

Strategic Internationalization Plan 2025 - 2035

February 2025

Thompson Rivers University is situated in Secwepemcú'ecw, the ancestral and unceded lands of the Secwépemc people. We recognize the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops) and T'éxelc (Williams Lake) communities as the caretakers of these lands and honor their enduring presence, languages, and stories. Our commitment extends to the neighboring territories of the St'át'imc, Nlaka'pamux, Nuxalk, Tâilhqot'in, Dakelh, and Syilx peoples.

The development of this Strategic Internationalization Plan was guided by meaningful collaboration with TRU's Indigenous Office, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and T'éxelc. We are grateful for the insight and support of Tina Matthew and Ted Gottfriedson, whose contributions helped ensure that our approach is rooted in respect, reciprocity, and relationship-building. The positive feedback we received from Dessa Gottfreidson, Education Manager, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, throughout this process has strengthened our commitment to ethical engagement and reconciliation.





Created by Kel-c Jules

To authentically represent our community on a global stage, we must first know the lands we are from — their protocols, stories, and cultures. This plan reflects our commitment to learning from the Secwépemc Community and ensuring that TRU's internationalization efforts are grounded in the values and teachings of these lands.







MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Thompson Rivers University, we embrace the vision of being “community-minded with a global conscience.” The Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) 2025–2035 builds on this commitment, providing a clear path as we continue to integrate international perspectives across all aspects of our institution. By building meaningful global connections, we aim to prepare our students to meet the challenges of an increasingly interconnected world with confidence, adaptability, and empathy.

This plan is more than a strategy; it reflects our values. Rooted in the principle of Kw’seltnéws — “we are all related and interconnected with nature, each other, and all things”— it guides us in embedding global perspectives into our teaching, research, and campus culture while honouring the traditional territories of the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc and T’exelc. The SIP aligns with our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and decolonization, ensuring that our international efforts are inclusive, respectful, and forward-thinking.

The SIP will ensure TRU remains a leader in higher education, creating opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to thrive in a global environment. With a focus on sustainability, collaboration, and innovation, this plan empowers our community to address complex pan-societal issues while contributing to local well-being. It will help us build a stronger TRU where every student is equipped to transform themselves, their communities, and the world.

Brett Fairbairn
President and Vice-Chancellor

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

The Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) 2025–2035 reinforces our commitment to delivering an education that prepares students for a globalized society. By weaving global, international and intercultural dimensions into our curriculum and research, we will empower learners to develop the competencies needed to excel in a world that is both interconnected through technologies and economies, yet increasingly polarized, and adversely affected by climate change.

This plan is an extension of TRU's mission to provide high-quality and flexible education that serves diverse learners. Central to the SIP is our Institutional Learning Outcomes, ensuring that every graduate leaves TRU with a deep understanding of the intersections between colonization and globalization, how a global perspective of decolonization is central to our commitment to honouring truth reconciliation and rights.

At the core of SIP is our responsibility to acknowledge and honour the Secwépemc Nation's wisdom and stewardship. Through this, we align our academic pursuits with the values of reconciliation and decolonization, ensuring our international efforts remain grounded in respect and equity.

As we develop an action and implementation plan for SIP, TRU reaffirms its commitment to global education by cultivating a research and teaching environment where students and faculty work together to address critical challenges. We are a university with a vision to inspire change locally and globally.

Gillian Balfour

Provost and Vice-President Academic




Introduction

At the heart of universities is the creation and dissemination of knowledge, and in today's interconnected world, this global exchange of ideas and information is not just beneficial—it is vital. The pursuit of knowledge transcends borders, cultures and geographies, making it inherently international. Internationalization plays a critical role in this process. It refers to integrating global dimensions into the curriculum, research and university culture, ensuring that students and members of the Thompson Rivers University community engage with diverse ideas and contexts.^{1,2} International, intercultural and global dimensions are used intentionally as a triad of terms to reflect the breadth of internationalization.³

In this pursuit of internationalization and TRU's vision of Kw'seltktnéws —“we are all related and interconnected with nature, each other, and all things”— TRU recognizes the need to approach this commitment with a foundation rooted in reconciliation and decolonization.⁴ This requires us to align our actions with the values and principles of the Secwépemc Nation, upon whose traditional lands TRU stands. As we integrate global perspectives into our curriculum, research, and campus culture, we must also ensure that these efforts honour and reflect the knowledge, wisdom and stewardship of the Secwépemc people who have cared for these lands for generations. Only by doing so can we truly embody a respectful, inclusive and forward-looking approach to internationalization.






Every TRU student should have the opportunity to engage with international perspectives as part of their educational experience. This is why we place such importance on Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).⁵ Through ILOs, we ensure that our educational environment fosters a comprehensive understanding of international contexts, equipping students to thrive in a world where knowledge knows no borders.

Building on our 40-year history of leadership in international education, we have developed a comprehensive internationalization plan to build on this legacy. This plan is designed to deepen and expand our commitment to welcoming and fostering global perspectives across all aspects of the university. By continuing to embed internationalization into our curriculum, research and campus culture, we aim to create an environment where every student can engage meaningfully with global issues and diverse perspectives. This plan will ensure that we continue to lead in preparing students for the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

The Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) outlines the vision, goals and objectives for TRU's future in internationalization. From a strategic planning perspective, the vision serves as the overarching guide, charting the organization's direction, while the strategy outlines the specific steps and actions required to achieve that vision for internationalization at TRU.

These steps will be outlined in annual SIP implementation plans, ensuring that strategic initiatives are effectively executed, measured, resourced and aligned with TRU's evolving goals.⁶ Both the vision and the implementation plans are important: the vision provides a steady framework amid uncertainty, while the implementation plans provide actionable strategies that can be reviewed annually to ensure effective execution aligned with TRU's evolving goals and needs.





Principles of internationalization at Thompson Rivers University

The development of the Strategic Internationalization Plan has been rooted in TRU's vision statement of being "community-minded with a global conscience" while serving our "regional, national and international learners and their communities through high quality and flexible education, training, research and scholarship," as indicated in TRU's mission statement.

We recognize our role in the world, understanding that by tackling local challenges, TRU can have a global impact. We aspire to develop and share our innovative solutions to inspire progress and drive meaningful change. In addition to being guided by the [TRU Vision Statement](#), the Strategic Internationalization Plan is guided by the following principles:

Situated in the heart of Secwépemc'ulucw, TRU is guided by the wisdom of the Secwépemc community. We are committed to expanding access for and support to students while actively working to dismantle the systemic inequities rooted in our colonial past and present.

We are dedicated to making decisions that honour the rights and opportunities of current and future generations, ensuring sustainable solutions that balance the needs of today's communities with those of tomorrow.

We turn our commitments into actions by ensuring that policies, strategic plans and programs align across the institution and that resources are allocated equitably and effectively.

We are driven by a curiosity to go beyond traditional approaches to internationalization, leveraging our unique position as the only teaching and research-focused university in BC that integrates a trades and technology school, an open learning mandate, and diverse educational modalities. Our expertise enables us to reach and engage diverse learners across Canada and around the world.



GOAL

Goals and objectives

To empower members of the TRU community through curricula and support systems to become community-minded and globally conscious through international engagement.

Objectives:

1. INSTILL GLOBAL COMPETENCIES in learners through the institutional learning outcomes to foster a deep sense of social responsibility.⁷
2. LEAD IN THE DEVELOPMENT and dissemination of innovative teaching and learning practices in higher education to strengthen the reputation of TRU as a hub for global engagement.
3. COLLABORATE WITH FACULTY, staff and learners to reduce barriers to advance participation in internationalization opportunities.
4. EXPAND GLOBAL RESEARCH opportunities to promote collaborative, research-driven solutions to provide learners with valuable experiences and meaningful international connection.

GOAL

To continue providing exceptional support services that ensure academic and personal success of international learners and contribute to the local region and global community.

Objectives:

1. PROVIDE OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL support services to continue to enhance and support the student experience and academic success.
2. LEVERAGE TRUly Flexible to expand access to diverse course modalities for international students, empowering them to meet their educational goals.
3. EXPAND THE TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION opportunities, offering flexible learning options that reach and engage learners across global markets, adapting to their unique needs and local contexts.

GOAL

To continue to expand access and supports for internationalization efforts with Tk'émłúps te Secwépemc and T'exelc. Actively work to address and dismantle the systemic inequities rooted in colonial history and their ongoing impacts.

Objectives:

1. CONTINUE TO EMBED Secwépemc culture and ways of knowing into aspects of TRU's internationalization initiatives.
2. ENHANCE SUPPORT and access for internationalization initiatives that start with the history and impact of colonialism in Secwepemcúl'ecw.⁸
3. PROMOTE INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE on diverse historical and cultural perspectives about colonial history around the world, enabling members of the TRU community to explore their own backgrounds, build relationships and foster connections.



GOAL

To enhance environments and opportunities to find enriching connections that inspire diverse cultural expressions, individual growth and foster life-long relationships.

Objectives:

1. PROMOTE COMMUNITY VITALITY by recognizing cultural well-being and supporting the opportunity for members to retain and express their cultural practices, learning and embracing others, while learning and respecting local cultural protocols.
2. STRENGTHEN CULTURAL infrastructure and community participation by creating environments and opportunities where students, staff, faculty, alumni and community members share stories to cultivate intercultural interactions and strengthen cultural infrastructure and community participation.⁹⁻¹¹
3. BROADEN CONNECTIONS and foster engagement with the wider community in Williams Lake, Kamloops and the surrounding region, with a focus on promoting global engagement and creating more opportunities for connection for all participants.



GOAL

To lead the way in cultivating a culture of community-mindedness with a global conscience by sharing educational practices, exchanging knowledge worldwide and taking a proactive role in addressing regional, national and global challenges through education and scholarship.

Objectives:

1. ENCOURAGE THE TRU COMMUNITY to collaborate and engage with diverse perspectives to create a positive impact both locally and globally in accordance with the TRU Academic and Research Plans.
2. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES that strengthen local and global partnerships and deepen global perspectives in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the TRU Vision Statement.¹²
3. PROMOTE A CLIMATE-LITERATE APPROACH to internationalization within the TRU Community to advance TRU's commitment to and value of sustainability.
4. DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY to effectively showcase the impact of TRU internationalization efforts, fostering global awareness and engagement among all members of our community and partners.
5. STRENGTHEN TRU'S LEADERSHIP in the post-secondary internationalization environment by sharing best practices, contributing to the global discourse, and leveraging our internal expertise for broader impact.

Acknowledgements with gratitude

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan. Your insights and support have been invaluable.

Strategic Internationalization

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Bibliography

A bibliography list is provided to acknowledge the varied levels of familiarity within our community regarding commonly used—yet often contested and evolving—terms in internationalization, encouraging readers to focus on the essence of each concept while considering its potential variations across time and context.

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