



President's Report to the Board

For the period from September 24 to December 3, 2021
Submitted to the TRU Board of Governors
By Brett Fairbairn, President and Vice-Chancellor

RETURN TO CAMPUS

TRU students, faculty and staff continue to be vaccinated and declare their vaccination status. The disclosure rate for both Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses combined is 91 percent, with 95 percent of faculty/staff and 91 percent of students advising they are fully vaccinated. TRU's COVID rapid testing clinic for asymptomatic individuals remains operational at both our campuses.

TRU continues to abide by all other provincially mandated COVID protocols, including mask-wearing in public spaces and requirements to show proof of vaccination in some venues and for specific, non-work purposes. We continue to use a variety of channels to inform our community about the need for continued vigilance and adherence to protocols.

I want to thank all staff, faculty, and students for taking safety protocols, including vaccination, seriously. It is through this combined, co-operative effort we will keep our campus and classrooms open to in-person learning, something that benefits us all.

ENROLMENT WINTER 2022

Institutionally, course enrolment for the first two quarters of 2021-22 is 7.1% lower than the same time period in 2019-20, the pre-pandemic year. Comparing to the same time last year, institutional enrolment is down 2.7%. This fall, at the Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses, there are 8,885 students, which is 7.4% lower than fall 2019 (9,595) and slightly higher than fall 2020 (8,870).

Looking ahead to the winter 2022 term on campus, relative to two years ago at the same time, course registrations are down 15% (29,765 two years ago vs. 25,346 this year) and student headcount is down 14% (7,701 two years ago vs. 6,649 this year). Comparing to winter 2020, course enrolments are up 4% (24,389 last year vs. 25,346 this year), while student headcount is up 6% (6,261 last year vs. 6,649 this year).

Domestic registrants are up three percent and international registrants are up 13 percent relative to this time last year. Course registrations reports are a preliminary indication of winter 2022 enrolment. It is still unclear how the COVID-19 pandemic and

winter course delivery will impact student behaviour. Compared to last year at the same time, there are:

- More undergraduate first year registrations in all Kamloops course divisions except Adventure, Culinary Arts and Tourism and Student Development
- More graduate-level registrations in all course divisions except Science
- Fewer previously enrolled domestic registrants in all divisions except Nursing, Science, and Arts
- More previously enrolled international registrants in all divisions except Adventure, Culinary Arts and Tourism, and Arts.

STUDENT HOUSING

Further to my update in the October report, student housing remains a challenge and a high priority action item for TRU. Most significantly, after a similar effort did not move forward in September, TRU continues to work with the City of Kamloops to reach an agreement on how we can provide temporary housing for students.

A new proposal is currently in the hands of City planners. It is similar to the original proposal but makes some key changes to address concerns from the City of Kamloops. It's hoped the new plan will be approved before the end of this year.

TRU now proposes installing 114-bed dorm-style modular housing in Parking Lot XT located alongside McGill Road near TRU's West Gate. Our previous proposal intended to use Parking Lot NT near Hillside Drive. We will continue to look for other longer-term solutions as well to assist students who come to TRU to study, including temporary emergency hotel/motel subsidies and building affordable long-term residences.

STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT

TRU's [SEM plan](#) was approved by Senate and the Board of Governors nearly one year ago. The SEM plan calls for the establishment of a SEM Steering Committee and an organisational framework to enable and oversee sustained SEM planning. Chaired by the Provost, composition of the SEM Steering Committee is nearly finalized with plans to meet before the end of 2021.

In addition, funds have recently been allocated through the academic portfolio for ongoing management, analysis, and interpretation of enrolment-related data to inform priorities and strategies and chart our progress toward SEM objectives.

Other SEM initiatives that are underway include:

- A review of academic policies to identify and mitigate obstacles to access,

- Implementation of the TRU Assurance Bursary, a renewable needs-based bursary that will alleviate financial pressures for more than 100 students per year),
- A project to re-imagine academic advising services with an aim to align academic advising with other student support services within a community of practice,
- A pilot project this fall to survey students who were eligible but chose not to register this past September so we can better understand the factors influencing why students continue at TRU or do not.

A full SEM annual report will come to the Board in the new year.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Trip to Germany — I participated in a trip to Germany co-hosted by DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – German Academic Exchange Service) and CBIE (Canadian Bureau for International Education). The mission resulted in new partnership opportunities as well as strengthening existing partnerships in Germany.

TRU’s objectives for this trip included:

- to diversify TRU’s international partnerships
- to attract German students to TRU’s flagship programs such as Master of Environmental Studies, MEEMS, MSEEM, as well as our visiting student program.
- to expand international research opportunities

I am confident the trip was successful and will lead to beneficial partnerships and opportunities for TRU in the future.

Universities Canada, Ottawa —In late October, I also attended a three-day Universities Canada conference in Ottawa. The theme of the event was Road to Recovery: Renewing commitments to Canadians. Through the conference, discussions and break-out sessions focussed on a variety of issues related to pandemic recovery, from “thinking outside the box” to public perceptions around return to campuses across Canada.

TRU Law Alumni Visit in Calgary — On December 9, VP Brian Daly, Dean of Law Daleen Millard and I, along with others from TRU’s Advancement team, will travel to Calgary to meet with TRU Law alumni there. The purpose of the trip is to encourage alumni to maintain an engaged relationship with TRU.

SD 73 / TRU Renew Longstanding Partnership — On November 16, SD 73 and TRU boards met to renew a [Partnership Charter](#), agreeing to collaborate to “transform education to better meet the needs of current and future learners.” The charter’s key values include commitments around accessibility, student engagement, enrolment trends and organizational responsiveness, equity, diversity and inclusion, educational advocacy and communication, and research and scholarship.

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Fall Town Hall — In early November, members of the senior executive team joined me to give a “State of the University” presentation to faculty and staff. The event provided a high-level overview of various topics relevant to TRU, such as enrolment numbers, budget, strategic planning, and other ongoing initiatives.

The event also featured a Q&A session that allowed participants to ask questions. The event was held both in-person at the Grand Hall (COVID protocols observed) as well as online via Teams. This was the first “hybrid” event we have held, and this model could well be the direction for events in the foreseeable future. I will be giving a similar presentation to TRUSU and students early next month.

LEADERSHIP

New VPs — The next stage of TRU’s development will see us seek to continue growing as a university in a shifting environment. As the pandemic winds down and—hopefully—an equitable and sustainable recovery sets in, we will experience a complex mix of opportunities and constraints. I am looking to two new senior executive leadership roles to help us navigate this transition and secure new resources and opportunities for TRU’s faculty, staff, and students.

TRU has started the search process for a Vice-President of Research, while Baihua Chadwick, formerly our Associate Vice-President of TRU World, has been promoted to the role of Vice-President International. Together these two new leadership positions will help TRU access the partnerships, people, resources, and opportunities we require to advance our vision and fulfill our planning goals.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

[Integrated Strategic Planning](#) (ISP) is a continuation of the TRU Envision work completed last year, and is intended to align the effort and resource allocation across TRU so that we can best achieve our 10-year strategic goals.

TRU's ISP project team successfully hosted goal alignment workshops with various university planning units on October 12 and 13 with Dr. Nick Santilli from the Society of College and University Planning (SCUP), with follow up workshops held November 15, 16 and 22.

In the coming weeks, all TRU units, schools and faculties will complete ISP templates about current and planned activities in relation to the strategic goals. These templates will be collected and used to inform an institution-wide integrated strategic plan, which is expected to be completed next spring.

UNIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS

Raymond James Trading Lab Opens with Leading Tech — Raymond James Ltd. invested \$550,000 in TRU's School of Business and Economics to set up a live trading lab for business students. The Raymond James Trading Lab Opening Ceremony was held on November 4. In addition to the capital and software gift, Raymond James has committed to their professional staff to mentoring and coaching students in the TRU Student Investment Fund group. This follows Raymond James funding an award for an indigenous student enrolled in SOBE's finance programs

Anonymous Donation Supports TRU ECE Program — An anonymous donor is contributing \$1.4 million to expand a peer-mentoring program for early childhood educators to keep them from leaving the profession. The funding goes to work headed by Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Associate Professor Dr. Laura Doan in partnership with the Early Childhood Educators of BC. The donation provides \$1.4 million over three years to expand the peer mentoring program Doan started as a pilot project in Kamloops, which was based on what early childhood educators said they needed.

TRU Student Wins Scholarship for Indigenous Women in STEM — Sophie Collins is one of 15 women each awarded \$10,000 for the Women in Technology/Indigenous Women in Technology Scholarships this fall. Collins is the only student to win the Indigenous Women in STEM Scholarship. Funded by the Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society, the scholarships are based on academic achievement and a demonstrated commitment to a career in computer/data science, engineering or mathematics. The scholarships come from grants to the society from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.