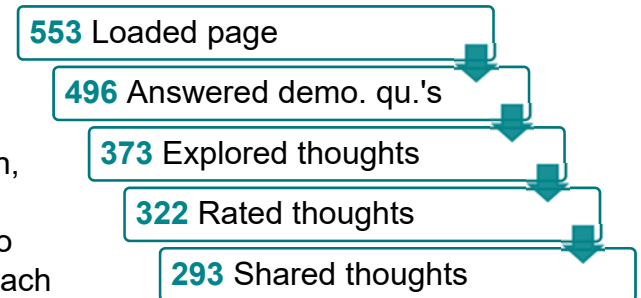


# Summary of Responses to First Visioning ThoughtExchange Question

**What do you value most about TRU and what can we do better to prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the future?** March 2019

TRU is conducting a consultation to inform a new vision for our institution: [Envision TRU](#). The process aims to be transparent, inclusive, authentic, balanced, efficient, and based on shared learning. This report summarizes responses to the first consultation question, which was conducted via ThoughtExchange: participation, emergent themes, and top thoughts are presented. ThoughtExchange is an online platform that asks users to anonymously share thoughts on a given topic and rank each others' thoughts. The first exchange (Feb. 27 to Mar. 22) asked,

**Figure 1. Participants**



**What do you value most about TRU and what can we do better to prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the future?**

This exchange included 553 participants (Figure 1). A total of 682 thoughts were contributed to the discussion, and 21,865 rankings provided insight as to community agreement regarding those thoughts (which informed the emergent themes – Figure 2). The largest group of participants was students (179) followed by staff/admin – full time (171). Participation rates were highest for the staff/admin – full time group (33%) followed by TRUOLFA (32%). Student participation was estimated at 1% of the 2018-19 student population.

**Figure 2. Emergent Themes**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU is learner-centered, open, accessible, and creates positive change in our world. TRU is in the process of defining its identity and should remember its history.</li> </ul>                              | <p><b>Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU is a diverse, inclusive community that values and supports people from all backgrounds. Freedom of thought and a culture of inclusion reflect the diversity of the world around us.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU supports and is supported by the external community; TRU leads innovation and creates economic opportunity.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Physical Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus green space is inviting, while parking is challenging for students and employees.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Student Success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU exists for students, and therefore provides access through flexible learning options, support services, and future preparation.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU demonstrates a commitment to environmental sustainability, which is part of our identity as an institution.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Employee Success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU employees are the reason that students are successful, and they need to feel valued and included in a supportive environment that includes flexibility and development opportunities.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRU is uniquely positioned to offer undergraduate research opportunities and to engage with community stakeholders to solve challenges.</li> </ul>  |



## What do you value most about TRU and what can we do better to prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the future?

March 2019

### Identity

Participants tended to agree that TRU is a teaching-focused social enterprise that has the potential (and responsibility) to lead change in our communities, and that TRU needs to be agile and responsive to student and community needs. Integrating campus and Open Learning into one collaborative institution was identified as a challenge. Our small size and resulting high-quality student experience is an asset.

“I think the genuine focus on our students and their success is really important (...) It is what may genuinely distinguish us from other universities, if we do it correctly.”

“I love that we are a small institution – we know our people, students, community and they should know us. We are not like the larger universities (...) people know each other.”

### Student Success

Students were identified as the main purpose for TRU’s existence, and student needs heavily influenced discussion of identity. Access for all learners through affordable and flexible learning options (especially through blended and online delivery) was key, and career-oriented programming that prepares students for the future was identified as a priority. Increased supports for student services was identified as a need.

“I value the relationships that students are able to build with peers, faculty and staff due to our smaller classroom sizes. Love the community feel! It’s important because we are able to build connections, and learn in a more comfortable setting.”

“I value our small size. Our small size provides a sense of community to our students.”

### Community

Community impact and engagement was strongly related to identity. Participants observed that TRU exists to serve the needs of its communities, and that TRU makes communities stronger through contributions to local economy, problem-solving, and innovative ideas. Remembering where we come from was emphasized, as was TRU’s position as a cultural and social hub.

“I like TRU’s efforts to be part of the community. We should build on that to create even more connections.”

“TRU reflects local/regional needs. From Indigenous education to trades to professional programs, TRU supports the needs of our community/region.”

### Employee Success

Employees (faculty, staff, administrators) were recognized as key to institutional success. Needing to feel valued through inclusion in decision making, equal access to development opportunities, and career stability was emphasized. Positive thoughts included increases in opportunities for PD and energetic, collaborative sub-cultures.

“The people! I think we sometimes neglect to fully recognizing the community of colleagues that make this place tick. Students should be our priority, but keep celebrating and supporting the development of our people to foster a culture of civility and respect.”<sup>(sic)</sup>

“(…) Although I teach the exact same courses online and in the classroom, my OL status seems less than my Sessional status. This needs attention.”

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### Sustainability

TRU's commitment to environmental sustainability was appreciated, and was related to each of the other major themes. Concerns around climate change and suggestions for increasing environmental sustainability were highly ranked. Strategies for attracting sustainable levels of enrolment were suggested, and a lack of a strategic enrolment plan was identified as a challenge.

"I value the commitment to Sustainability initiatives across campus and extending out to the community of Kamloops. Sustainability is important to the development of education and future opportunities beyond education."

"TRU is always trying to respond to the needs of the community (...) Offering relevant programming is essential to keep enrollment healthy and responding to regional need is part of our mandate."

### Diversity

Participants agreed that an inclusive culture that celebrates diverse perspectives and attracts students and employees from various backgrounds is a priority. Diversity extended to open access and equity. Indigenization and internationalization were recognized as important, and more work around diversity and inclusion was recommended.

"(...) TRU is inclusive and allows students to participate in the university community no matter what their circumstances are. This makes us stronger and more diverse than traditional campus based universities (...)."

"The university's diversity of both classes and ethnicities. This is important for the future's work force since globalization is a factor in today's world and to be accustomed to that is a benefit."

### Research Capacity

Research was discussed primarily in relation to the opportunities that TRU can provide for students (graduate and undergraduate) and for the greater community. While there was majority agreement around TRU's identity as a teaching-intensive institution, a particular "TRU style" of research was described in connection with identity, community, and student success.

"Great to see how we are working with community partners to develop community-engaged learning and research opportunities for our students. (...)"

"TRU's role as a civic leader goes hand-in-hand with its responsibility to bring its research and teaching capacity into service for the community. TRU represents a critical mass of research power (...) to address/solve local and regional issues/problems."

### Physical Environment

Comments around TRU's physical environment were both complementary and critical. The physical campus environment was appreciated, especially the outdoor green spaces and attractive campus/ buildings. Options for study space, parking, housing and food services were identified as challenges and were related to student and employee success.

"I value the support we give students. One area where we could improve is parking – we could help students with their expenses by making parking cheaper for them."

"I value the green spaces on campus. This is important since it is beneficial for the environment, as well as to take a mindfulness walk."