledge Makers program was singled out as prime example of how a focus on student research as "knowledge making" achieves excellence by linking research-informed learning, the creation of a university-based learning community, and effective community engagement beyond the university.

- The Committee Recommends using this consensus as an opportunity to further leverage ongoing opportunities at the undergraduate level and as potential opportunities for graduate students by the way of masters-level co-op programming and integration of internship opportunities.
- The Committee Recommends further development of student research training, with the aim of providing equitable access to "research-informed learning" experiences to all students (see Appendix H, Report on Research-informed Learning. See also Appendix I, the student curated inksheddings gathered at the February 2018 symposium on undergraduate research).
- The Committee Recommends making Research-informed Learning an institutional priority, with the aim of establishing a national



profile for TRU as a leader in undergraduate research.

While it is clear that community-driven and community-engaged research are seen as areas of considerable strength and activity at TRU, some researchers have expressed concern about the need to develop a critical mass of expertise, a shared understanding of CBR methodologies, and the institutional supports needed to advance our research profile in this area. In particular, the Committee notes a desire to achieve the rigor that may produce an impact that is recognized more broadly (e.g., by funding agencies). Community-driven and engaged research can have a substantive impact on the Kamloops area, but such research will do more to enhance the reputation of the University and of individual faculty if it is translated and shared with the broader research community.

- The Committee Recommends that the Research Office take the lead—by expanding its Knowledge Mobilization and Student Research capacities—in working with faculty, students, and community-based researchers to conduct research that can be shared more broadly than the immediate community, ensuring impact locally, nationally, and internationally via peer-reviewed venues.

The University's role in enterprise creation and partnership development remains a key area of interest, one intimately connected to development of research contract opportunities with industry and business, and increasingly relevant to the development of the Interior University Research Coalition and its association with the Province's network of community accelerators and research incubators. Despite the importance of this area, and despite the vitality of the programming offered off campus by Kamloops Innovation and on campus by The Generator, the University's innovation agenda received little discussion or feedback during the consultation process.

One of the key elements of the innovation cycle is the translation of ideas to action through testing and prototyping. Incubation spaces, such as at Kamloops Innovation, especially if more closely linked to TRU's Trades & Technology and Business divisions, provide the necessary testing ground

for commercialization and enterprise creation. Coupled with a social incubator, the United Way's XChangeLab, the University has an opportunity to further cultivate community-driven research and promote social innovation (See Appendix J). Existing partnerships with Kamloops Innovation and United Way's proposed XChangeLab give TRU a significant competitive advantage that is the envy of other universities: the opportunity to co-locate community-driven research both on campus and in the community.

- The Committee Recommends a focused effort to better publicize the role of enterprise creation and partnership development through an enhanced online presence, through targeting increased success in securing research contracts, and through a further consultation on and discussion of the University's Innovation Strategy, Innovation@TRU (see Appendix K).
- The Committee Recommends a rearticulation and circulation of the goals of Innovation@TRU: to provide pathways to small city and regional innovation and cultivate participation in the Interior innovation ecosystem by:
  - Promoting technological and social innovation, and social enterprise
  - Germinating ideas that lead to commercialization and the creation of new enterprises
  - Developing research partnerships with community partners
  - Sharing research infrastructure and engagement spaces
  - Enabling knowledge exchanges

The Committee also heard about the specific concerns of Indigenous researchers working with and for community: about the need to address issues raised by the University's ethics review processes; about the "ownership" of data; about the need to better understand and respect community autonomy, traditions, and protocols; about the need to better align Finance and Purchasing procedures with community expectations, particularly in making sure that Indigenous community partners are compensated for work and participation in a timely manner.

Initiated at the request of TRU's Canada Research Chair in Indigenizing Higher Education, a second consultation meeting with Indigenous faculty and administrators was convened in January, 2019: the aim was to explore further these issues, while recognizing that Indigenization of the academy is very much an ongoing conversation (See Appendix L). Discussion was wide-ranging, but included the need for decisions to be made around the keeping of knowledge, about the different levels of knowledge, and on understanding the different ways appropriate for delivering or sharing Indigenous knowledge. It was emphasized that researchers and ethical practices must be seen, heard, and witnessed in the community—and that Indigenous representation be included at key decision-making levels, especially the Research Ethics Board. It was also acknowledged that existing groundwork in these areas has been developed elsewhere, including the national conversations with Indigenous researchers and communities informing the Tri-Agency guidelines (TCPS 2, Chapter 9, "Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada").

The following recommendations are necessarily preliminary in nature, meant to highlight emergent concerns, to celebrate areas of success, and to create a framework for further discussion and action.

- The Committee Recommends that led by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, in close consultation with Indigenous faculty, elders, staff, students, community members, and administrators, the University commit to ongoing discussions and policy development related to Indigenous research.
- The Committee Recommends continued financial support for the highly successful Knowledge Makers program, with the aim of expanding the program regionally and nationally through SSHRC's Partnership Program.
- The Committee Recommends that new protocols and policies be put into place to facilitate the payment of elders and Indigenous community members who help in faculty research so that community participation is recognized in a timely, respectful, and culturally appropriate manner.
- The Committee Recommends that an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens be integrated as a given for all decision-making, policy development, hiring, research, and program development.

## 5. Resource Requirements

It was noted that, at present, the University invests less than 1% of its total budget for the indirect and direct support of research through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Similarly, increased funding for the Library was identified as a resource need, and that the Library's current funding level at just above 1/3 of the national average is not viable to advance or sustain research activity for students and faculty. The Committee agrees with The Canadian Library Association's 2014 report, *The Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives*, a response written in consultation with the Royal Society's Expert Panel, which states that "the digital revolution has transformed academic libraries and their services. Academic libraries are becoming much more about collaboration and co-learning than silent study halls of the past. The primary role of libraries continues to be access and provision of information. There is increasing emphasis on combining traditional access to physical and e-resources with teaching, learning and social spaces that support collaborative learning. Likewise, research questions no longer consist of quick facts but more frequently represent complex, sophisticated questions that reflect a shift in how universities are preparing students" (p. 7).

- To meet increasing demands, especially around graduate programming, undergraduate research training, community engagement, partnership development, and the expansion of Library resources, the Committee Recommends creation of a flexible plan for growth with respect to the development of research groups and centres, labs, and graduate student research space; the acquisition of research equipment; and the enhancement of Library collections, services and space. Increased graduate programming generally and, more specifically, interest in more thesis-based graduate programs requires increased funding to research and to the University Library.
- While recognizing that the funding of academic libraries is at the discretion of the academic institution, the Committee Recommends that

the percentage of University funding for the TRU Library be increased incrementally until it reaches the system norm of 4%.

A very clear theme emerged regarding the need for research space, where student researchers can work closely with faculty supervisors. Without student research space in close proximity to faculty, the student experience is impoverished and supervision becomes difficult if not impossible for faculty.

- The Committee Recommends that all research-active faculty be invited into a planning process through which space needs can be discussed/requested, a process that will give funding priority to supporting student research training and faculty research programs.
- Toward this end, the Committee further Recommends that research space be identified as a top funding and planning priority when considering changes to current space usage and the construction of new buildings.
- There is a long-standing consensus on campus that graduate student research training space needs to be established in close proximity to supervising faculty. The Committee supports the University's Campus Space Plan and Recommends renewed commitment to the initial target of doubling existing graduate student research space, making the development of such space an integral aspect of all new building and renovations (see Appendix L, Recommendations for Research Space, Campus Space Plan).

A critical point repeatedly asserted during the consultation meetings and reflected in this report is the shared understanding that the University has many more students that want to take part in research than we have resources to support full participation. Similarly, we have many more faculty who want to engage students in their research than we have the resources to support such activities.

- The Committee Recommends that TRU identify student participation in research as an equity issue, and that we increase inclusion by further developing curricular and co-curricular strategies that scaffold Research-informed Learning.
- The Committee Recommends that the pro-

posed expansion of knowledge mobilization and student research capacities be allocated new funding of 1 FTE allowing for a combination of staff and faculty fellows to be funded to work with the Office and with faculties on (1) the training of undergraduate researchers, (2) the creation of new knowledge about undergraduate research and community-driven / community-engaged research, and (3) the integration of URs into community-based research generally.

- The Committee Recommends that funding currently supporting faculty recognition for research training be increased in proportion to demand, with support provided to all PIs receiving externally refereed grants of one year or greater in duration.

## List of Appendices

- [Appendix A: Annual Accountability Report 2017-18](#)
- [Appendix B: Annual Accountability Report 2016-17](#)
- [Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding between UNBC, TRU, and UBCO](#)
- [Appendix D: \(Link to CURN site when complete\)](#)
- [Appendix E: Memorandum of Understanding between The Office of Research and Graduate Studies and United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo](#)
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Thompson Rivers University  
805 TRU Way  
Kamloops, BC V2C 0C8  
[tru.ca/research](https://tru.ca/research)

