

## **RETURN TO CAMPUS**

Since the last board meeting, there have been new developments in the COVID pandemic caused by the unexpected emergence of a highly transmissible variant — Omicron.

Despite uncertainty in some quarters regarding what impact Omicron would have on society, TRU along with several other institutions in BC continued with plans to open in January to in-person learning. This approach was recommended by BC's Chief Provincial Health Officer on two separate occasions.

TRU was mindful that some were uneasy about the plans to re-open. However, we considered local transmission rates and balanced potential risks caused by Omicron against the academic needs and mental health of large numbers of students, and concluded that keeping with our original commitment to widespread in-person learning was appropriate.

TRU continues to abide by a full suite of protective protocols, including mask-wearing in classrooms and public spaces and requirements to show proof of vaccination in some venues and for specific, non-work purposes. We have also brought in high-capacity air filtration units. We continue to use a variety of channels to inform our community about the need for continued vaccination, vigilance, and caution while proceeding with essential work and learning.

We continue to monitor vaccination status in our community. To date more than 95 per cent of TRU students, faculty, and staff have declared they are fully vaccinated, a remarkable number that will go a long way to reduce the impact of COVID on our campuses. TRU's COVID rapid testing clinic for asymptomatic individuals remains operational at both our campuses.

Lastly, while data does not indicate post-secondary institutions contribute significantly to community transmission, it is important to recognize that TRU is feeling the impact of Omicron's presence in our community. Individual departments and teams are seeing increased absences caused by Omicron infections, and all teams have been instructed to develop work plans to adjust to workplace labour shortfalls. I am confident TRU will weather this storm and will return to full strength as the Omicron wave begins to fade.

## **ENROLMENT WINTER 2022**

*(This report compares current enrolment to previous enrolment for Kamloops, Williams Lake, and Open Learning using two units of measure — student headcount enrolment and course enrolments. These "stable enrolment" data were extracted by IPE as of January 25, 2022.)*

This winter, there are 8,517 students at the Kamloops campus and 223 at Williams Lake campus, for a combined total of 8,739 students. Nineteen students are taking exclusively virtual courses, 12 of whom are international students.

Student headcount at Kamloops is down 2% from last year. Domestic student headcount is 5,201, which is down 3% from last year and down 7% from Winter 2020. International student headcount is 3,316, which is down only eight students from Winter 2021 but down 9% (309 students) from Winter 2020. Williams Lake headcount is up 23% compared to Winter 2021 but down 9% from Winter 2020.

For Winter 2022, there are 31,722 on-campus course enrolments, with 31,151 at Kamloops and 571 at Williams Lake. For Kamloops, this represents a 4% drop relative to Winter 2021. Williams Lake enrolments are flat relative to Winter 2021 despite the 23% increase in headcount at that campus. The reason for this discrepancy is that the distribution of students among different program areas (and therefore the number of courses these students take) has changed.

This fiscal year-to-date (FYTD), there are 13,845 students enrolled in Open Learning courses, of which 984 students are dually enrolled in on-campus courses and Open Learning courses, generating 28,015 course enrolments. Both domestic and international student counts are down (10% and 21%, respectively). Those enrolled in a TRU program are down 3%, whereas course-takers are down 18%.

In Winter 2022, there are 3,316 international students from 99 countries. This is only eight fewer international students than in Winter 2021, but 309 fewer than in Winter 2020. Most are from India (41%; 1,362) and China (9%; 286). Several countries have seen significant growth over the past year: the number of students from Nigeria is up 45% (from 169 in Winter 2021 to 245 in Winter 2022); Iran is up 58% (from 62 to 98); and Nepal is up 89% (from 35 to 66).

New international student headcount came in lower than projected due to study permit delays and program capacities (533 new vs. 700 projected), but continuing international headcount was predicted with less than 1% error (2,783 enrolled vs. 2,765 projected).

### **DEVELOPING VALUES-BASED CULTURE**

As the Board of Governors' arms-length investigation into allegations against two senior TRU administrative officials continues, TRU is taking steps to address broader issues related to workplace culture.

TRU has engaged the services of an independent HR consultant (Lisa Castle) and The Neutral Zone, a specialized firm experienced in helping organizations such as ours with self-development, improving interpersonal relationships and implementing organizational initiatives. This work, which is being overseen by VPs Brian Daly and Baihua Chadwick as well as Provost Donna Murnaghan, is well underway.

The Neutral Zone also brings added capacity, alongside TRU's People and Culture department, to provide safe spaces for employees to share any specific concerns they may have. TRU is deeply committed to hearing individuals, investigating where appropriate, and acting on what we hear.

TRU's deans and associate vice-presidents are currently engaged to assist in designing a TRU-wide engagement process to hear from employees and students and identify ideas and actions to improve TRU's institutional culture. The external consultants will be a support and help facilitate as needed, but this will be TRU's work. We need to do this together to get to a better place.

TRU is taking meaningful action that I am certain will yield positive results. These actions are inspired by our values, which are based on respect for all people. Our values are community-mindedness, EDI, curiosity, and sustainability and also reflect the Secwépemc values of kw'seltktenéws (being relatives to one another), knucwentsút (helping yourself), étsxem (practising for strength, power, and self-sufficiency), and mélélc (having a rest).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSSIBLE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL GRAVES IN WILLIAMS LAKE**

On January 25, the Williams Lake First Nations (T'exelc) held a news conference and informed Canadians that a preliminary geo-physical investigation has identified 93 potential burial sites on the lands of the St. Joseph's Mission in Williams Lake, the location of a former residential school.

The news is another painful reminder of an ugly history brought to light last summer in Kamloops when Indigenous leaders confirmed the presence of 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. These revelations have brought shock and sadness into our communities, especially for Indigenous people, who have long known many of their children died and were buried unnamed and unremembered at residential schools.

TRU sent a message of support in advance of the announcement to Kukpi7 Willie Sellars and T'exel'c, and distributed supportive messaging to faculty and staff at our Williams Lake campus. Recognising that the effects of Tuesday's announcement go beyond the Williams Lake region, we also sent out a message today to Kamloops-based faculty, staff, and students.

Also, Paul Michel, TRU's Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Matters, was in Williams Lake for the announcement, sat with Elders, and attended a sacred fire and spiritual circle at the Williams Lake First Nation Powwow grounds with about 20 TRU nursing students.

Once again, we must be willing to mourn the horrific loss of these children alongside our Indigenous partners, neighbours, and friends with humility and respect, and pledge our commitment to the hope of healing and reconciliation for the future.

## EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

**New Column in Kamloops This Week** — I am pleased to report that we have secured regular space in Kamloops This week to share viewpoints and news about the TRU community. View From TRU, my opinion column, will appear in the newspaper both in print and online on the third Wednesday of every month. I am excited to have the opportunity to share information, news, and perspectives about TRU and higher education with our community in this fashion. [You can find the column here.](#)

**High School Students Visit Campus** — Late last year, SD 73 students in grades 10-12 from various high schools throughout the district joined the Department of Engineering at TRU for the first Discover Day collaboration exploring the world of Software Engineering. This is an annual event designed to introduce senior high school students to post-secondary opportunities. This kind of event aligns well with our ongoing partnership with SD 73, which we formally re-confirmed at a special event last year.

## LEADERSHIP

**Welcome to New Dean** — I would like to warmly welcome Dr. Yasmin Dean, our new Dean of the School of Education and Social Work, who started at TRU at the beginning of the winter semester.

Yasmin comes to TRU from Mount Royal University, where she served as chair of the Department of Child Studies and Social Work since 2017. In addition to Mount Royal, she has also taught at the University of Calgary, the University of Victoria and Dalhousie University. Internationally, Yasmin worked at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates and Kyungnam University, South Korea. She also has more than a decade of experience in direct social work practice in the City of Calgary as a youth probation officer, community social worker and issues strategist.

As chair and associate professor, Yasmin has focused on the decolonization of social work education, the design and delivery of international education, mentorship and development of undergraduate student researchers, and community engagement. Her current research includes analysis of post-secondary academic leadership and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She has a particular interest in the design of international field schools that commit to principles of collaboration and reciprocity.

A registered social worker, Yasmin has a Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Social Work and PhD in Social Work from the University of Calgary. She is a senior fellow at Mount Royal's Institute of Community Prosperity, and serves on the United Way Council of Champions.

**Update on Provost Search** — The process for finding a new Provost for TRU continues. Four candidates were engaged by our search committee. By the time of this Board meeting, all have been to TRU and have met with me, members of our senior executive team and other TRU stakeholders. All made presentations to TRU faculty and staff through one-hour virtual Teams

sessions. The search committee has met and considered all the relevant criteria and made a recommendation. It is my hope to be able to announce the results of these efforts shortly.

**Search for VP Research** — As soon as the process of identifying a successful candidate for Provost is complete, we will begin search for a new VP of Research. Our Vice-President Research will replace the current AVP Research, a term that is set to expire shortly, and will provide a level of leadership that aligns with what is found at our peer Research Universities Council of BC (RUCBC) institutions.

The VP Research will find and develop research partnerships with other universities, institutes, foundations, and organizations; access new resources and funding for TRU; and develop community opportunities that will benefit both faculty and students as well as communities themselves.

**Interim AVP for People and Culture** — Dorys Crespín-Mueller has agreed to serve as People and Culture's interim AVP pending the outcome of a search for a permanent candidate. Dorys currently heads IPE, and will provide signing authority and administrative leadership to People and Culture as we move through this leadership transition.

## **UNIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Video celebrates achievements and successes from last year** — A new year is upon us, and it's always an opportunity to look back, reflect on the year that was, and build anticipation for the fresh 12 months on our 2022 calendars. We have just posted a new video that takes all that in.

In 2021, we wrapped up our 50th anniversary celebrations, welcomed students back to campus and ended a fundraising campaign that exceeded its \$50-million goal. That's just the start to a long list of highlights from the year. [Check out our TRU 2021 Year in Review video](#) to relive some of our best moments in 2021 and watch for hints about what we're up to this year.

**Law professors publish new book on digital privacy** — Associate Professors Chris Hunt and Robert Diab have published a new book: *The Last Frontier: Digital Privacy and the Charter*.

Featuring 11 essays written by many of Canada's leading privacy scholars, the book examines emerging privacy issues across a range of contexts, including a reconsideration of the Supreme Court of Canada's approach to s.8 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, privacy interests arising in the Criminal Code's voyeurism provisions, privacy in civil discovery, and privacy and its relationship to access to justice.

Other essays tackle privacy implications for familial DNA searches and for the tracking and tracing regimes related to COVID-19, and the use of complainant records in sexual assault trials.

Taken together, the collection offers a valuable source of analysis and insight into major developments in privacy law that have emerged over the past decade and will likely influence these debates for years to come.

[Fellowships recognize TRU environmental science students](#) — Graduate students Camille Roberge and Brandon Williams have each been awarded \$7,500 [Environmental Science and Natural Resource Science Fellowships](#) as a result of their commitment to research and potential for future contributions to their respective fields.

Roberge, whose research explores the impact of forest cutblocks (harvested areas) on declining moose populations, is working with the Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council, who recognize the vital role these animals play in the well-being of their community.

Williams's research uses traditional Indigenous knowledge of prescribed burning as a tool to transition an agronomic dominated grassland community to a native plant community.

Receiving these grants has been hugely beneficial for these students, not only financially, but also by acknowledging their previous research excellence.