

President's Report to the Board

For the period from Sept. 21 to Nov. 28, 2019
Submitted to the TRU Board of Governors
By Brett Fairbairn, President and Vice-Chancellor

This report summarizes progress to date on priorities of the executive team for 2019/2020. It also includes university highlights since the last reporting period.

Priorities

Organizational development, leadership, people:

Vice-President, University Relations search—Recruitment is promising with the university search committee actively considering candidates for the role. Supported by a search consultant, the process, including announcement of a successful candidate, is anticipated to conclude early in the new year.

Labour Relations—TRU was pleased to reach a new three-year collective agreement in early October with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 4879 under the provincial Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate. The agreement covers approximately 600 employees who provide integral support for our university in various positions, whether in the library, bookstore, enrolment services, or maintenance and utility operations. Negotiations continue with TRU's other two employee unions to reach agreements for on-campus and Open Learning faculty.

Employee development—To enhance the culture at TRU, the university recently launched TRU Leaders, a nine-month program designed to strengthen leadership competencies in the areas of leading self, leading teams, and leading the organization. The inaugural group consists of 27 individuals who represent a cross-section of leaders from throughout the university, and at varying stages in their leadership roles.

Planning:

Envision TRU—Work to develop a new vision for TRU remains on target with the process now entering its final stages. Our wide-ranging six-month conversation has involved over 2,800 participants, 107 small-group discussions in four cities, and 10 online ThoughtExchange forums. A final report on these discussions is complete, identifying for us three overarching areas that represent what is most important to us. These are: co-creating student-defined pathways to success; intentional community engagement for learning, research, and development; and embracing innovation and continuous improvement. Participants also raised four cross-cutting topics: equity, diversity, and inclusion; Indigenization; openness; and sustainability.

Informed by the conversation to date, the next task is to create a "vision statement" for TRU. This new document will include a section about TRU's vision for the future, a

section about our values, and a few strategic priorities or goals. These three new pieces (vision, values, and strategic goals) will supplement our existing mission statement, which no one has proposed to change.

During the past month, two key meetings have helped define next steps. First, I sought input from a number of university and community members on guidelines concerning what makes a good vision statement. Individuals who had previously volunteered for the Envision TRU Advisors' Network, plus others who responded to an open invitation, met on 14 November and provided advice I find compelling:

- Participants said that our TRU values should “guide us”, be “something to live up to, be accountable to,” and should be “uplifting”, “relational”, and “inclusive.” Our values should not be “interchangeable catch-phrases”.
- Our vision should be “short”, “clear”, “inspiring”, and “authentic” — it should be “unique” and identify how “we are different from other universities”.
- Each of our strategic priorities or goals should be “S.M.A.R.T.” (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely), should “require the collective” in the sense that “no one area can achieve it alone”, and should be “big enough that it can’t be achieved quickly”. Our goals should “push boundaries” and “challenge assumptions.”

On 25 November I convened 86 people for most of a day — elders, members of Senate and the board, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members — to reflect on the findings report and how to translate the findings into the vision-statement guidelines. I am still digesting their thinking and conceptualizations. At a high level, the outcomes included:

- For values (our long lasting commitments to each other as members of the TRU community), three clusters stood out related to inclusion, community, and being flexible/responsive. After that, curiosity and Indigenization figured prominently; followed by student-centeredness, open access, and sustainability.
- For an overall vision of the kind of university we aim to be, there were also three predominant clusters. First, a number of participants made strong cases for Indigenous or specifically Secwépemc concepts that holistically capture our aspirations. Second, many said we should focus on our aspiration to be a university that embraces adaptation, change, and innovation. Third, many supported the idea that we lead with being a university for everyone, accessible with many pathways for students. Other suggestions were to focus on how we connect community and global engagement, or how we lead our sector or influence society by being a different kind of university.
- Concerning strategic goals (areas where we aim to change over 10 years), many participants commented on integrating different modes of delivery (on-campus and online); on inclusivity and intercultural competence; and on action to provide

more personal educational pathways. Other proposals were for more action on openness and access; on Indigenization; and on community collaborations.

The above is a rough overview as there were numerous synonyms and alternate formulations to be considered.

For next steps, I have asked a few individuals to help me interpret the findings and generate drafts for the Vision Statement. Following review by our senior executive, the complete, draft Vision Statement will come to Senate, the Planning Council for Open Learning and the Board for endorsement or approval by the end of March.

As you can see from the process outlined above, the Envision TRU process has very much been a participatory process. As president, I have been clear from the outset the intention was to create a shared vision of what the future of TRU would look like. It was not an undertaking I would take on my own. I am gratified for the support of the project resource team, and most of all, for the individuals who heard the call and have participated in shaping the future of TRU.

Sustainability:

Limitless Campaign—On Oct. 10, I was pleased to launch the public phase of Limitless, the largest fundraising campaign in the history of TRU. Our goal is to reach \$50 million by the end of 2020, and we have been quietly moving toward this for the past many years, reaching \$41 million by the time of public launch. Universities like TRU are funded through various means, the biggest portion of which are government operating grants and student tuition. These provide for our basic essentials. However, it is the generosity of others, from people in the communities which we serve, that allow us to do so much more—provide scholarships and bursaries for students, buy new equipment or build new buildings, and support student and faculty research. Expect to hear more about the Limitless through the coming year.

Student Recruitment National Campaign—In October, our Marketing and Communications department launched “the world needs you,” a campaign to attract students from throughout Canada to attend TRU. This campaign was informed by data which suggest today’s students are attending post-secondary not only to get a good paying job, but to make a difference through that future job. Additional information on the campaign can be found online through TRU’s [Newsroom](#).

Indigenization:

Office of Indigenous Education—To support and strengthen TRU’s commitment to Indigenization and Indigenous Education, the Office of Indigenous Education has undergone a restructuring. Paul Michel, our previous Executive Director in the office, has now taken on the role of Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Matters. Paul’s focus is to work within the university and with the broader community, including Indigenous communities, to ensure TRU is able to honour and implement the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action for universities in a manner that is aligned with our

strategic priorities for Indigenization. Tina Matthew, who has served as Associate Director for Indigenous Education, will assume the duties of the executive director. Reporting to the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Tina will continue the work of ensuring Indigenous-related education initiatives are embedded in curriculum across all programs and that Indigenous students are well supported at TRU.

Relationships:

TRU recognizes the value of relationships to our success as a university. Below is a highlight of some of the relationship-building activities undertaken by members of senior executive or employees over the preceding months.

- VP Advancement (interim) attendance at a meeting of RUCBC, the Research Universities' Council of BC.
- Various engagement activities involving the President, including but not limited to the following:
 - Meeting with School District 73
 - Meeting with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief and Council
 - Attendance for the opening of the Secwepemc Scholars Gathering
 - Attendance at international meetings of the OERu, a partnership of universities offering open, online education and resources
 - Fall Convocation at our Kamloops campus – a particular highlight with 776 students graduating.
- Envision TRU engagement activities:
 - Wrap up of Phase 2 consultations—67 small group sessions with stakeholders from within and outside TRU.
 - Nov 14 and 25 planning sessions involving various internal and external stakeholders Envision TRU engagement activities:

University Highlights

Universities are places of knowledge creation and transfer, and achievement. We have much to celebrate. Below represents a short listing of some of our recent activities and achievements. Much more can be found on [TRU's Newsroom](#).

- Recognition of research—The Office of Research and Graduates studies has produced its seventh annual report, highlighting the past 12 months of research efforts and accomplishment of faculty, students, and community research partners. [Committed to Community](#) showcases groundbreaking work in the

sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, law, nursing, education and business, and the growing area of community-driven projects.

- Collaborating on a unique course offering—The Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Adventure, Culinary Arts and Tourism are offering a once-in-a-lifetime course on the evolution of pop culture from 1954 to 1984. The course features former Rolling Stones manager [Andrew Loog Oldham](#) as a visiting scholar-in-residence with the Faculty of Arts. The 13-week course was announced with much media fanfare on Oct. 30 and starts in January.
- Students—Eleven graduate students at TRU were the recipients of a total \$48,000 through awards sponsored by Kamloops philanthropist Ken Lepin. Eight students received \$6,000 each through the [Ken Lepin Graduate Student Awards](#) while three other students received Business Excellence Entrepreneur and Communication MBA Awards valued at \$3,500 each.
- Community impact—On Oct. 2, TRU released the results of its latest [economic impact study](#), which underscored both the reach, and long-lasting value of a university, and a university education. It's estimated the annual value of the university's daily operations and activities of students and alumni are \$705.3 million to the region, and \$1.5 billion to the province.