



**THOMPSON
RIVERS
UNIVERSITY**



FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

SEPTEMBER 2016

On behalf of the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Board of Governors, welcome to Kamloops. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in a public discourse on the opportunities and challenges facing British Columbia.

Education is one of the best long-term investments we can make in our children and our communities. A vigorous, innovative post-secondary education system ensures BC's citizens and communities will thrive in our rapidly changing, globalized, knowledge-based and entrepreneurial society.



Acknowledgement

THE MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION'S latest support for TRU and our students—\$7.03 million in funding toward our new Industrial Training and Technology Centre (ITTC)—will enable TRU to expand our trades and technology programs by an additional 550 full-time equivalent student spaces (FTEs). Through this funding, TRU will provide students with hands-on, state-of-the-art training, and ensure our communities have the skilled tradespeople that are essential to BC's prosperity. TRU is also grateful for the ministry's applying the Economic Stability Mandate to our recent collective bargaining mandate, which allowed us to give much-needed salary increases while remaining able to maintain programs and services for our students.

Advancing Engineering & Technology

Universities and TRU in particular support local business and industry, and the growth of the BC Interior economy by developing local talent and providing the next generation of highly qualified and skilled citizens so critical to the global knowledge economy. Toward this goal, TRU is developing a fully accredited engineering degree program with a focus on software, computer and electrical engineering.

TRU has the capacity and the ability to create a truly innovative and applied engineering program, unique to this region. Building on partnerships with our rapidly growing local technology industry, we wish to expand our existing two-year Engineering Transfer program to a four-year degree. The program will be grounded by co-operative education (co-op) and other work-integrated learning opportunities—developed in collaboration with industry professionals and responsive to the needs of the technology sector—to create a transformative educational experience for our students.

At full capacity, our cluster of IT engineering degrees will contribute significantly to projected labor market needs, accommodating 350 students in the four-year program. Graduates from TRU Engineering will have extensive hands-on, real-world experience gained through both curriculum learning and co-op placements. These graduates will become the next generation of leaders and professionals in Kamloops and the surrounding region, adding to BC's talent pool and capacity for innovation and economic diversity.

Our goal is to have programming and student awards in place to support current first-year engineering transfer students in completing a four-year TRU engineering degree in computer, software or electrical engineering. We have been able to internally fund the first two years and we need the government to fund the third and fourth years.

Advancing Innovative Health Education

TRU aims to address Western Canada's critical nurse shortages by providing knowledgeable, innovative professionals educated to meet the unique needs of rural, aging and Aboriginal populations. We have proposed a new Nursing and Population Health building which will increase TRU's capacity by 100 FTEs and make a substantial contribution to identified gaps in health care in BC.

TRU produces highly skilled health care professionals through its nationally recognized School of Nursing and health-based programs. Nearly 800 students prepare to enter the health care industry every year in TRU's Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Respiratory Therapy Diploma, Health Care Assistant Certificate and other health care programs and courses, but more spaces are needed. TRU currently has to turn away 77% of applicants due to space restrictions. Meanwhile the demand for nursing and health-care professionals is expected to outstrip the supply of workers in BC in 2019, with an additional 42,250 workers needed by 2022.

The Nursing and Population Health building will provide the highest level of access for students, comply with best practices and incorporate responsive, state-of-the-art learning technologies. Our students will graduate with applied skills in patient-centred care, inter-professional coordination and safety, and with increased cultural competency.

These graduates will have a direct impact on the health and well-being of our region, including the Aboriginal communities of the Thompson-Okanagan. TRU collaborates with these communities to create nursing and health-based programming specific to their needs, and cultivate health care professionals from within those communities. But we need additional, new, modern space to expand program offerings in specialties such as critical, emergency, perioperative, intensive, cardiac, senior, rural and home care nursing.

Our goal is to begin construction to accommodate September 2019 occupancy.

New Models for Universities Require a New Funding Model

The present post-secondary funding model is about 15 years old. It is outdated and insufficient to meet the evolving needs of our students and our region. Block grant funding appears to have been generally static for 12 years and decreased recently. Much has changed in the past 15 years; for example, the total number of students has significantly increased.

Diversity of Mandates

New universities have been created, leading to a broad diversity of university mandates including TRU's mandates of open access and comprehensive programming and research. TRU serves multigenerational university-goers as well as first-generation students, including "rurban" students, Aboriginal students, first-generation students from immigrant communities, working students, mature students, students with

disabilities, students who are care givers, and geographically isolated students. TRU has a campus in Williams Lake and five regional offices. As we recruit, retain and graduate more students, we contribute to their success and the sustainability of their communities and we also address BC's highly qualified personnel (HQP) gap provincially. The value added to the Interior is priceless.

Different Students, Different Needs

It is generally acknowledged that students who attend an open access university often require more attention. An access university must spend more per FTE to recruit students, more on retention, transitions (high school to university and university to employment), orientation, advising, remedial learning centers, counselling, etc. But BC's funding allocation to TRU predates its creation by about five years and does not take into account its needs.





Student Support Has Changed

New kinds of student supports and services are expected today compared to 15 years ago: digital admission and registration, co-ops, internships, mentor programs, work study, study abroad, summer programs (to reduce time to graduation), career services, service learning, volunteer learning, web-based learning management systems, social media support, entrepreneurship, innovation and startup companies support, accommodation for disabilities, and recently, sexual violence services, mental health and wellness services and importantly, the recommendations to universities in the Truth and Reconciliation Report. Most of these supports and services require additional, highly-trained personnel.

Pedagogy Has Changed

The student engagement revolution, inquiry/problem-based learning, case studies, web-based learning, “blended learning”, experiential learning, work-integrated learning, internationalization and learning and teaching technologies are just a few examples of the massive changes that have taken place inside and outside the classroom in the past 15 years.

Enterprise Management Has Changed

Also noted are the dynamic growth of IT demands, safety concerns, environmental issues, enterprise risk analysis and management, sustainability, institutional planning and analysis (data), governance issues, union bargaining mandates and PSEC, Freedom of Information laws and requests and Personal Privacy Information (PPI) laws, copyright issues, intellectual property laws, economic innovation, Government Reporting Entity, Public Services Accounting Standards, and reporting requirements of governments.

Conclusion

TRU is dedicated to excel at all of these features of a modern university but the outdated 15-year-old funding model no longer allows us to offer a full-service university to our region and our province. The funding formula and the funding allocation in support of BC’s PSE institutions are long overdue for modernization and reinvestment.

We agree with our students in the belief that BC’s funding model for its post-secondary education system must evolve with the evolving needs of the province’s students, communities and institutions. We call upon the province to reevaluate the funding model for post-secondary education.

Alan Shaver
President & Vice-Chancellor

Paul Dagg
Board Chair



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