



February 7, 2022

Via Email

TRU Chairs Group

Attention: Shawn Read

Dear Shawn,

Re: Response to Letter from TRU Chairs Group, February 3, 2022

Thank you for the letter sent February 4th regarding the budget update presentation.

Given the lack of signatories on the letter, it is unclear to me if the positions stated are representative of individual chairs, or the faculties or departments for which they represent.

Regardless, it is clear there are a number of faculty and staff within our university community who are deeply concerned about the current situation and it's important you, and the chairs, understand that not all share the same perspective. While some have expressed the views laid out in your letter, others are either quietly neutral or in support of decisions made and the process ahead. I say 'quietly' as leadership is also hearing from individuals who are afraid to speak their mind; they want to come to work and focus on their work without feeling pressured to take "a side." This is deeply concerning for the executive, which I will address later in my response.

Also concerning is the escalation and repeating of inaccurate information, as is included in your letter. The notion that TRU senior leaders 'well know' the allegations is untrue. The board investigation has not involved management; this was by design and request of the unidentified complainants. As such, we don't know the specific details or whether any current employee is a complainant in the process. Only when TRU receives further information from the board investigation will we be able to consider any action. Until then we are in a period of uncertainty and many unknowns, and, while I appreciate this is difficult for many people, we need to approach this period with care, which includes restraint in passing judgement.

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Regarding your specific points, I can provide the following:

- TRU's leadership has heard the calls for administrative leave. However, such decisions are based on a variety of weighty and complex factors that balance the rights of individuals along with what is known about allegations. As already noted, the board investigation is being conducted by independent investigators at the request of complainants. Hence, the investigators have not been in communication with TRU executive nor have they provided specific information that would support placing an individual on administrative leave. TRU is not free to place employees on leave without an adequate basis to do; allegations reported in media are not enough to support such action.
- It is unfortunate there are those that may feel unsafe at TRU. We have a responsibility to provide a culturally safe environment for all. This is ongoing work with an understanding that safety means different things for different people.
- If individuals feel unable to attend the budget presentation, I encourage them to receive this information in other ways. The powerpoint presentation will be available via OneTRU, and budget updates can regularly be found in agenda packages for both Senate and the Board of Governors meetings. The budget update presentation is not the only way to engage or be informed on TRU's financial status or budget planning.

Touching on a point in my opening remarks, TRU leadership is fully cognizant of the high levels of stress and anxiety among our employees and deeply concerning to us is that individuals are under pressure or feeling pressured to take positions. As a university community, we should be open to new information, seeking other perspectives, before making judgements. This is what universities are about.

We are concerned about the assumptions and misinformation that are circulating, and as a result, have created web pages for both the board investigation and for TRU's work with The Neutral Zone, which will be centered on a conversation around workplace culture. The web pages can be found here: www.tru.ca/workplace-culture. I encourage you to visit the webpages, where we will add new information as it becomes available.

I also look forward to the chairs' active participation on a way forward, through our future conversation in building a values-based culture at TRU.

Kind regards,



Donna Murnaghan, PhD, RN
Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research (Interim)

cc: Dr. Brett Fairbairn, President