

RETURN TO CAMPUS

As we have seen for the last several months, the circumstances around BC's management of COVID and the pandemic continue to change. At the time of the last Board meeting, the Omicron variant had risen to dominate over previous variants, and pushed infection rates to new highs. However, that wave is in fast decline, and with dropping numbers has come relief from government mandated COVID controls and restrictions.

Since my last report to the Board, BC's Chief Provincial Health Officer has rolled back capacity restrictions for inside events, and most recently, eliminated mask mandates except in high-risk locations. Lastly, BC's vaccine passport system will end April 8.

As has been our practice since the onset of the pandemic, TRU has followed advice and recommendations from the Provincial Health Office. As a result, staff, faculty, and students are no longer required to wear masks on our campuses, and capacity restrictions on TRU events have been lifted.

Despite changes to those measures, TRU continues to tell our community to exercise caution and adopt safety measures based on assessments of personal risk. We will continue to emphasize that we are a mask-friendly environment, and anyone who feels the need to protect their health with masks is encouraged to wear one.

As we have done from the outset, TRU will continue to monitor emerging trends and be open to new directions from health officials. We will continue to work with employees in their units to minimize disruptions and protect employee health and safety within the context of our wide commitment to in-person teaching and learning, and the student service requirements of each unit.

ENROLMENT FALL 2022

In my last report to the Board, enrolment data suggested an encouraging picture of our region's and TRU's recovery from the pandemic. However, uncertainty continues around our medium-term international recruitment, and there is continued cause for scrutiny of domestic enrolment trends from our region and some others in Canada. The most recent data from IPE continues to support cautious interpretation of these data, especially around international enrollment.

Total applications and admissions (excluding Nursing, Trades, and Law) are currently tracking higher than last year's numbers and higher than three years ago¹ at the same point. Domestic applications are tracking very close to last year at the same time (currently down 2%) and are up 5% from the same time three years ago.

International applications are currently up 33% from last year and 62% higher than the same point three years ago. Domestic admissions are tracking close to last year at the same time (currently down 3%), while international admissions are up 34%. A portion of these international applications and admissions are from prospective students who were deferred from Winter 2022 due to program capacities and delays in study permit processing.

There remains a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the ability of students to obtain their study permits and to travel to campus. IPE and TRU World continue to monitor these and other factors impacting international students.

Enrolment Funnel This Year to date			Enrolment Funnel Previous Years to date			Enrolment Funnel To-Date % Difference		
Fall 2022	Applications This Year to date	7,075	Fall 2021	Applications Last Year to date	6,144	Applications to date % diff	15%	
	Admissions This Year to date	4,080		Admissions Last Year to date	3,475	Admissions to date % diff	17%	
	Registrants to date	0		Registrants Last Year to date	0	Registrants to date % diff		
	Fall 2019 *	Applications 3 Years Ago to date	5,406	Applications to date % diff	31%			
		Admissions 3 Years Ago to date	3,069	Admissions to date % diff	33%			
		Registrants 3 Years Ago to date	0	Registrants to date % diff				

Latest Application On		March 11, 2022		APPLICATIONS			ADMISSIONS					
Residency	3 Years Ago to date*	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total	3 Years Ago to date*	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total
Domestic	2,962	3,163	4,843	3,105	-2%	64%	1,481	1,541	2,664	1,491	-3%	56%
International	2,444	2,981	4,829	3,970	+33%	82%	1,588	1,934	3,495	2,589	+34%	74%
Total	5,406	6,144	9,672	7,075	+15%	73%	3,069	3,475	6,159	4,080	+17%	66%

Domestic applications from within BC are flat relative to this time last year. The second-largest market for domestic applications is Alberta, where applications are down 14%. Almost all of this drop is in post-secondary transfer students, whereas immediate high school applicants from Alberta are currently up 6%.

¹ IPE now compares applications and admissions to last year and three years ago (Fall 2019), which is the most recent pre-pandemic fall term.

Domestic Applications and Admissions by Province

Province	APPLICATIONS					ADMISSIONS				
	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total
British Columbia	2,544	3,911	2,548	0%	65%	1,320	2,241	1,308	-1%	58%
Alberta	300	436	258	-14%	59%	118	204	90	-24%	44%
Saskatchewan	45	60	24	-47%	40%	12	28	8	-33%	29%
Manitoba	16	33	25	56%	76%	7	19	5	-29%	26%
Ontario	139	211	141	1%	67%	44	86	44	0%	51%
Québec	24	37	15	-38%	41%	7	16	6	-14%	38%
Newfoundland and Labrador	7	11	4	-43%	36%	4	5	0	-100%	0%
New Brunswick	10	15	5	-50%	33%	3	4	2	-33%	50%
Nova Scotia	6	11	8	33%	73%	1	3	1	0%	33%
Prince Edward Island	1	3	3	200%	100%	1	1	1	0%	100%
Yukon	14	18	23	64%	128%	8	15	13	63%	87%
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	17	30	13	-24%	43%	7	16	5	-29%	31%
Unknown (Postal Code Error)	40	67	38	-5%	57%	9	26	8	-11%	31%
Domestic Total	3,163	4,843	3,105	-2%	64%	1,541	2,664	1,491	-3%	56%

Domestic Applications and Admissions from Alberta by Basis of Admission

Basis of Admission	APPLICATIONS					ADMISSIONS				
	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total	Last Year to date	Last Year total	This Year to date	To-date % diff (last yr)	This Year to date % of Last Year total
PS Experience	142	213	100	-30%	47%	32	74	23	-28%	31%
Immediate HS	94	113	100	6%	88%	54	76	45	-17%	59%
Delayed HS	48	74	46	-4%	62%	24	37	16	-33%	43%
Returning	5	20	7	40%	35%	2	8	2	0%	25%
Other	10	13	5	-50%	38%	6	9	4	-33%	44%
Mature	1	3	0	-100%	0%	0	0	0		
Total	300	436	258	-14%	59%	118	204	90	-24%	44%

Including Nursing, Law, and Trades programs, international applications currently account for 47 percent of applications, which is eight percentage points higher than at this time last year (due in part to the large number of deferrals from Winter 2022). It is important to note that these programs (which are excluded from the graphs shown above) are competitive in nature and most seats are given to domestic students.



DEVELOPING VALUES-BASED CULTURE

As the Board of Governors' arms-length investigation into allegations against two senior TRU administrative officials continues, TRU continues to develop a plan to address broader issues related to workplace culture.

As I reported to the Board in February, TRU has engaged the services of an independent HR consultant (Lisa Castle) and The Neutral Zone (TNZ), a specialized firm experienced in helping

organizations such as ours with self-development, improving interpersonal relationships and implementing organizational initiatives. This work is being overseen by VPs Brian Daly and Baihua Chadwick as well as Provost Donna Murnaghan.

TRU's deans and associate vice-presidents assisted recently by providing feedback regarding the design of a TRU-wide engagement process to hear from employees and identify ideas and actions to improve TRU's institutional culture. We are currently developing the project charter for this work with TNZ.

As well, to help keep people up-to-date and informed regarding processes related to culture, we added informational pages to our website. These pages will provide updates around TNZ's engagement processes, as well as the ongoing Board of Governors investigation. [The pages can be found here.](#)

BC BUDGET FOCUSES ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The NDP government released its 2022 budget in February, promising to “build a stronger BC.” Several components of the budget look optimistic for post-secondary education, specifically around training, reducing the talent gap, and increasing the size of BC's skilled labour force.

According to the government, BC is in a strong economic position for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent climate-related disasters. The province's economy expanded by an estimated 5.0% in 2021 and is forecast to expand by 4.0% in 2022 and 2.5% in 2023. Budget 2022's three-year fiscal plan presents declining deficits, with a projected \$5.5-billion deficit in 2022-23 declining to \$3.2 billion in 2024-25.² As a result, the province has committed to invest in areas related to economic recovery, and specifically in post-secondary education.

Recently — as an example of how investments might materialize as opportunities for TRU — the government launched a plan to revitalize tourism. BC's Tourism Task Force emphasized how challenging it has been for industry to find the skilled workers it needs. As a result, the government will invest a further \$2 million for post-secondary education and training to support B.C. students who enrol in tourism and hospitality certificate, diploma or degree programs, tourism-related apprenticeships, and trades training and Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport development programs.³

This program, now in development, will prioritize students who are Indigenous, immigrant or refugee applicants, as well as those from rural or remote locations, and people with accessibility needs. More details will be provided soon, and TRU will monitor closely. We expect to see more programs like this across a wide range of areas in the months to come.

² <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/accessibility/2022-news-release.htm>

³ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/tourism-and-immigration/tourism-industry-resources/our-tourism-strategy/strategic_framework_for_tourism_2022_final_full_version.pdf

WAR IN UKRAINE

I wanted to share a brief update with Board members regarding the steps TRU has taken or continues to take regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine.

On February 24, Russian military forces began an illegal and deadly invasion of Ukraine. The events quickly resonated around the world, including at TRU, which hosts students from both Ukraine and Russia. TRU also has staff and faculty who have been directly or indirectly affected.

TRU currently has 20 students from Ukraine and 66 from Russia. To date, TRU has not differentiated responses or actions between Russian or Ukrainian students, as both groups have required similar levels of emotional, psychological and financial support. Actions taken by TRU to date:

February 24

- TRU World issued two messages, one to students from Ukraine, and one to Russian-speaking students, offering resources for counselling services and individual support by Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking advisors.
- A “Space for Connection” recognizing the power of community healing was created, offering snacks and beverages and a safe place for students to come and support each other.
- VP International Baihua Chadwick and I jointly issued a communication to the campus community in support of our students, faculty, and staff impacted by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

March 3

- TRU supported a student-led rally on campus in support of Ukraine, and a second communication from Baihua Chadwick and I was issued to TRU community in support of Ukraine. Students from both sides of the Russian and Ukrainian borders came out and spoke passionately, sharing experiences and support for each other.
- A TRU World Relief Fund was created to support students impacted by the war, and donations are being matched by TRU World and TRU Foundation.

March 10

- TRU faculty led a rally on campus in solidarity with Ukraine.

March 11

- TRU hosted “Perogies for Healing,” a special event that brought community volunteers together with Ukrainian and Russian students and other members of the TRU

community to make and share perogies with each in a spirit of solidarity and support. The event was extremely well received and will be held again.

Ongoing / Future

- TRU World continues to support weekly “Space for Connection” for students.
- Moving forward, we plan to raise funds to assist all Ukrainian students in need for food, lodging and tuition assistance.
- TRU World is working on contributing \$100,000 as an emergency matching fund to match the donations into the TRU World Relief fund, which will be used to support students in need affected by the war. TRU Foundation is donating \$5,000 as well as matching donations for up to another \$5,000.
- For students from Russia, we provide the same emotional, social, and employment support as for all students.
- We are planning to provide financial assistance to students from Ukraine to enable them to continue their studies. Lastly, we are working on creating full scholarships for Ukrainian refugees.

We will continue to monitor the war in Ukraine and provide our staff, students, and faculty with support as required as we hope for a quick end to the conflict.

LEADERSHIP

Announcement of New Provost — Earlier this month, I was delighted to be able to announce the appointment of a new Provost and VP Academic for TRU. Dr. Gillian Balfour will assume her new duties on July 1. She comes to TRU from King’s University College in Waterloo, Ontario, where she has served as the VP Academic since August 2021.

Dr. Balfour will be an outstanding leader for TRU. Her skills and experience as an academic leader are well-aligned with TRU’s vision and values, and her record of accomplishment and field of research as a faculty member are an excellent fit for our institution.

Dr. Balfour completed a PhD in sociology at the University of Manitoba where she focused on critical socio-legal studies and feminist criminology. Her research interests include a critical analysis of restorative justice and sentencing law reforms intended to address over-incarceration of Indigenous women; victim impact statements in sexual assault cases; and the effects of carceral feminism on the punishment of Indigenous women.

I also want to thank Donna Murnaghan, who has served as our Interim Provost. Her leadership has been instrumental in guiding TRU through the last several months.

Search for VP Research — TRU has commenced its search for a VP Research. Our VP Research will replace the current AVP Research, and will provide a level of leadership that aligns with what is found at our peer Research Universities Council of BC (RUCBC) institutions.

The VP Research will find and develop research partnerships with other universities, institutes, foundations, and organizations; access new resources and funding for TRU; and develop community opportunities that will benefit both faculty and students as well as communities themselves.

I am also pleased to share that Dr. Will Garret-Petts (formerly AVP Research) will serve as our Interim VP of Research. His begins in his new role on April 1.

Senior Leadership development — This year I have continued to work with the President's Leadership Group (executive, deans, associate vice-presidents, and executive directors) to refine our understanding and expectations of senior leadership at TRU.

We are working with a consultant to develop common perspectives on leadership including outcomes, behaviours, and skills/competencies for senior TRU leaders. In this work we have special focus on communications, EDI, and collaboration.

At our most recent session on March 17, we assessed the current state of our collective leadership based on individual interviews. I expect the PLG's work on leadership development will continue for the balance of the year.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

The work of developing an over-arching strategic plan for TRU continues. [Integrated Strategic Planning](#) (ISP) is a continuation of the TRU Envision work completed in 2020, and is intended to align effort and resource allocation across TRU so that we can best achieve our 10-year strategic goals.

The ISP team has recently completed the work of analyzing lengthy submissions solicited from 27 business units. The team coded these submissions using content analysis methodology to produce a comprehensive document setting out emergent themes aligned to TRU's four strategic goals.

That document will now be reviewed by a larger working group. The executive team held a half-day meeting on March 18 to review thematic summaries developed from the planning templates. A draft of a strategic plan is expected this spring, and a final version of the strategic plan is expected to be completed by the summer.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

The loosening of pandemic restrictions across Canadian and international jurisdictions has created more opportunity for in-person outreach and engagement, and as a result, I have been able to participate in numerous events.

The following is a list of some of the activities I have attended that have allowed me to engage with stakeholders, government leaders, other post-secondary organizations, and international delegations:

- March 2 in Washington DC — APPA Thought Leaders' Symposium. This event at a US higher education planning workshop was held for invited participants. TRU was the only Canadian university with a leader present, a nice recognition for our institution.
- March 3 in Vancouver — RUCBC meeting. Engaged with RUCBC members as well as government representatives regarding topics of concern to post-secondary institutions.
- March 4 in Vancouver — Attended the Council of Western Canadian University Presidents meeting.
- March 15 — Attended TRU launch of the U Sport Men's Soccer Nationals Tournament, which will be held at TRU in November.
- March 17 — Hosted Chamber of Commerce Event: An evening with Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir and Mayor Ken Christian.
- March 18 — NDP MLA Ravi Kahlon, who is BC's Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, along with Parliamentary Secretary for Technology and Innovation Brenda Bailey, toured TRU's Industrial Trades and Technology Centre, where they met with instructors, discussed growth in trades and women in trades, as well as the province's plans for recovery.
- March 24 & 25 (at TRU) — Words of Welcome – BC Co-op Association Agriculture and Food Co-op Conference and Trade Show.
- March 27 — Provided virtual welcome address for Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) Conference being held at SFU and virtually March 27-31
- March 29 — Attended TRU's Inaugural Professorial Lecture series, a new event designed to celebrate our faculty who have recently been promoted to full professor.
- March 31 (dinner) — Hosted a delegation from Kenya.

UNIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS

TRU renames SoBE to honour significant donation — The newly named Bob Gaglardi School of Business and Economics honours a Canadian entrepreneur and philanthropist with deep Kamloops roots and a family legacy grounded in community service.

Unveiled on Feb. 17, this is the first faculty or school to be named at TRU and represents the qualities Gaglardi himself values: personal integrity, hard work, strong ethics, innovative thinking, and the ability to face and overcome challenges. Together, TRU and Bob Gaglardi champion a game-changing business education in the heart of the BC Interior.

“This is a pivotal time for the school of business and it’s important that our name embodies the principles we encourage in our students,” says Dean of the Gaglardi School of Business and Economics Michael Henry. “This is the start of a strong partnership with the Gaglardi family rooted in our shared values, including developing ethical business leaders and entrepreneurs who will shape and grow their communities.”

[Learn more about Bob Gaglardi and why the family chose to give to TRU here.](#)

TRU Community Legal Clinic sees 2,000th client — The Thompson Rivers University Community Legal Clinic (TRU CLC) is the first student-staffed free legal clinic in the BC Interior. The students work under the guidance of a team of supervising lawyers to provide legal assistance and advice in a range of areas to those who would otherwise be unable to afford legal assistance.

Last month, the TRU Community Legal Clinic opened its 2,000th client file six days away from the sixth anniversary. CLC opened its first client file on Feb. 9, 2016. In those six years and 19 semesters, 182 students from the TRU Faculty of Law have participated in TRU CLC through the Clinical Practice Course for a range of three, six, nine or 12 credits. [Learn more here.](#)

View From TRU: The power of internationalization — In my most recent column in Kamloops This Week, I wrote about how bringing international perspectives to campus helps our students broaden their knowledge and understanding of different worldviews. [Find the column here.](#)