

CONSULTATION REPORT

Renewable energy: TRU can lead the way by researching and innovating

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 eighth 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 can TRU enhance leadership in all areas of sustainability as student and community needs change?

In total, 27 students, alumni, faculty, and staff participated in this event (Figure 1). Twenty-seven thoughts were shared and contributed to the discussion, while 161 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 (10), followed by on-campus faculty members (4) and alumni (4).



Figure 2. Emergent Themes

Top Thoughts

The two top-ranked thoughts from this exchange were consistent throughout and addressed themes of public transportation, renewable energy, and faculty & staff:

“hire a researchers whose specialize in sustainability and environmental concerns we have a great reputation for sustainability it would be nice to have researchers on staff who have intl connections to support that.”

“I feel TRU needs to take a MUCH stronger leadership position in the city to facilitate MUCH better public transport services for our community.”

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

Public Transportation

Participants generally agreed that public transportation in Kamloops needs to improve. It was also mentioned by participants that TRU should work together with the community to push for a change that will benefit our community members.

“I feel TRU needs to take a MUCH stronger leadership position in the city to facilitate MUCH better public transport services for our community.”

“Many of us would use public transport rather than driving to/from TRU, if there was better service available Currently, it's just not a realistic nor practicable option for our family and neighbours (...)”

Faculty & Staff

Comments around faculty and staff generally focused on the need for more specialized staff members to increase the possibilities of the sustainability office.

“TRU is a leader and should remain an example as such in sustainability in Kamloops. A strong governing board and directors would provide the right direction [sic] in making the right decisions affecting sustainability especially with regard to carbon footprints, etc.”

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy was discussed as a key to increasing TRU's sustainability. It was suggested that TRU needs to lead the community with innovation by developing well thought out renewable energy projects.

“Prototype testing of Renewable Energy Technologies are a great way to prove an investment in the future.”

“An increase in alternative heating/cooling, and electrical energy generation on campus would demonstrate leadership in Sustainability. We have come a long way (...), its time for the next phase in energy leadership.”

Emergent Themes (cont.)**Community Programs**

Collaboration with community was discussed as an important piece to enhancing TRU's leadership in sustainability. Some suggestions included encouraging more opportunities for students to learn in the community and in nature.

“It is important to collaborate more with community groups, local activists and local government. (...)

Give students more connection to the local community and more opportunity to be mentored and practise leadership.”

Innovation

Finding new ways of increasing sustainability was mentioned as an important factor. Participants said that TRU should strive to lead the community by developing new sustainable solutions.

“By continuing to find innovative ways of enhancing TRU's level of sustainability. We need to set goals for ourselves that go beyond commonly accepted practices.”