

CONSULTATION REPORT

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Nursing and health care: How TRU should address the future needs of BC's population

In March 2019, Thompson Rivers University began conducting consultations, through *Envision TRU*, with the intention of informing a new vision for the institution. This process—which aims to be as transparent, inclusive, and authentic as possible—is based on the idea of shared learning and is expected to continue until the end of March 2020. The following report is a summary of responses to the sixth consultation question, and presents information regarding participation, top thoughts, and emergent themes.

Thoughtexchange is an online platform that brings people together to anonymously share and communicate thoughts about a given subject and rank those that have already been submitted by others. This exchange, which ran from June 19 to September 30, asked participants:



Figure 1. Participants

How should TRU address the future needs of BC's population and the resulting labour market challenges?

In total, 47 students, alumni, faculty, and staff participated in this event (Figure 1). Twenty-five thoughts were shared and contributed to the discussion, while 360 ratings provided insight into community agreement regarding these comments and ultimately formed the basis for the emergent themes (Figure 2). The largest group of participants were staff/admin (16), followed by on-campus faculty members (15).



Figure 2. Emergent Themes

Top Thoughts

The two top-ranked thoughts from this exchange were consistent throughout and addressed themes of nursing, health care, and student development:

“TRU WLK needs more support for Indigenous students perusing careers in healthcare, human services, and education. The 15 bands in the region (...) have a critical need to “grow there own” professionals in these areas.”

“continue to offer top notch healthcare programs (ie more Grad Nurs specialties) so we can produce more students that can 1) enter labour market and 2) serve our aging population as the burdens on healthcare rise”

Nursing- & Health Care-Focused

A frequency analysis (Figure 3) of key terms, within the 25 thoughts that were shared, revealed that nursing and health care was a central focus of this exchange. This was also reflected in each of the emergent themes.



Figure 3. Word Cloud

Diverse Perspectives

While participants generally seemed to agree that nursing and health care are key to addressing the future needs of BC’s population, what this looked like in practice varied by stakeholder groups. For example, top thoughts for on-campus faculty also focused on Indigenization, while those for OLFMs highlighted student development.

To read all of the top thoughts and explore each of the emergent themes from this exchange, please visit the [online report](#), provided by Thoughtexchange.

Emergent Themes

Nursing & Health Care

Part of the challenge in addressing the future needs of BC's population, is first in recognizing the demands of the present. Nursing and health care were specifically highlighted here as areas in which focused efforts to improve the current situation could ensure continued success in the years to come.

“TRU needs to offer more specialized Nursing or Healthcare programs This will help with the healthcare demands from the aging population, as well as provide specialized staff at small community hospitals.”

“Our population already has significant Health Care and Social Service needs. We should be focusing on how we can address this demand in the short term as well as the long term.”

Indigenization

Indigenization was mentioned strongly in relation to nursing and health care, but thoughts also revolved around the idea of preservation, conservation, and inclusion.

“Emphasize inclusion to prepare Indigenous professionals and graduates, and others from under-represented groups, (...) Our society needs to draw on the ideas, strengths, and energy of diverse population groups.”

“TRU needs to offer Linguistics courses to our NITEP students. These courses are important to prepare our students to stabilize and revitalize their critically endangered Indigenous languages.”

Student Development

Thoughts around student development seemed to focus on more than just encouraging it, but on how TRU might better be able to deliver on its commitment to serving the educational needs of all students, regardless of age.

“All students come to TRU to gain a career or upgrade current career skills to increase their economic status Let's not be afraid to use the word CAREER-it compliments our academic success-it does not reduce or lower it by highlighting jobs and careers”

“As part of the "aging" demographic, (...) many over 65s would be happy to continue working or adapt to new career. Gives skilled elders purpose, allows TRU access to valuable knowledge & experience, increases resources for vulnerable people who can't work.”

Interculturalization

Interculturalization and indigenization go hand in hand at TRU and, as one of our strategic priorities, it is almost no surprise that they both would be mentioned in this discussion.

“Broad-based integrated intercultural skills training in all programming; especially health and social services Population projections show increasing diversity. Employers strongly value intercultural skills; the knowledge and internet economies demand them.”

“Create more training, school programs, internships, and work experience including volunteering in areas that require succession so the labour force is not depleted. Open immigration and working opportunities for skilled and talented people to join us.”

Emergent Themes (cont.)**Technology**

Participants generally agreed that advances in technology can improve the ease with which people can connect and communicate with others, as well as help to bridge the gaps between things like classrooms and campuses.

“TRU Kamloops needs more ITV enabled classrooms. This would enable more classes to be taught in Kamloops and WLK simultaneously, making programs (...) in WLK much more feasible.”

Research

Participants seemed to agree that, while research may be important in developing knowledge, it also has the potential of solving some of the resulting challenges of an aging population.

“Take advantage of the likely increase in research funding directed towards this problem through strategic hiring.”