

CONSULTATION REPORT

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INTEGRATED PLANNING & EFFECTIVENESS

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Collaboration and Supporting Community are key to a positive TRU community impact

In March 2019, Thompson Rivers University started conducting consultations, through *Envision TRU*, in an effort to inform a new vision for the institution. This process—which aims to be as transparent, inclusive, and authentic as possible—is based on the idea of shared learning and will continue to operate until the end of March 2020. The following report is a summary of responses to the third consultation question, and presents information regarding participation, top thoughts, and key actions.

Thoughtexchange is an online platform that brings people together to anonymously share and communicate thoughts about a given subject and rank those that have already been submitted by others. This exchange (May 27 to June 21) asked participants:

What does a positive TRU community impact look like? Describe the community and relationship.

In total, 77 students, faculty, and staff participated in this event (Figure 1). Fifty-five thoughts were shared and contributed to the discussion, while 1016 rankings provided insight into community agreement regarding those issues and ultimately formed the basis for the key actions (Figure 2). The largest group of participants was staff/admin (37), followed by on-campus faculty members (13).

Figure 1. Participants

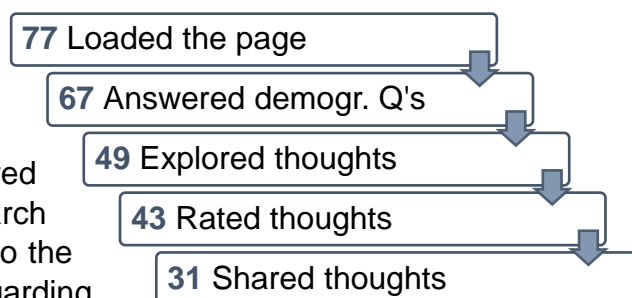
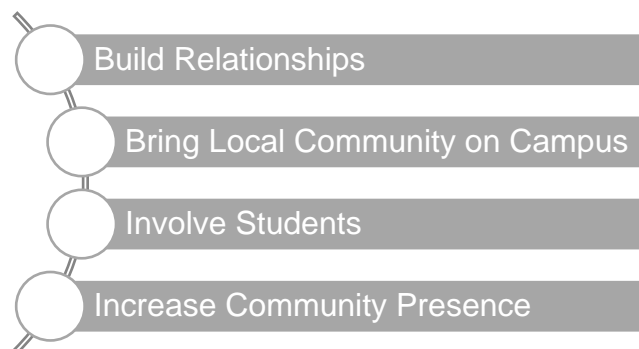
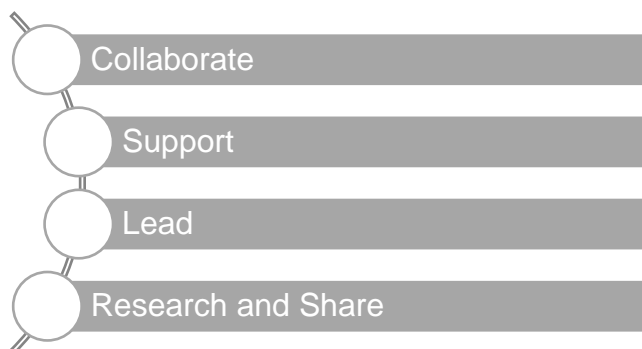


Figure 2. Key Actions



Top Thoughts

The top two thoughts from this exchange were:

“working collaboratively with the community to solve issues in our own backyard. TRU is uniquely positioned to invent and scale solutions working along side of community partners to build a stronger community.”

“Having strong relationships between Faculty/Staff/Students. Makes the campus more comfortable.”

Events & Research

A frequency analysis (Figure 3) of terms, within the 55 thoughts that were shared, revealed that community events and research were a central focus of this discussion.

Figure 3. Word Cloud



Diverse Perspectives

While participants generally seemed to agree that working collaboratively and supporting the community were the top priorities, what this looked like in practice varied by stakeholder groups. For example, top thoughts for staff/admin members emphasized sharing knowledge in the community and building relationships on-campus, while on-campus faculty members tended to be more general in their ratings.

To read all of the top thoughts and explore each of the key actions from this exchange, please visit the [online report](#), provided by Thoughtexchange.

Key Actions

Collaborate

Collaboration was discussed as being key in creating a positive community. Participants emphasized having a reciprocal relationship with the community and having more opportunities to work with the community. In addition, collaboration and open discussion between faculty and students could strengthen the on-campus community.

“Community partnerships should be easy to create. Processes and approvals need to be efficient and easy to navigate to initiate and carry out community partnerships. Opportunities can be missed.”

“(…) OL students and OLFMs should be empowered to take part in the same great collaborations as Kamloops student/faculty – but in a much wider community.”

Lead

Many participants recognized that becoming a leader in the community is important. They expressed the significance of TRU sharing their expertise with the community. Having innovative technology and programs were also recognised as key to TRU becoming a leader in education.

“Working with municipal governments to share knowledge and research to increase sustainability (….) We have expertise to share.”

“People would look to TRU for leadership. When city council or school board are wondering what to do about something, they would naturally think of consulting with TRU.”

Support

Most participants agreed that TRU should support and reflect the needs of the local community. Some suggested this could be done by partnering with stakeholders, empowering First Nations Communities, and giving back to the local community.

“TRU can support, uplift, and empower First Nations Communities by following principles of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (….)”

“Partnering financially with our clinical practice stakeholders in the community to improve their environmental space and/or workplace resources (….) show how much TRU values the community partnership.”

Research and Share

Conducting research in the local community and about the communities’ interests was a key topic among discussions. In addition, those research findings may possibly be shared with the community. Participants suggested it should be more visible what TRU’s faculty and students are doing with research.

“Involving local industry and government professionals in cooperative research and online education event (….)”

“(…) Students are the heart of TRU & providing enhanced research training opportunities integrated with the community needs showcases the strength of TRU.”

Key Actions (cont.)

Build Relationships

Participants generally agreed that building relationships was important to having a positive community impact. Relationships were identified as vital for the community on campus, locally, and globally. Participants tended to agree that connections with the local community and businesses would increase sustainability.

“Building partnerships with local businesses that foster future careers for graduates (...)”

“Feeling like part of the Whole University, not just some-one in a Department. It is not often that Staff get to mix and feel like part of a Community (...)”

Involve Students

Students getting more involved in the community was recognized as important for the local economy. Some suggested ways of increasing students’ involvement were through more research, field opportunities, and host family programs.

“More mobility or field school opportunities across the discipline. TRU students learning and working in and with communities regionally, nationally, globally.”

“A positive community impact means that we are creating global citizens that we are proud of.”

Bring Local Community on Campus

Increasing the amount of events on campus was observed to be important. Participants agreed that there should be more ways for the local community to be involved on campus. Emphasis was placed on the campus being welcoming for the public.

“(...) TRU can provide access to first class resources and events that reach beyond core programs. Professional and academic conferences, notable guest speakers, and events that bring people to the campus provide high value.”

“(...) TRU should be so enmeshed in the community that everyone feels welcome on campus (...)”

Increase Community Presence

Another way that participants observed TRU could have a positive impact on the community was by being more involved in local community events. This included suggestions of increasing sponsorship of events or sports teams, and having a stronger presence at events.

“TRU would have a strong presence at community events. Wherever there is a popular community event, TRU would be there in some way - - even Ribfest!”

“Sponsor, Participate in Cultural and Sports Events. TRU could be active supporter of community events (...)”