

This report summarizes progress to date on priorities of the executive team for 2020/2021. It also includes university highlights since the last reporting period.

### Priorities

#### Institutional Resilience and Capacity-Building:

##### *Leadership and culture*

**People Plan**—TRU launched a new initiative in October focused on our people. The TRU People Plan, a first for the university, will be a plan that will connect all our employees—whether faculty, staff or administrators—to TRU's Vision Statement, including its four strategic change goals. Through employee input over the next several months, the People Plan will provide a visionary map that describes the kind of culture we want to achieve and how we will get there. While it may seem unusual to start such a process amid a pandemic, and one that has affected our workforce so deeply, the time is right. Together, with our people, we intend to emerge from COVID-19 much stronger.

**TRU Leaders**—the executive was pleased to recently celebrate with the first group of employees who completed our inaugural TRU Leaders program. In all, 27 leaders from a variety of areas across the institution, including Williams Lake, participated in the year-long program. These included: administrative coordinators, managers, directors, and associate deans. The goal of the program is to develop leadership capacity and foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. Building on the success of this pilot program, we plan to offer TRU Leaders in a hybrid virtual/in-person format (where safety protocols allow) beginning in the New Year.

**Mentorship**—TRU is entering its third year of offering TRU Connections, a mentorship program that helps staff and faculty members meet their professional and personal goals. The first year was a pilot with 10 pairs (mentee and mentors) involved. This past year, HR matched 40 individuals and while starting off in-person, the group quickly shifted to a virtual format. Given the changing nature of the pandemic, the 2021 program will be delivered entirely online.

**Anti-Racism Task Force**—as part of the university's commitment to maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment, which includes fostering healthy attitudes and behaviours toward diversity, racial and ethnic equality, human rights, and social justice, the Provost launched an Anti-Racism Task Force in October. Co-chaired by Drs. Monica Sanchez-Flores and Rani Srivastava, the task force will help us better

understand the needs of our TRU community, particularly from the perspective of racialized groups and Indigenous people. We look forward to the task force's report and recommendations in the spring.

**Leadership Updates**—TRU welcomed Professor Daleen Millard, our new Dean of the Faculty of Law, on Nov. 1. We are excited to have someone of Daleen's calibre with TRU and look forward to what she will bring to the Faculty and its students. (For more information on Daleen, please see the October President's Report to the Board).

As we welcome one dean, TRU is saying goodbye to another. Dr. Airini, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, will be taking a new position at the University of Saskatchewan as Provost and Vice-President Academic. Airini is a passionate advocate for Indigenous peoples. Contributions during her six years at TRU include leading the creation of First Nation language and culture studies, as well as Knowledge Makers, an Indigenous student research mentoring program. Airini also oversaw the steady increase in enrolments in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, significant expansion of Open Learning courses, and expansion of early childhood educator teacher education to Indigenous communities in BC's rural areas. A search for a new dean will commence in late January.

Our search for a new Associate Vice-President of Advancement concluded in November with the appointment of Kim Cassar Torreggiani, effective Jan. 4, 2021. Kim is no stranger to TRU, currently serving as a director of development for the School of Business and Economics. With more than 25 years of fundraising, sponsorship management and marketing experience, including roles in higher education and non-profits, Kim is well-positioned to take this key role in providing leadership and strategic direction to the university's growing philanthropic efforts. Kim will replace Jeff Sodowsky who has supported TRU for the past two and a half years, first as Interim VP Advancement, and more recently as Interim AVP Advancement.

## *Planning*

**SEM Plan**—It's gratifying for the executive to report the completion of a Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan for TRU. This plan, which reflects our mission, mandate and Vision Statement, will guide our approach to enrolment over the next 10 years. The executive acknowledges the tremendous work that has gone into the plan, which started in February 2019, and in particular, would like to thank the individuals involved in the SEM Task Force and members of the campus community who participated in the consultation phase in 2019. Work on SEM was necessarily paused, and adjusted earlier this year due to the pandemic's impact on our day-to-day operations, as well as on our enrolment. As a result, the focus for the first few years of SEM's implementation will be on rebuilding and stabilizing TRU's enrolments to pre-pandemic levels.

**Ongoing strategic planning**—a strategic plan for Open Learning (OL) is in its last phases of completion. Since our inception as a university in 2005, OL has been integral to our operations, and to our students who are increasingly choosing OL to meet their

educational needs. Indeed, OL has been a critical support and advantage for TRU during the pandemic. TRU would not be where we are today without the expertise of the many individuals who supported their campus colleagues to pivot and adjust to the pandemic, delivering education virtually and away from the traditional classroom setting.

Separately, in early 2021 the Provost will begin work on an Integrated Strategic Plan, with updates provided to the board in future meetings.

**TRU's recovery**—TRU has worked hard to proactively manage a difficult financial situation this year. Decisions to reduce spending, reduce positions, have been made not solely in consideration of one budget year, but with the university's ongoing financial sustainability in mind. Similarly, the university has intentionally invested on the capital side. Improvements such as the summer relocation of the library, upgrades to the underground utility network at the corner of Summit Drive and McGill Road in partnership with the city, and other maintenance or upgrades have been funded through capital reserves or in partnership with other parties. Such investments are necessary and will benefit students and our university community in years to come, long after the end of the pandemic.

## 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](#).

- Virtual student supports—the many ways TRU has supported students through the pandemic, and in mostly a virtual environment, is not easily documented. TRU's Marketing and Communications department took a creative approach to this challenge, mapping out through a fictional student, the many ways a student can stay connected with TRU, and be successful, while learning in a pandemic. The full story can be found [here](#).
- A remarkable year for TRU research—when the pandemic virtually shut down TRU's campuses in March, many faculty and students were forced to pause or redesign their ongoing research projects to ensure physical distancing. Others jumped in to assist by adapting, changing and launching innovative projects to contribute knowledge designed to help us navigate through a pandemic and answer important questions. For the many ways TRU researchers pushed through and continued to contribute this year, please read the just-released [Annual Report on Research](#).
- A dream comes to reality—a new education and research centre at Wells Gray has been decades in the making and November saw much celebration as together with community partners TRU marked its opening. The history of this project is captured in both [written and video stories](#) on TRU's Newsroom.