



## PROVOST'S REPORT TO SENATE

March 2025

I am delighted to share updates with the Senate on the outstanding teaching, learning, and research activities happening across TRU's Faculties and Library. Each month, I request updates on key successes and initiatives. While many faculties have their own newsletters, I would like to highlight items of interest to senators as well.

### FACULTY OF ARTS

Creative Writing instructors Justin Madu and Catriona Leger have been hosting public readings for Creative Writing students to share their work at the end of each term since November 2023. Participation and attendance have increased with each presentation.

Dr. Benjamin Woodford has recently published 2 peer reviewed articles. Dr. Tara Chambers has received a Teaching Excellence award (Open Learning). Dr. Thomas Vernon has received an internal research grant to support his next novel and will be presenting at the ACCUTE conference in May. Sasha Austin, a THTR major, has landed a recurring role on a Netflix series filming in South America. The Actors Workshop Theatre Spring production of A Comedy of Errors played to over 675 people, including 175 high school students from SD73, St. Ann's Academy, and Revelstoke HS.

Dr. Joceline Andersen supervises a student-led documentary project, co-hosts film screenings and discussions, co-organizes a digital film festival, and is a co-applicant on a SSHRC Insight Grant. She also participates in conferences, post-film discussions, leads a research grant project, and has received a TRU Graduate Research Assistant Fund. Dr. Heather MacLeod participated in a workshop on social change, presented decolonizing assignments, received a BC Arts Council Grant, served as a Literary Arts Assessor, and participated in an Indigenous Film Festival. She also published a short story and a poem. Dr. Peter Zakrzewski is awaiting the publication of his second book, co-written with David Tamés. He supervises students premiering a documentary film for the Scw'exmx Tribal Council, who will be honored at the event.

Publications from the Dept. of Psychology:

- Parker, P. C., Daniels, L. M., & Mosewich, A. D. (2025). Supporting effective setback management in high-performance student-athletes via an online intervention. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-07200-0>
- Parker, P. C., Daniels, L. M., Mosewich, A. D., Pelletier, G. N., & Tulloch, S. L. (2025). Exploring collegiate athletes' perceived control beliefs involving sport setback experiences during COVID-19. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2025.2470097>
- Pruessner, L., & Ortner, C.N.M. (2025). Adaptiveness of emotion regulation flexibility according to long-term implications. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 379, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2025.02.114>.

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION & SOCIAL WORK

The week of March 9-15 was proclaimed Social Work Week by the Province of BC, and March is National Social Work Month.

On February 28, EDSW hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Big Breakfast event for students. The event was held in honour of Black History Month and featured Western Canadian Music Award-winning artist Krystle Dos Santos performing BLAK: Canadian Women In Music. Approximately 400 students attended the performance, which wove songs from a variety of genres with stories of key events, civil rights, and activism by notable women in Canadian history.

## FACULTY OF LAW

This year, 39 students participated in moot teams, representing about 16% of upper-year students. The teams included 23 2Ls and 16 3Ls. Three 3Ls, Brynn Pedlow, Luke Conkin, and Pria Flanagan, each participated in two moots.

Twenty-six volunteers from various cities coached the teams, with many more judging practice rounds. The teams competed in Ottawa, San Diego, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Victoria, Winnipeg and online. Special thanks to Amanda Louvros and Corporate Traveller for their support, especially when the Hockey Arbitration team was delayed in Toronto due to an overturned flight. Thanks to our sponsors: Gillespie and Co., Rush Ihas Hardwick, Poulus Ensom Smith, the Sherman Jen Fund and TRUSU for their financial support.

This year, the National Sports Law Negotiation team of Brynn Pedlow and Luke Conkin reached the semi-finals and finished 4<sup>th</sup> overall. The Hockey Arbitration Competition team reached the semi-finals. The Wilson Moot team received the prize for top factum. The Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Law Moot received 2<sup>nd</sup> overall factum. The National family Law Negotiation moot team of Evelyn Iszak and Isabella Balducci finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and Evelyn Iszak received a prize for 6<sup>th</sup> overall negotiator.

## FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Faculty are promoting and accepting registrations for Let's Talk Science workshops, a national charitable organization offering free STEM programs for Canadian youth and educators. The Master of Science Showcase on March 6 had over 100 attendees. Kara Atkinson won the Poster Presentation Award for her research on climate effects on grassland small mammals, and Chloe MacLean won the Oral Presentation Award for her work on microbial community shifts following permafrost thaw.

Engineering professor Catherine Tatarniuk was featured on CFJC Midday in February to raise awareness for STEM programs and the Women in Engineering Workshop for high school students held on March 1.

On March 29, the Faculty of Science will welcome 50-100 newly admitted students with an afternoon social session, supported by nearly all departments and in partnership with FSD. On April 1, Science will host the annual Cariboo-Mainline Regional Science Fair, featuring 90-100 top science students presenting their projects and engaging in various science activities.

## FACULTY OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

FSD is undergoing a reorganization to improve its structure and effectiveness, involving upcoming campus-wide consultations to gather input from the community. An external reviewer praised the reorganization's positive impact on the Global Competency and Environmental Sustainability certificates, emphasizing experiential learning. FSD received national recognition from CEWIL Canada, renewing its co-op accreditation for six years.

FSD, Student Services, and EDSW are collaborating on the Honouring our Lost Loved Ones Research Project, funded by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Respectful Relations Fund. Five CEL team members attended the TRU Explore Event in Williams Lake. The Writing Centre's Creative Writing Fridays hosted its most well-attended event with 23 participants.

## BOB GAGLARDI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Last month, our MBA team excelled at Canada's 2025 National MBA Games, securing first place in spirit and second in athletics. On February 19, TRU Gaglardi hosted an AI Summit on Generative AI's Role in Education, Business, and Society. On February 27, the TRU HRMN Club is hosting an HR industry night with CPHR BC, offering HR students and new graduates a chance to connect with professionals. Additionally, 20 Gaglardi students attended the CFA Society Okanagan Forecast Dinner in Kelowna, coordinated by Drs. Randy Kimmel and Meng Yan, for networking and insights into financial market trends. Meanwhile, the TRU Enactus team is preparing for the regional competition in Edmonton, providing hands-on experience in social entrepreneurship and business innovation.

The TRU Gaglardi Wolves' Den Student Pitch Competition has received over 30 applications. Students will receive expert guidance on business plans and pitches through two structured mentorship sessions hosted by the TRU Generator, with optional additional sessions for further refinement.

On April 28, students will present their business ideas to judges and receive feedback. Winners will access TRU Generator Entrepreneurship Workshops and receive funding to develop their business plans.

The GPS Program enhances the professional development of MBA, MEEM, and MScEEM students from October to March, offering soft skills training, industry connections, and real-world business experience.

## SCHOOL OF NURSING

SON Dean's Inaugural Speakers Series kicks off March 13th with Dr. Cindy Blackstock talking about Jordan's Principle 20 years after. Jordan's Principle is a human rights principle established by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) to make sure that First Nations children do not face gaps, delays, or denials in accessing government services because of their identity as First Nations children. Jordan's Principle is named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. He was a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba.

MN Program Review has been completed and Dean's recommendation report submitted to APPC.

SON is thrilled to announce that Eden McEachern-Toombs, one of our talented 2nd-year nursing students, will perform with Snotty Nose Rez Kids and Tia Wood at the Juno Awards.

Preparations are underway for the SON 50 years celebration on May 10, featuring an open house and social event.

### LIBRARY

The library has added Emerald Journals to its online offerings, providing access to academic journals and books across various disciplines.

On March 11, the Library Makerspace team, TRU Sustainability, and Kamloops Repair Café hosted a Repair Café event to promote waste reduction and teach repair skills.

From March 24-28, the TRU Library and Office of the Vice-President Research are supporting the 20th annual TRU Undergraduate Research & Innovation Conference, where students will present their research, gain feedback, and engage with the community through poster sessions in the Library Learning Commons and lecture sessions at the Research Hub in OLARA.

### EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION and ANTI-RACISM

The Office of EDI & AR led EDI Basics, Unconscious Bias and Active Bystander training sessions for faculty at Kamloops and Williams Lake campuses. Since January 2025, 77 faculty, staff, and admin have attended at least one of the 21 sessions, with 3 sessions held in Williams Lake. The Faculty of Arts has made EDI training mandatory for faculty and staff.

Planning for the U-B-U EDI & AR 2nd Annual Conference, scheduled for May 15, is underway.

EDI Basics training and EDI Student Dialogues have been provided to students.

For Black History Month, the film "The Color of Fear" was screened, attended by 44 faculty, staff, and community members. The "On the Radar" initiative, led by the EDI & AR Intern, focuses on student engagement with EDI, providing education, support, and project development.

Bodrun Nahar and the Gagliardi School of Business were recognized for their efforts in developing and hosting the 2025 International Women's Day Event. This initiative highlights significant efforts in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion across the institution.

### LEARNING, TECHNOLOGY and INNOVATION

The working group of the Teaching and Learning Committee tasked with developing teaching and learning guidelines for GenerativeAI is progressing. An environmental scan of existing guidelines has been completed and the group is assessing existing best practice and identifying unique needs for TRU. An inventory of TRU's existing resources and resources has also been performed.

Attention is now turning to drafting proposed guidelines for TRU, as well collecting the identified resources in a central location.

## STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services Strategic Plan aims to improve student well-being and belonging, increase access and engagement, and further equity and dignity. To align with TRUly Flexible, services are being integrated to support online learners.

In February, the Indigenous Student Development team promoted Indigenous Awareness Week and the Gender and Sexual Diversity Manager hosted the Valentine's Day Drag Extravaganza with over 100 participants. A survey was conducted to identify service gaps for Former Youth in Care at TRU.

To support both on-campus and online learners, a Ctsenem7ew'sem (Guide) was hired to assist Indigenous students, and the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy launched its first event for online learners. The GuardMe Student Support Program was expanded to provide 24/7 mental health support to all TRU students. In February, Student Case Managers had 166 appointments and 1,196 points of contact. The Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) piloted drop-in sessions and held trainings. The Academic Integrity team adjudicated 66 cases.

Student Affairs is updating several policies, including those on harassment, sexualized violence, and off-campus safety.

## PROVOST UPDATES

In early March, we had the pleasure of hosting former Alberta Premier Rachel Notley and current Alberta MLA and Social Worker, Joe Ceci, for a discussion on how community members can drive positive social change. They also joined faculty and students from the Social Work and MA in Human Rights and Social Justice programs to celebrate World Social Work Day. Additionally, they engaged in a conversation with TRU's leaders about effective leadership during times of change and uncertainty.

Please see the attached background document on Phase 2 of TRUly Flexible. Key recommendations from an environmental scan will be highlighted at Senate in a separate presentation.

Respectfully submitted on March 17, 2025 by:



Dr. Gillian Balfour  
Provost and Vice-President Academic

# Key Findings

From December 2024 to February 2025, the TRUly Flexible Phase 2 Project undertook an external scan to determine key themes, considerations and implications of integrating flexible delivery options in a pilot of four programs for on-campus programs at Thompson Rivers University. Having established that the TRUly Flexible initiative will have institution-wide impact data collected from informant interviews and conducted a literature review to identify areas to be consider when planning for the pilot of flexible delivery.

## Strategic Planning

Defining timelines, milestones and governance mechanisms for change is essential for managing expectations and driving progress.

Roles and responsibilities need to be clear, along with defined success criteria so that there is focus on achieving common goals.

Processes must be developed and/or revised to operationalize the delivery of strategic goals.

## Investment

Institutions must invest to see change and appropriate levels of resource must be lined up to underpin strategic plans.

- Change at institutional scale usually requires significant financial investment. If institutional resources are constrained, then choices about investment must be highly strategic and evidence driven.
- Investments can include teaching release, employing additional staff, employing external service partners, providing incentives, and revising workload allocations.

## Student Readiness and Support

- It is vital to understand student needs around different modalities including what drives the need for flexibility, and what support is required to help students be successful. Few if any institutions are doing this well today.
- Required supports include technical assistance, online orientation, peer mentoring, and flexible access to ancillary services such as academic advising or well-being supports. Ensure that no delivery modality leaves students feeling “second class” to the on-campus experience.
- It is important to understand equity and accessibility issues and to bridge the digital divide, including anticipating and supporting digital literacy gaps.
- Core systems such as the LMS need to be usable, with focus on minimum standards of web usability such as consistent top-level navigation and course landing pages.

## Faculty Experience and Support

- Research highlights that academic freedom and resistance to perceived centralization is a common challenge, but informants reveal in practice that faculty are vital to translate institutional goals into practical implementation within their disciplines.
- Ensure that support for delivery comes at all levels including market research, curriculum design, learning design, use of educational technologies
- Support comes in many forms including structured professional development, collaborative design processes, communities of practice, mentoring, and faculty to faculty engagement.
- Students are often an overlooked resource. Their experiences and input can be captured via persona development and by participation in co-design processes. Co-op students are sometimes also employed to build courses in the LMS.

## Experiential Process

- Undertaking and participating in flexible learning initiatives reshapes organizational structures, cultures, and relationships and is an investment in developing capacity as well as tangible changes to academic programming.
- At a faculty level adopt an experiential approach that brings together cohorts of faculty and staff engaged in change wherever possible.
- At the institutional level ensure that there are plans in place for monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes and impacts, and mainstreaming change to ensure it sticks.
- These initiatives are part of longer continuums of continuous improvement and capacity building.

## Managing Change

- There must be visible and engaged executive leadership and investment in developing networks of champions.
- Scaffold the change experience, starting small and growing.
- Meet people where they are at and support them to work on changes, they have a vested interest in. Ensure that “what’s in it for me?” is answered.
- It has to be safe to experiment and fail and supports need to be on hand to adapt and change.
- Supporting working relationships to be changed towards greater levels of trust and collaboration. Recognize and reward it when it happens.
- Student support services must work collaboratively across the institution to support a change to flexible learning. They need to be in the loop as to the programs that changing, the nature of the change, and the impact on students.

## **Evidence Based Process**

- Use evidence to inform and drive the change and processes
- It is vital to understand all the contextual factors that drive flexible modality choices including student needs, the subject being taught, institutional/faculty goals, external drivers, faculty preferences and capability.
- Develop decision making tools to help navigate this complexity when choosing modality.