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THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY



The University of

Choice

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2012

Thompson Rivers University
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Thompson Rivers University: Our History – Our Legacy

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) was founded in 1970 as Cariboo College, one of the network of two-year community colleges created in the 1960s and '70s to bring post-secondary education and training to all corners of British Columbia. The college began operations in Kamloops in the fall of 1970 in temporary quarters at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, and in the summer of 1971 moved to the current campus location on the south slope of the city overlooking the Thompson Rivers. From the main campus in Kamloops, and a satellite campus in Williams Lake, the institution has served regional communities from Merritt in the south and Lillooet in the west, north to Williams Lake, Clearwater and east to Chase for over 35 years.

The original selection of programs included university transfer courses in arts and science, certificate and diploma programs in career and vocational fields and the trades. At the same time, the College took over the responsibility to deliver continuing education courses from the six participating school boards that created the college and defined the region to be served.

Twenty years after the creation of community colleges, widespread public support for greater access to university studies led to a second major expansion of post-secondary education in BC. One major strategy of the 'Access For All' initiative resulted in the college being given university college designation in 1989. This allowed the college to expand the range of program offerings to include complete undergraduate university degrees, through partnership agreements with all three provincial universities.

The new University College of the Cariboo (UCC) thrived under the expanded mandate, developing new program options and taking a leadership role in developing the concept of 'ladders' between traditional one- and two-year college programs and university degrees, to break down traditional barriers between 'college' and 'university' training and create new flexibility for students in planning their career paths.

With the proclamation of the amended College and Institute Act in 1994, UCC was given full authority to grant degrees in its own right, and within five years almost all degrees were independent. UCC established itself as a provincial leader in developing new degree programs such as the Bachelor of Natural Resource Science (BNRS) degree, the first new degree in BC developed outside of the three provincial universities, designed for the changing world of environmental awareness.

As the model of an integrated institution evolved and instructional divisions created new degree completion opportunities that made post-secondary education more accessible, other dimensions of being a university had also emerged. New scholarship and research opportunities, a growing international presence, and connections to the workplace through co-op education and other forms of work experience were all making it apparent that the institution really had become a new kind of university.

This reality, combined with a new understanding in local and regional communities of the potential of a truly comprehensive and highly flexible institution, led to a grassroots community effort to achieve full university status. The Friends of UCC University Society was the catalyst for the second major transition in the history of the institution. In March 2004 the Government of British Columbia announced that UCC would be a full provincial university, mandated to be fully comprehensive and highly flexible.

As an integral component of the transition, the new university would assume full responsibility for all courses and programs of the former BC Open University and Open College, including some 300 distance and online courses, and more than 50 degree, diploma and certificate programs that offered the maximum flexibility through open learning. This opportunity allowed TRU to benefit from the significant expertise and background in distance learning that the Open University and Open College developed over twenty-five years of operation. In addition, it has enabled TRU to significantly expand its services to students across the province and establish a foundation for the flexible delivery of its own programs and those it inherited from the Open University and Open College.

The naming of the university took place in September 2004, and on March 31st, 2005 the Inaugural Convocation ceremonies marked the formal transition to Thompson Rivers University. Today, the impacts of this new role are being felt in many different ways, and the potential benefits of a truly comprehensive, primarily undergraduate, teaching-focused university are being recognized across the country and beyond.

Upwards of 10,000 students now study on campus at TRU, while another 15,000 students enrol annually in distance and online courses and programs. The launch of the first TRU Masters degree in 2005 was the next step in the continued evolution of the university, and the introduction of distance and online learning into an already highly integrated offering of degree, diploma, certificate, trades and adult education programs makes Thompson Rivers University the most comprehensive university in Canada.

In many respects, the transition to TRU marks the achievement of the majority of goals the institution set for itself in its 2000/2005 Strategic Plan. The university's new plan reflects both the dynamic nature of the communities it serves and the changing needs of its students, alumni, faculty and staff. Accordingly, adjustments have been made to the university's mission and value statements and a set of new strategic goals have been framed that set the direction for the next decade and beyond.



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Mission Statement

Thompson Rivers University is a comprehensive, learner-centred, environmentally responsible institution that serves its regional, national, and international learners and their communities through high quality and flexible education, training, research and scholarship.

Value Statements

Learner-Centredness

TRU is a learner-centred institution dedicated to the development of its students, staff and faculty. It aims to empower individuals through intellectual, cultural, ethical, emotional, social and physical development. To this end, TRU believes that all programs or courses should provide students with learning and critical thinking skills and the encouragement to approach issues with creativity.

Accessibility

TRU aims to serve the needs of adult learners across British Columbia and around the world. It is committed to life-long learning and sees the provision of multiple modes and levels of access to education as the best way of meeting these needs. TRU endeavours to maintain access through flexible scheduling of courses and services, through a variety of traditional and distance delivery methods, through a progressive credential structure, and through ladderized curricula, all of which allow students to move in and out of post-secondary education as their personal and professional needs allow.

Quality of Education and Service

TRU strives for the highest levels of educational quality, research, scholarship and service. It is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of its programs and developing graduates who strive for excellence in their studies and rise to the challenge of the future. It sets high standards for its students, faculty and staff and believes that the support necessary to meet those standards should be provided.

Responsiveness

TRU recognizes the interdependence of the region, its communities and the university. It endeavours to play a responsive and creative role in the province's economy through training, research and the development of human resources. It also recognizes a responsibility to respond to the educational, cultural and social needs of the communities it serves.

Comprehensiveness

TRU believes that it can best meet the needs of its face-to-face and distance learning constituencies through a balanced profile of programs and services and, accordingly, provides a range of preparatory, undergraduate, graduate, continuing studies, career-technical, trades and vocational programming.

Sense of Community

TRU recognizes and values the diversity of interests and plurality of cultures among its students and staff. Consequently, it seeks to create a safe, participatory environment in which the keystones are mutual trust, respect and integrity of relationships among those various interests and cultures.

Accountability

TRU values the responsible and effective stewardship of human, physical and financial resources as a means of maximizing benefits to its students and staff, and to the provincial, national and international communities it serves.

Environmental Responsibility

TRU recognizes the environmental challenges faced by current and future generations, believes in the importance of a sustainable future, and values the ethic of environmental responsibility.

Quality Work Place

TRU recognizes the importance of a work environment that provides for the professional, personal, social and cultural development of its employees. The integration of employees into the life of the campus is integral to making the university a desirable place to work.

Strategic Goals

As the most comprehensive, primarily undergraduate university in Canada, Thompson Rivers University seeks to build on the strengths it has established for the quality and impact of its highly flexible, integrated, experiential and practical university learning experience. Specifically, TRU will seek to clearly establish itself as the University of Choice in the context of seven distinct strategic goals.



> Research at TRU

The University of



Choice ...for Student Engagement

Thompson Rivers University recognizes that learning in all its forms is greatly enhanced by the environment in which it takes place. As a comprehensive, teaching-focused university, TRU has a unique opportunity to engage students and create an experience, be it on campus or in the community, that will enhance educational objectives and serve to prepare students to make positive, life-long contributions to our global society and the sustainability of the communities in which we live.

As the University of Choice for Student Engagement, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Engage students in the quest for world citizenship through social and cultural learning opportunities, in a respectful and inclusive environment that provides a better understanding and appreciation of our global community.
- > Engage students in discovery by incorporating research, in the broadest sense, as part of the curriculum and equip them with an understanding of academic integrity, ethics, social and environmental responsibility.
- > Engage students in a stimulating academic experience that provides a highly interactive environment between students, faculty and alumni as an integral part of an ongoing focus on improving and enhancing learning.
- > Engage students in a healthy lifestyle through activities that promote their physical, social, cultural, emotional and intellectual development.
- > Engage students in university governance and decision making and ensure they have meaningful representatives on university, faculty, and departmental committees.
- > Engage students both in the use and application of technology in the processes of teaching and learning and in the experience of distance education as a lifelong learning skill.
- > Engage the campus community in facilitating the successful transition of students from high school or the workplace to the university environment, and the retention of students to credential completion at all levels, and by all means of program delivery.
- > Engage the campus community in providing a welcoming environment for students, with a positive service focus in all areas, to ensure a rich campus life that supports the development of a strong sense of belonging to the institution.
- > Provide increased opportunities for students to engage in on-campus employment.

The University of



Choice

...for the Integration of Research and Scholarship with Teaching and Learning

Thompson Rivers University recognizes that it is the contribution to the creation of knowledge and the application of existing knowledge to solve problems that distinguishes universities from other post-secondary institutions, and that students will benefit most from this when faculty who are actively engaged in research and scholarly work bring their expertise and experiences to their teaching. The university also believes that students benefit when they have the opportunity to participate in the processes of creation, integration, application and dissemination of knowledge, and sets as a high priority the integration of research and scholarly work with teaching and learning.

As the University of Choice for the Integration of Research and Scholarship with Teaching and Learning, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Encourage, support and celebrate research, scholarship, creative works and innovation transfer that enhance the quality of education.
- > Increase the opportunities for students to participate in research and scholarly work, and promote the value of pure and applied research in meeting the challenges faced by the communities the university serves.
- > Ensure that academic curricula contribute to students' understanding of the ways in which knowledge is obtained, evaluated, integrated, applied and disseminated and that all students have a firm understanding of academic integrity, ethics and social responsibility.
- > Develop strengths in pedagogical research that support ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- > Support the development of masters degree programs in areas consistent with TRU's expertise and in which there is demonstrated need.
- > Raise the profile of faculty and student research and scholarly work across campus by promoting the dissemination of results, and by supporting regular research colloquia and seminars for faculty, students and interested external community constituents.
- > Plan and build a new Library and Learning Commons on the Kamloops campus that is designed to facilitate and support the scholarship and research activities of both faculty and students.
- > Recognize and celebrate the contribution of TRU alumni – both students and faculty – to research, scholarship, creative works and innovation, and knowledge transfer.
- > Expand professional development activities focused on teaching and learning, the integration of research activities into programs, and improving services to students and university operations.



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> The Gathering Place for Aboriginal Students



> BC Centre for Open Learning

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...for Aboriginal Students and First Nations

Thompson Rivers University, known for its broad, multi-cultural student population, seeks to ensure that the campus, curriculum and the university community are welcoming, supportive and positive environments for aboriginal students to achieve their education goals.

As the University of Choice for Aboriginal Students and First Nations, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Review curricula to identify courses and programs where it is appropriate to incorporate aboriginal knowledge and culture and promote understanding for all students.
- > Determine, through consultation, how to make the campus more welcoming and supportive for people of aboriginal ancestry.
- > Expand services in support of the successful participation of aboriginal students in all programs.
- > Build partnerships with aboriginal and First Nations communities and organizations to support the academic preparation of aboriginal students.
- > Develop business, technology, trades and leadership programs in response to the needs of First Nations.
- > Devote space to support a First Nations House of Learning on campus to provide social, cultural and educational opportunities for all.
- > Seek to increase the number of employees of aboriginal ancestry in university employee groups.
- > Expand training for faculty and staff in order to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity to the issues faced by aboriginal students.

The University of



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...for Open Learning

Thompson Rivers University, which has a legacy of being open and accessible to students, now has a legislative mandate for open learning in the province of British Columbia. As the most comprehensive university in Canada, TRU has the ability and opportunity to incorporate openness across all programs, and ensure that learning, and the recognition of learning in the form of a credential, is available provincially, nationally and internationally.

As the University of Choice for Open Learning, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Strive to make post-secondary education available at a time and place and through delivery methods convenient to the learner.
- > Establish distance education as a viable complement to on-campus and classroom learning, and promote the inherent openness of all TRU programs across the institution.
- > Expand the recognition and acceptance of credits earned at national and international institutions by establishing an educational credit bank that broadens credential-completion opportunities.
- > Broaden participation in post-secondary education by developing programs to encourage and engage first-time, first-generation learners.
- > Enhance the opportunities for distance students to receive academic and non-academic support on-line with the aim of improving completion rates.
- > Where programs allow, expand options for greater flexibility through part-time and distance learning opportunities.
- > Examine opportunities for distance learning students to develop a dynamic and meaningful relationship with other students and the institution.
- > Work to improve the integration of off-campus employees into the life of the institution.
- > Expand training in the field of distance learning for faculty and staff, and provide an orientation to the challenges faced by students in the distance learning environment.

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> TRU Campus



> International Building

The University of



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...for Environmental Sustainability

Thompson Rivers University recognizes that it has a significant role to play in education, research, policy development and information exchange related to the health of the local and global environments in which we live and work. TRU seeks to be the University of Choice for students concerned about environmental sustainability and to be recognized for its leadership and stewardship in responding to environmental challenges.

As the University of Choice for Environmental Sustainability, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Develop and expand programming and associated research activities in the areas of environmentally sustainable technologies, policy development, and environmentally and socially responsible economic development.
- > Develop policies and best practices that support environmental stewardship and sustainability in the university's operations.
- > Foster environmental literacy amongst students, staff, faculty and alumni, and cooperate with other community partners to increase environmental awareness.
- > Encourage the development of partnerships with public and private sector organizations in support of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The University of



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...for International Opportunities

Thompson Rivers University has a rich history of being open and accessible to students from around the world, and of extending the expertise of the university to the international community. Building on the legacy of thirty years of international connections, the university seeks to balance success in the international context by creating expanded international opportunities and experiences for Canadian students, faculty and staff, and by increasing levels of international awareness and understanding within the university community.

As the University of Choice for International Opportunities, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Increase the number of international learning opportunities for TRU students.
- > Increase opportunities for TRU faculty to teach and conduct research internationally.
- > Develop partnerships with international universities for joint research, scholarship and faculty exchange opportunities.
- > Review curricula to identify courses and programs where it is appropriate to incorporate international perspectives and increase awareness of global issues.
- > Develop an international presence on the Williams Lake campus and create activities that will profile and celebrate internationalism on all TRU campuses.
- > Expand TRU's academic activities internationally.
- > Expand support and services available to international students.
- > Expand training for faculty and staff in order to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity to the issues faced by students from international backgrounds.



> Trades & Technology Building

The University of



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...for Career Success

Thompson Rivers University recognizes that access to post-secondary education is essential for all members of society in the 21st-century global economy. Success is a lifelong achievement, and over the course of a lifetime individuals will have opportunities to achieve success in many ways. TRU seeks to be the university best known and regarded for its unique ability to prepare students with an integrated set of academic, applied and experiential skills to be highly successful at every stage of life.

As the University of Choice for Career Success, Thompson Rivers University will:

- > Define and establish the characteristics of TRU graduates that will equip them for career success in a global economy by providing the knowledge, skills and experiences required to achieve academic excellence, personal growth, and international awareness and understanding.
- > Create new interdisciplinary opportunities that give students the flexibility to combine theory and practice in preparation for the demands of the 21st-century.
- > Achieve the full integration and laddering of credentials in all program areas (academic, professional, technical and trades) to establish the university as the first choice for transfer students from universities and colleges across Canada for degree completion or to complete a professional career credential.
- > Review the mandate and direction of Continuing Education to increase opportunities for integration, flexibility of learning, and specialized training that builds on existing credits and credentials in support of continued career advancement and success over the working lifetime of individuals.
- > Expand services to link graduates with potential employers and to engage alumni in mentoring and supporting graduates as they move into the workforce.
- > Develop graduate programs that support the environmental, economic, social and professional development objectives of the interior region and the province.



Thompson Rivers University



> Campus Activity Centre