

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

FAREWELL MESSAGE — As I prepare to conclude my tenure as President and Vice-Chancellor of TRU, I want to offer a few reflections directly to the Board, my last opportunity to do so in this forum.

Over the past seven years, TRU has continued to mature as a regionally important research-informed post-secondary institution. My role, as I saw it, was to help move the university further along that path and help it to be a university grounded in place, yet open to the world; committed to access, while advancing excellence in research and teaching; and guided by a coherent vision of the future.

The foundational work of Envision TRU — the collective visioning process we undertook early in my presidency — shaped much of what followed. It set out the values, aspirations, and strategic change goals that have since guided our decisions and investments. Translating that vision into practice led to TRU's first fully integrated strategic plan, new roles and structures in planning and budgeting, and most recently, the development of TRU Bold — our first academic plan to integrate teaching, Open Learning, research, and graduate studies.

Across each of Envision's four 10-year strategic change goals, we made meaningful progress:

- In expanding access, we endowed over \$1 million for Indigenous student scholarships in partnership with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and T'exelc, introduced data-informed recruitment campaigns, and launched the Honours College.
- In honouring truth, reconciliation, and rights, we embraced Secwépemc knowledge and practices in university life and supported international Indigenous exchange through the Global Skills Opportunity program.
- In supporting research, creativity, and innovation, we established new research chairs, established the TRU Research Hub for students and faculty, and launched the *TRU Wildfire* research initiative — a cross-disciplinary effort with lasting significance.
- In building a strong and flexible learning environment, we laid the foundation for the TRUly Flexible strategy, recognizing the diverse pathways students need to succeed in higher education.

We have also strengthened TRU's physical campus and capacity for the future. In recent years, we opened the Nursing and Population Health building, expanded The Reach, renewed key facilities including Old Main, and nearly doubled student residence capacity. We also broke ground on the new Indigenous Education building and the LCDES, signalling our ongoing investment in academic excellence and Indigenous engagement.

Our international partnerships grew more diverse and reciprocal, with renewed collaborations in China, Mexico, and beyond. I am especially pleased that we are creating more opportunities for international students to enter skilled trades and for faculty and students alike to participate in global learning and exchange.

None of this would have been possible without the remarkable people who make up the TRU community. I continue to be inspired by our students, by the initiative they take in shaping their own futures and in supporting one another as tutors, ambassadors, and leaders. It has also been a privilege to share in sector leadership, as chair of RUCBC during the pandemic and through service on the board of Universities Canada.

Throughout my presidency, we navigated significant challenges — the COVID-19 pandemic, a major internal investigation, and now, dramatic shifts in federal immigration policy. Through each of these, I am pleased to know that we stay focused on TRU's vision and mission. I am proud of the way this university — and this Board — responded with integrity and care.

As I leave this role on June 30, I am mindful of what comes next. My focus today is not on farewells but continuing the work of moving TRU forward and ensuring a smooth and respectful handover of this office that keeps the spotlight on TRU's future. I am confident that President-designate Dr. Airini will bring new insight.

Lastly, I am grateful to the Board for your trust and support over these past seven years.

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ENROLLMENT OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK — The 2024–25 academic year marked a turning point in TRU's enrollment landscape. As institutions across Canada grappled with shifting demographics, evolving learner expectations, and the disruptive effects of federal immigration policy changes, TRU demonstrated both resilience and responsiveness. While overall enrollments remained stable and even showed modest growth, the composition and distribution of learners shifted significantly, underscoring the need for continued strategic agility.

International enrollments, once a key driver of institutional growth, began to show signs of sustained decline, particularly in campus-based programs. Meanwhile, domestic interest in TRU rose, aided by targeted policy adjustments such as the removal of application fees and

streamlined admissions processes. Open Learning continued to be a stabilizing force, with rising interest from both domestic students and course-takers across Canada.

While enrollment pressures persist, especially for international students, TRU remains focused on adaptation and innovation. Integrated Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) continues to monitor trends closely, and TRU is adjusting recruitment strategies, exploring new delivery models, and enhancing supports to ensure student success. As the institution enters a new academic planning cycle under *TRU Bold*, this work will be critical to maintaining momentum and delivering on TRU's access-driven mission in a dynamic landscape.

2024–25 Enrollment Overview — TRU closed the 2024–25 year with overall course enrollments slightly above target, achieving 101% of projections and marking a 0.4% increase over the previous year. Growth in Open Learning enrollments (+12%) offset a 5% decline in on-campus activity. Ministry-countable FTEs rose by 6%, and TRU's annual utilization rate reached 97% — up from 92% last year.

Domestic enrollments saw a notable increase, with headcount up 6% and course enrollments up 4%. International course enrollments declined by 6%, though international student headcount grew slightly (+4%), driven largely by Open Learning activity. International students now make up 20% of Open Learning enrollments.

2025–26 Projections and Application Trends — Recent federal immigration reforms continue to affect TRU's international enrollments, particularly on campus, where a 13% year-over-year decline in international headcount has been observed. Early indicators for 2025–26 point to a further 27% decline in on-campus international students, contributing to an overall projected 8% drop in total enrollments. As of June 1, international applications for Fall 2025 were down 30%, and admissions were down 32%.

In contrast, domestic demand has grown. Applications for Fall 2025 increased by 27%, and admissions rose by 16%, supported by recent policy changes. Among domestic applicants, Psychology, Biology, and Adventure Studies emerged as popular majors. International applicants showed a continued preference for general entry programs in business, science, and arts.

Summer and Open Learning Enrollments — Summer 2025 on-campus course registrations are down 19%, with domestic headcount stable and international enrollments falling by 31%. Post-baccalaureate and graduate registrations experienced the most significant declines.

Open Learning continued its positive trajectory. For the 2025–26 fiscal year to date, course registrations rose by 1%, and headcount increased by 5%. Domestic enrollments grew across all provinces and B.C. college regions, with especially strong growth from the Lower Mainland. International Open Learning enrollments declined 19% but the number of course-takers continues to grow.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS — As the academic year ended, VP Research Dr. Shannon Wagner accepted an appointment to the role of Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic following Dr. Gillian Balfour's departure from the role.

In her first message to the TRU community, Shannon acknowledged the collective dedication of faculty and staff in supporting student success and advancing the university's mission. She highlighted several major initiatives launched or further developed over the past year — TRU Wildfire, TRU Bold, and TRUly Flexible, noting their enduring relevance to students, faculty, and communities.

Each initiative reflects TRU's ongoing commitment to academic innovation, research excellence, and flexible access to education. She also recognized the leadership of our former provost, whose contributions helped shape these initiatives and advance institutional renewal.

Amid financial uncertainty stemming from declines in international enrollment, Shannon emphasized that TRU's academic priorities remain clear. The university continues to respond with careful planning that balances innovation and fiscal responsibility.

"These efforts are not dependent on a single leader or moment in time," she noted. "They are shared commitments, and they will be advanced by the strength of our community."

Earlier this month, TRU announced that Dr. Brian Roy would assume temporary additional responsibilities as Acting Vice-President Research, effective July 1.

Brian was already set to join TRU as Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Research, beginning July 1. In his expanded role, he will work closely with the president and senior executives to guide TRU's research strategy and support the continued advancement of graduate education and scholarly activity across the institution.

Brian brings extensive leadership experience from Brock University, where he served as Associate Dean in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, and previously as Chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Director of the Centre for Bone and Muscle Health. A nationally recognized researcher in sports and clinical science, his work focuses on muscle metabolism, physical activity, and injury prevention.

We are grateful for Brian's willingness to step into this key role during a time of transition, and we look forward to the insight and leadership he will bring to TRU's growing research and graduate portfolios.

TRU ANNOUNCES ERIIP FOR TRUFA AND CUPE — The following announcement was made via TRU Connect on May 15:

Dear colleagues,

Weytkp. With TRU's 2025–26 budget now approved by the Board, we want to take a moment to thank everyone who contributed ideas, planning, and cost-saving measures. Through collaboration and cooperation, we have identified ways to meet this year's financial challenge.

However, as we said throughout the budget planning process, TRU faces sustained financial pressure due to declining international enrollment. This trend is expected to continue for the next three to five years.

We are preparing for the likelihood that enrollment will eventually stabilize at levels closer to those we experienced in 2017–18. As a result, we'll need to reduce the number of faculty and staff at TRU to support a smaller student population.

To support this transition and reduce involuntary job losses in the future, TRU, in partnership with TRUFA and CUPE, will offer a one-time Early Retirement Incentive Plan to employees covered by collective bargaining agreements with TRUFA and CUPE.

The plan will provide defined financial incentives to those over 55 who voluntarily retire from TRU. We encourage anyone considering retirement to review the plan's details. More information about eligibility, payouts and timelines can be found on P&C's SharePoint pages.

To be clear, this is a one-time offer. Our intention is to reduce the number of involuntary job losses required in the years ahead. We recognize that uncertainty causes anxiety and stress. We hope this incentive provides an attractive option for those who may already be thinking about their next chapter — and, in doing so, helps lessen the impact on others.

These are difficult decisions in challenging times. We want to navigate this unprecedented period with as much empathy, honesty, and care as possible. Our goal is to be transparent about the challenges we face, thoughtful in the options we provide, and respectful of individuals.

We will continue to share information, listen carefully, and support one another as we move forward.

Kukwstsétsemc.

Gillian Balfour, Provost
Matt Milovick, VP Admin and Finance

Honouring Truth and Reconciliation

HONOURING NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH — June marked National Indigenous History Month — a time to honour and celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Canada. At Thompson Rivers University, we reaffirmed our deep commitment to respecting our host Nation, the Secwépemc, and to fostering an inclusive environment grounded in intercultural understanding.

Throughout the month, we were guided by the principle of *Re stsqéy's-kucw m-qîyém'ne tmicw ne7élye ne Secwepemcúłecw* — the laws written on the land in Secwépemc territory — as we continued to build meaningful relationships rooted in respect, reciprocity, and shared learning. I encouraged all members of the TRU community to participate in the many initiatives and events held during the month and to embrace this opportunity for reflection, education, and growth. Together, we used this time to uplift Indigenous voices and strengthen our university's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and understanding.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SKEETCHESTN INDIAN BAND — In May, I had the honour of signing a new affiliation agreement with Kukpi7 Eddy Jules of the Skeetchestn Indian Band — a milestone that reflects the deepening relationship between Thompson Rivers University and the Secwépemc peoples. The ceremony, held at the John Jules Professional Building in Skeetchestn, was followed by a shared meal to mark the occasion.

The agreement is grounded in recognition, respect, and shared purpose. It reaffirms TRU's commitment to increasing access to post-secondary education for Indigenous learners and improving outcomes that go beyond enrollment and retention. It also acknowledges the right of Skeetchestn to lead educational efforts in accordance with Secwépemc worldviews and pedagogies.

As part of the agreement, TRU committed to co-developing programs and supports that align with community-identified priorities — including technical training, academic pathways, and culturally grounded mental health services. The agreement also includes a recommendation for Skeetchestn representation on the Qelmúcw Affairs Committee of Senate, as well as regular dialogue and shared accountability.

This formalized relationship builds on a long history of collaboration and mutual learning. It strengthens our shared efforts in reconciliation and supports TRU's goal to be the university of choice for Secwépemc and Indigenous peoples.

I would like to thank Kukpi7 Jules and the Skeetchestn community for their trust, guidance, and commitment to this partnership. It is a responsibility we carry with humility and deep respect.

TRU has anchor partnership agreements with the host communities for our Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses. Affiliation agreements such as this one with Skeetchestn supplement these partnerships and formalize our respectful relationships with other nearby communities on whose lands and with whose students TRU is engaged.

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

SPRING CONVOCATION 2025: CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT — TRU celebrated the achievements of more than 3,000 graduates during Spring Convocation 2025, held over three days at the Tournament Capital Centre in Kamloops and in Williams Lake.

Six ceremonies in Kamloops honoured students from 131 programs, including the inaugural graduating class of the Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner program — the first of its kind offered in the Interior Health region — with six graduates.

Across our Kamloops, Williams Lake, and Open Learning communities, TRU conferred 3,082 credentials:

- 2,607 undergraduate and preparatory credentials
- 475 graduate credentials
- 190 credentials to students who self-declared Indigenous ancestry

Convocation also featured 10 valedictorians, four honorary doctorate recipients, two professor emeriti, and the presentation of the President’s Annual Merit Awards. Twenty-nine medals were awarded to 28 students, and the largest single ceremony recognized 458 graduates from the Faculties of Science and Nursing.

In her remarks, Chancellor DeDe DeRose spoke to the transformative power of education. “Education is still one of the smartest, most courageous investments you can make — not just for what it gives you, but for what it allows you to give,” she said, emphasizing the value of critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability in a complex and changing world.

Graduate reflections echoed the spirit of community, growth, and resilience. Students expressed gratitude for their families, faculty mentors, and the diverse and welcoming environment that TRU offers. From personal challenges to academic triumphs, their stories reminded us of the power of support, belonging, and perseverance.

I would like to thank everyone — from faculty and staff to student volunteers and organizers — who contributed to the success of this year’s ceremonies. Convocation is a powerful reminder of our collective impact and the purpose that drives our work: empowering students to create positive change in their communities and beyond.

2024–25 TRU FACTBOOK RELEASED — Integrated Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) released the 2024–25 edition of the TRU Factbook, offering a comprehensive snapshot of the university’s student population and enrollment trends.

In 2024–25, TRU served just over 31,000 students, including approximately 2,400 learners who were dually enrolled in both campus and Open Learning courses. International students represented 26 per cent of the total headcount, originating from 118 countries — a testament to TRU’s global reach and diversity.

The Factbook includes detailed data on:

- Student headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment
- Course enrollments by location and delivery method
- Credentials awarded
- Student characteristics such as Indigenous identity, age, residency, and geographic origin

These data are disaggregated by location (Kamloops, Williams Lake, regional centres, and Open Learning). If you have questions about the Factbook, please contact [Stephanie Klassen](#), associate director, IPE. I would like to thank Stephanie and the IPE team for producing this important resource. The Factbook remains a key tool in evidence-informed planning and institutional accountability.

2024 BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESULTS RELEASED — The latest results from the 2024 BC Student Outcomes Baccalaureate Graduates Survey confirmed that TRU graduates continue to achieve strong employment outcomes. Alumni surveyed two years after graduation reported a median annual salary of \$73,000, with 84 per cent indicating their job was related to their field of study — a result that underscores the relevance and quality of TRU’s academic programs.

These results form part of a broader province-wide initiative led by BC Student Outcomes, in collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and BC Stats. The annual survey provides valuable insight into graduate employment, skill development, and the overall student experience, supporting both institutional planning and provincial policy development.

At TRU, the Office of Integrated Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) made the 2024 results available via its BC Student Outcomes SharePoint site and Tableau Server. Internal users can access high-level summaries as well as interactive dashboards with filters for credential type, program, and demographic variables, including Indigenous identity and geographic region.

I would like to thank Stephanie Klassen and the IPE team for their continued work in making this data accessible and meaningful. These insights are essential to TRU’s ability to assess program impact, support evidence-informed decision-making, and better serve our graduates. Those seeking tailored data or support are encouraged to connect with Stephanie directly.

Community Engagement / Partnerships

ADVANCING TRU'S GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS — Earlier this month, I had the privilege of representing Thompson Rivers University and the Province of British Columbia on an international trade mission to Japan and Korea, as one of two presidents from the Research Universities' Council of BC (RUCBC) institutions. Our participation in the province's delegation reinforced TRU's role in supporting B.C.'s economic diversification and underscored the importance of higher education in international trade and diplomacy.

During this mission, I met with several of TRU's institutional partners in both countries. These meetings reaffirmed our university's commitment to global engagement and long-term academic collaboration, while also expanding opportunities for international student and faculty mobility, exchanges, and joint research.

Before the trade mission, I also travelled to Malaysia, where I met with four of our transnational education partners and held productive discussions with the Canadian High Commissioner. These conversations highlighted the growing strength of Malaysia's educational and economic landscape, and with it, greater opportunities for TRU students and faculty to engage globally.

Through these visits, TRU continues to build strong, reciprocal international partnerships rooted in long-term relationship-building. These engagements help ensure a steady, mutually beneficial flow of students and ideas and reflect our strategic approach to global education — one that prioritizes sustainability, collaboration, and meaningful outcomes for our learners and communities.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH MAPLE LEAF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS — In May, I had the pleasure of joining Vice-President International Baihua Chadwick in China to mark the 30th anniversary of Maple Leaf Educational Systems and to celebrate our longstanding partnership. For nearly three decades, Thompson Rivers University and Maple Leaf have collaborated to expand global access to high-quality education and to develop innovative, cross-cultural academic pathways.

Our partnership reached a major milestone in 2015 with the launch of TRU's Bachelor of Education in Secondary STEM program, specifically designed for graduates of Maple Leaf's B.C. offshore schools. Since then, more than 190 students have completed their education degrees at TRU, with many achieving B.C. teaching certification and now teaching in classrooms across Canada and internationally.

In 2016, we further deepened our collaboration with the creation of the Maple Leaf University School-TRU, located on our Kamloops campus. This pioneering initiative brought international high school students directly into the heart of university life. Over six years, approximately 260 students earned B.C. Dogwood Diplomas, completed university credits, and gained meaningful exposure to Canadian academic and cultural environments.

This enduring partnership has enriched TRU's academic community and enhanced the educational experience for students both on campus and abroad. In recognition of this relationship, Maple Leaf founder Dr. Sherman Jen made a transformational \$5 million personal donation to TRU in 2017. His generosity established eight scholarship endowments and funded two major learning facilities: the Dr. Sherman Jen High-Fidelity Simulation Centre and the Dr. Sherman Jen Instrumentation Lab.

To date, 149 students have received scholarships through these endowments, and the facilities continue to support exceptional, hands-on learning experiences across disciplines.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to our TRU World team for their continued leadership and strategic foresight in strengthening these international connections, as well as to Dr. Jen and all those who have contributed to this remarkable partnership. It stands as a powerful example of what long-term, values-driven collaboration can achieve in the realm of international education.

UNIVERSITIES CANADA STATEMENT ON FEDERAL ELECTION AND PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION — Following the April 2025 federal election, Universities Canada issued a public statement congratulating Prime Minister Mark Carney and all newly elected and returning Members of Parliament. The organization affirmed its readiness to work with the new Liberal government to address Canada's most pressing economic and social challenges.

Canada's universities, including TRU, continue to play a vital role in training the skilled professionals the country needs — from health-care workers and engineers to educators and entrepreneurs. Universities are also key to driving research and innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence, sustainability, advanced manufacturing, and public health.

Universities Canada welcomed the government's campaign commitments to modernize research infrastructure, expand graduate scholarships, and invest in student housing, including the \$2 billion pledge for student and senior accommodations.

The organization emphasized the urgent need for bold investment in Canadian research and talent development, including faster visa processing and clearer immigration pathways to restore Canada's global reputation and attract international talent.

To this end, Universities Canada called on the federal government to convene a ministerial roundtable involving multiple departments, provincial partners, industry, and post-secondary institutions to shape a coordinated, data-driven strategy supporting international student success and workforce integration.

TRU supports these calls for collaboration and remains committed to contributing to national conversations on student access, research excellence, and economic resilience. We look forward to continued engagement with federal partners in the months ahead.

SFU PRESIDENT APPOINTED CHAIR OF RUCBC — On June 6, Dr. Joy Johnson, President and Vice-Chancellor of Simon Fraser University, was appointed Chair of the Research Universities' Council of BC (RUCBC) for a two-year term.

Dr. Johnson brings to the role extensive academic leadership experience, having guided SFU through the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of a new strategic plan, and the establishment of the new SFU School of Medicine.

In her remarks, Dr. Johnson emphasized the critical role of a sustainable, well-funded post-secondary sector in securing B.C.'s economic and social future. As chair, she expressed her commitment to strengthening advocacy and collaboration among B.C.'s research universities, including TRU.

RUCBC represents the province's six research-intensive universities and works to enhance the quality, accessibility, and coordination of higher education across British Columbia. TRU looks forward to continuing to work alongside Dr. Johnson and fellow RUCBC colleagues to advance shared priorities for students, communities, and the province.