

The following sections report on work underway, and progress made regarding executive priorities for the current year based on TRU's vision and 10-year strategic change goals.

Enabling Strategies/Operations

A COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP — TRU's senior leadership has recently adopted a statement of the qualities — actions and behaviours — that members of our university community can expect from senior leaders. This new framework of leadership competencies has been developed collaboratively by and for the members of the President's Leadership Group, which comprises approximately two dozen leaders at TRU, including vice presidents, deans, associate vice presidents, and executive directors.

It is the outcome of extensive leadership-development work among the senior leaders and addresses findings from the Listening Phase of the Culture Conversation. I encourage you to review the [Leadership Framework document](#). The new framework will guide senior leaders in their interactions to promote a cohesive university culture aligned with TRU's core values. It's important that faculty and staff are aware of what to expect of our leaders. Everyone is welcome to use this framework as a guide for considering interactions on campus.

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES — At the most recent Senate meeting, TRU Provost Gillian Balfour gave Senators and update on TRUly Flexible, an initiative designed to reframe online learning at TRU. Currently, learners have access to on-campus programs and online programs through Open Learning.

TRUly Flexible envisions a hybridization of these modalities to provide all students with greater choice in course delivery. TRUly Flexible envisions expanding expertise to bring digital learning into all TRU programs, by bringing together Open Learning and TRU on-campus programming in new ways. The process of doing so requires coordination, consultation, and cooperation between the entities, which each have their own distinct faculty and faculty associations.

TRUly Flexible also reflects the B.C. government's Digital Learning Strategy, which outlines strategic priorities, recommended actions, guidance and resources to support the post-secondary system with digital learning in B.C. The strategy was developed by the Digital Learning Advisory Committee, a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and subject-matter experts from across B.C.'s post-secondary system.

This work is complex and will be done strategically to ensure success. Next steps involve the identification of programs suitable for inclusion in a pilot project. It's also important to note that significant changes to the delivery model for a program requires government approval.

Another initiative currently underway is TRU Bold. Flowing from TRU Envision and the ISP process, Provost Gillian B. identified three strategic priorities for 2023-26, including:

“To be recognized provincially, nationally, and internationally for our unique academic and trades programs that provide students with flexible learning pathways, experiential opportunities and community research.”

An objective was identified from the above priority:

“We will develop, implement and evaluate an Academic and Open Learning plan that reflects our commitment to accessible, research-informed curriculum, experiential learning, and Trades and Technology.”

TRU Bold aims to align strategic research planning and high-impact teaching practices with academic program directions, by focusing on research-informed curriculum, experiential learning, decolonized pedagogies, and flexible program delivery options. The focus will be on the creation of halo program areas that feature flexible program delivery options and high-impact teaching practices.

Campus-wide consultations regarding TRU Bold have now been completed. A report will next be provided to the Senate, leading to final approval by the Board in the coming months.

NAVIGATING CHANGE IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION — Federal policy changes have increased challenges for international students, damaging Canada's global reputation. TRU has seen significant drops in both source country applications and program registration.

These changes, including caps on study permits, changes to spousal permits and continuous procedural uncertainty, have profoundly impacted all international students, including many within the TRU community. Not only have these changes made it even more challenging for students to complete their studies in Canada, but they have also caused irrevocable damage to the Canadian brand at a global level.

We are, of course, affected by this. TRU lost nearly 60 per cent of applications from the top two largest source countries — India & Nigeria. TRU has seen declines in registrations of nearly 60 per cent in Post Bac, 30 per cent in Bachelor, 40 per cent in MBA, and 20 per cent in Master of Data Science programs or courses.

In January, we expect declines to continue, and we expect we will be below our targets, but TRU, unlike most post-secondaries, will have at least one extra term of sustainable student numbers.

Efforts to mitigate the declines include new marketing and promotion efforts and initiatives to develop international partnerships. TRU boasts more than 101 International Partnerships across 31 countries, demonstrating our strong commitment to global education. These partnerships come in various forms:

- Articulation agreements for seamless credit transfers
- Accreditation agreements for delivering TRU programs abroad
- Student exchange agreements
- Field school locations
- Visiting student agreements
- Pathway agreements

TRU ANNUAL PHILANTHROPY REPORT SHOWCASES TRANSFORMATIONAL GIVING — The [TRU Annual Report on Philanthropy](#) details how donations and endowments have made a significant impact on student scholarships, campus improvements, and community programs. This year’s report highlights contributions toward mental health and wellness, student success, and research development.

Philanthropy from alumni, staff, and community donors not only enhances TRU’s resources but also directly enriches student experiences and supports the university’s broader mission. The report highlights the importance of giving in strengthening TRU’s capacity to serve students and fulfill its educational goals.

TRU SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE GAINS RECOGNITION — The TRU Sustainability Office has recently been recognized for its sustainability initiatives. TRU was recently named to the [Princeton Review’s Green College 2025 Honor Roll](#), the only Canadian school that earned the achievement of getting a perfect score in the Green Rating tallies.

The Princeton Review is an independent online resource offering information for students as they transition into post-secondary studies. TRU previously made the list in 2021.

Schools were ranked on their performance as an “environmentally aware and prepared institution.” Criteria included campus quality of life for students, how well students are prepared for employment in today’s clean-energy economy and how environmentally responsible the school’s policies are. Of the nearly 600 schools ranked, only 45 received perfect Green Rating scores.

As well, the entire Sustainability Office team came in as runner-up for [Energy Manager Canada’s Energy Manager of the Year](#) award. Both recognitions highlight TRU’s ongoing, long-term commitment to sustainability.

Honouring Truth and Reconciliation

TRU lowered flags this month to honour the memory of Senator Murray Sinclair (Mazina Giizhik), who passed away on November 4. He made Canadians look at their history in ways many had not done before. As the chief commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), he created a path for the nation to find reconciliation.

TRU recognized Sinclair with an honorary Doctor of Laws in 2017. From his first campus visit to give the President's Lecture at the TRUSU Storytellers Gala in 2015, he inspired multiple initiatives in response to the calls to action by several faculties and schools.

An Ojibway-Canadian lawyer and Manitoba's first Indigenous judge, Sinclair was well-regarded for his stature in the legal field for over 25 years. He gained wider recognition and affected the lives of thousands of people as the chair of the TRC, listening to and documenting the stories of survivors of residential schools. With the TRC's 2015 report and 94 Calls to Action, he provided Canadians with a clearer understanding of what happened in residential schools, and a road map to reconciliation.

Sinclair was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 2016, serving on several committees including the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

He received honorary doctorates from a total of 17 universities across the country and numerous awards, most recently the Indspire Lifetime Achievement Award (2017), the President's Award from the Canadian Bar Association (2018), the SSHRC Impact Award (2019), the Symons Medal (2019), Humane Canada Leadership and Innovation Award (2020) and the Adrienne Clarkson Prize for Global Citizenship (2020).

CONVEYING THE STORY OF INDIGENIZATION AT TRU — TRU has a long history and a strong commitment to honouring the process of Truth and Reconciliation through the Indigenization of campus spaces, programs, and support services.

The story of our efforts, which span 50 years, merits telling. We are now developing a suite of materials for our website and other forms and channels to provide a factual overview of current activities. I hope to be able to be able to share more with the Board about these efforts by the time of the next Board meeting in the new year.

Leading in Community Research / Scholarship

MILESTONE HIRES FOR TRU WILDFIRE — TRU has taken a major step forward in strengthening our TRU Wildfire initiative with the hiring of new staff for two leadership positions.

Recruitment for the director, TRU Wildfire (Research, Innovation, Education) and associate director, TRU Wildfire (Training) began last June. Based at TRU's Kamloops campus, the positions were created to lead the development of comprehensive infrastructure within TRU Wildfire, to support world-leading research, education, training and innovation.

Dinyar Minocher joined TRU as the new director, TRU Wildfire (Research, Education and Innovation) on Nov. 18. Quentin Nelson joined TRU as the new associate director, TRU Wildfire (Training) on Nov. 25.

TRU Wildfire, in partnership with the BC Wildfire Service, brings together research, education, training and innovation to offer a solutions-focused and comprehensive approach to current and future wildfire challenges. Learn more at tru.ca/wildfire.

TRU EXPERT SHARES EXPERTISE ON WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT WITH HOUSE OF COMMONS —

Dr. Mike Flannigan, a noted expert in wildfire science and Academic Director of TRU's Institute for Wildfire Science, Adaptation and Resiliency, provided critical insights to the House of Commons on wildfire management and risk mitigation in October, using the recent Jasper wildfires as a case study. His testimony contributed valuable expertise to national policy discussions on climate adaptation and wildfire resilience. Dr. Flannigan's involvement demonstrates TRU's academic leadership in addressing climate-driven challenges and reflects our university's commitment to research with far-reaching impact.

IPL HIGHLIGHTS RESEARCH ON PEER MENTORSHIP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION —

Dr. Laura Doan, a faculty member in the School of Education, presented a lecture (Nov. 19) titled "Peer Mentorship to Retain Early Childhood Educators" as her Inaugural Professorial Lecture at TRU. Her research highlights the positive impact of peer mentorship on job satisfaction and retention among early childhood educators, a field facing considerable workforce shortages.

Dr. Doan's findings suggest that mentorship fosters community and support, which is critical in retaining educators and reducing turnover. Her work demonstrates TRU's commitment to practical research that addresses real-world workforce challenges, supporting the sustainability of essential services in early childhood education.

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESULTS AVAILABLE — The latest BC Student Outcomes resources and results from former TRU diploma, certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship and foundation students are now available on the Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) [BC Student Outcomes](#) OneTRU site and IPE's Tableau Server.

The BC Student Outcomes Research Forum, in partnership with The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and BC Stats, conducts annual surveys of former students from B.C.'s post-secondary institutions. The results help shape the future of post-secondary education

in B.C. by providing valuable information to post-secondary institutions, the provincial government, career counsellors, parents and prospective students.

Another BC Student Outcomes resource available is the [BC Student Outcomes Data Viewer](#), which is available to the public. The results in the Data Viewer are available by student group, institution (all participating BC PSIs), program area and program name. Aggregated data for the three most recent survey years are presented.

INTERIOR LABOUR MARKET SURVEYS — Work BC projects 124,620 job openings for the Thompson-Okanagan region between 2023 and 2033. Sixty-seven per cent of these openings will be generated through the retirement of existing workers, and economic expansion generating the remaining 33 per cent of job openings.

Occupations with the highest percentage growth in job postings between 2023 and 2024 included:

- Graphic and interior designers (↑8%)
- Electrical, electronics, and computer engineers (↑8%)
- Machine operators in food processing (↑7%)
- Logging, forestry, and landscaping (↑6%)

Work BC also projects 21,150 job openings for the Cariboo region between 2023 and 2033. Almost all these openings (98%) will be generated through the retirement of existing workers. Degree holders represent 10% of those educated in the region, yet 19 per cent of job postings between 2023 and 2024 required a degree.

The [2024 Thompson-Okanagan Labour Market Insights](#) provides info about high opportunity occupations, regional education and sought-after skills. An infographic can be found on IPE's OneTRU site from the [Market Research page](#) under Additional services.

Community Engagement / Partnerships

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS — On October 19, 2024, British Columbians voted to elect our provincial government. As we all know, David Eby and the NDP will continue serving in a majority capacity.

Our primary supporter is our provincial government, and there have been changes at the senior levels of our Ministry and others. Earlier this month, I met with Minister Anne Kang and Deputy Minister Trevor Hughes alongside my colleagues, the Presidents of BC's research universities. Minister Kang previously served as our Minister during the early pandemic. I look forward to welcoming her to campus in the coming weeks.

Trevor Hughes is the new Deputy Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, the highest member of the civil service in our ministry. He brings a long background from the Labour Ministry and served on the pandemic Economic Recovery Taskforce. We look forward to working with him.

We look forward to the province's creation of a new Infrastructure Ministry. We hope splitting Transportation and Infrastructure into two Ministries will be an opportunity to streamline processes and enable nimble responses to the changing needs of BC.

Bobbi Plecas is the new Deputy Minister for Infrastructure. She led Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills through a time of rapid change, helping to develop the systems necessary to administer the federal government's changes to International Student visa approvals.

NURSING OFFERS IN-DEPTH NALOXONE TRAINING — The team at the Simulation-Based Learning Centre at TRU has developed a new advanced training session in CPR and naloxone specifically for non-medical participants, including how to recognize cardiac arrest in someone experiencing an overdose and how to administer both CPR and a naloxone injection safely.

Participants get practice with manikins to recognize the signs of cardiac arrest and feedback to administer CPR effectively before naloxone is given. The participants also learn with a live actor as their patient. The learning team sets the scene in their simulated apartment, a furnished bachelor suite with a kitchen and bed, belongings and the potential for tight spaces. This part of the session is immersive and intense. Participants learn that there can be safety concerns and that they need to be aware of their surroundings.

The simulation centre invites interested groups from the campus and Kamloops community to request their free training. Contact the centre at simulationteam@tru.ca. Initiatives across TRU support the province's *Overdose Prevention and Response Guidelines for BC's Post-Secondary Sector*.

All automatic external defibrillator (AED) wall cabinets on the Kamloops campus now include nasal naloxone. Additionally, 21 naloxone-specific cabinets have been installed in student residences. This means nearly 50 locations on campus are equipped with emergency life-saving supplies.

TRU VP APPOINTED CHAIR OF BCNET BOARD — Matt Milovick, Vice-President of Finance and Administration, has been appointed Chair of BCNET's board of directors. BCNET, a shared services organization, helps maximize efficiency and reduce costs for B.C. universities through services in networking, educational technology, cybersecurity, and procurement.

TRU has been a BCNET member for more than 30 years, spending \$5.2 million on its services in 2023-24 alone. Milovick highlighted BCNET's significant role in streamlining TRU's internal

processes by providing pre-vetted, cost-effective solutions. As Chair, Milovick aims to continue expanding BCNET's potential, including exploring new areas for service beyond IT.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT — Here is a list of fall events and meetings that allowed me to connect with stakeholders:

- Oct 11 – Fall Convocation
- Oct 16 – TRU Board and City of Kamloops Council Meeting
- Oct 17 – TRUnity Dessert Party
- Oct 17 – President's Reception for Scholarship Students
- Oct 22 – Fall Forum
- Oct 22 – RUCBC Presidents' Committee Meeting
- Oct 23 – Consul General India Luncheon
- Oct 24/25 – Board Planning Session
- Oct. 27-30 – Universities Canada, Board Retreat and Membership Meetings in Ottawa
- Oct. 30 – Government relations meeting in Ottawa
- Oct. 30 – Alumni event in Ottawa
- Nov. 1 – Donor relations meetings in Toronto
- Nov. 1 – Alumni event in Toronto
- Nov. 6 – TRU Remembrance Day Ceremony
- Nov. 6 – TRUSU Student Caucus Meeting
- Nov. 7 – Alumni event in Calgary
- Nov. 8 – Donor relations meeting in Calgary
- Nov.22 – RUCBC Presidents' meeting in Vancouver
- Nov. 28-29 – Prince George, IURC partner meeting