

# Annual Report 2017

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union

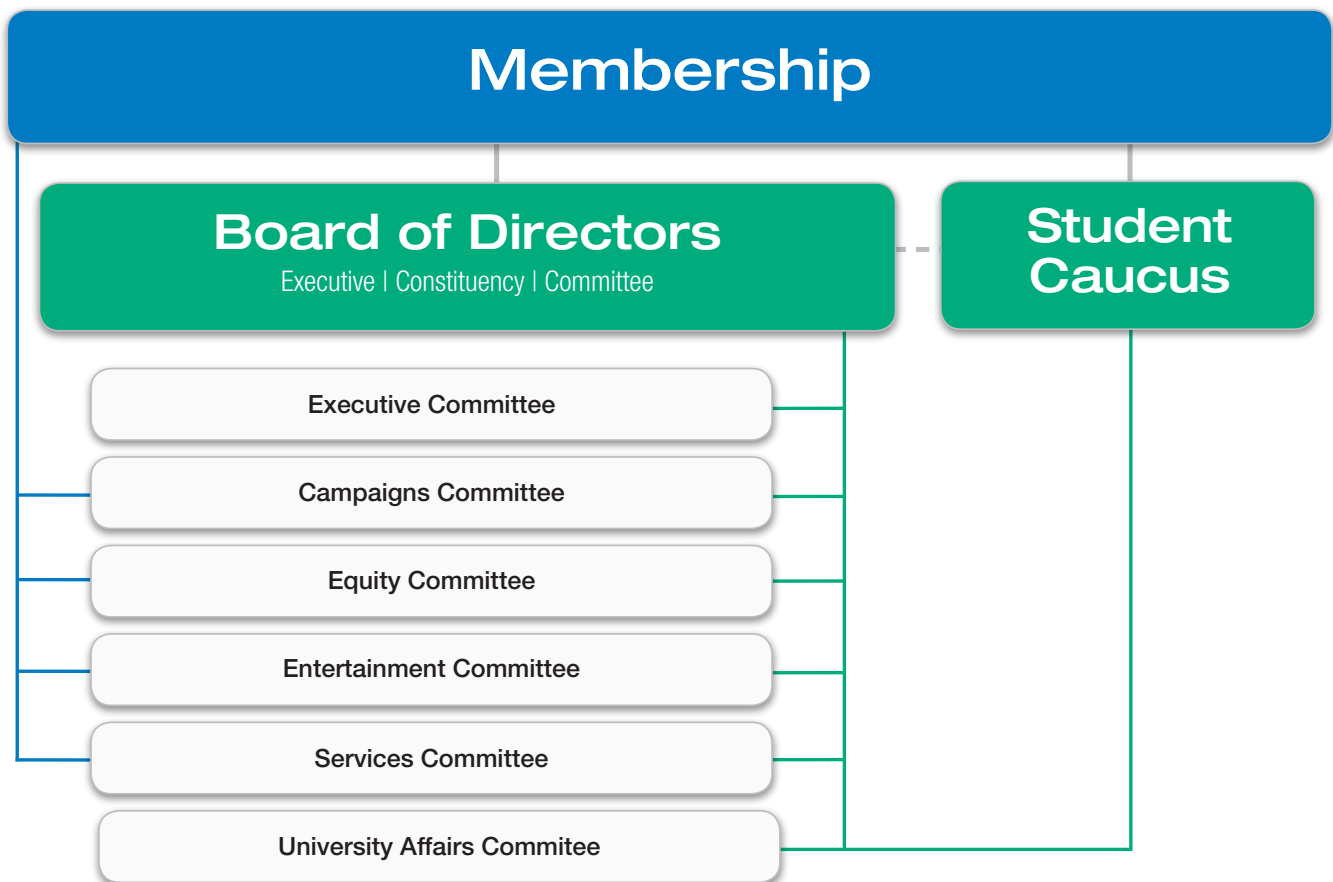


# About Us

## About Us

The Thompson Rivers University Students' Union is the membership organization of the over 10,000 students studying at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops British Columbia. Governed by the BC Societies Act, the TRUSU Constitution and Bylaws, and the TRUSU Policy Manual, the Thompson Rivers University Students' Union seeks to ensure that students are engaged, valued, and supported in pursuing their educational aspirations.

The following report outlines of the activities of the Union from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, spanning three semesters and two Board of Directors terms. For further background information on the nature of the advocacy, services, and entertainment reported in this document please visit the Union's website at [trusu.ca](http://trusu.ca).



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# University Affairs



## University Affairs

The Union takes a three-tiered approach to student participation in university affairs through the Student Caucus. Building from a foundation of supporting meaningful student representation, the Student Caucus creates capacity for advancing solutions to student issues while pursuing an overarching vision of transparent, informed, effective, and collegial governance.

In 2017, the Caucus maintained success in recruiting for a comprehensive range of student representative positions and implemented more interactive meeting activities and a new peer-to-peer team leader system to support and engage those representatives as a team.

The Student Budget Consultation continued to build on its capacity for participation and accurate representation, its potential to secure meaningful commitments based on students' priorities, and to provide focus and direction for Student Caucus projects.

The Student Caucus continued in 2017 to tackle challenging projects that have the greatest impact on the student experience. Issues that students have prioritized have proven to require large-scale and contentious solutions built over multiple years, and the Student Caucus has had a mix of successes and failures. These have both provided opportunities to develop better strategies to advocate for students.

On food service, the Hungry for Choice campaign built on its previous success and, in light of the 2018 expiry of the campus food service contract, secured a community consultation to

shape any new or renewed contracts. This is a good example of empowering the campus community to drive their own improved experiences.

On textbook affordability, the Student Caucus continued to advance the cause of "open textbooks", which use permissive copyright to make educational resources free for students and adaptable by faculty. The Caucus secured a key committee endorsement for its proposed grants program to support the creation and use of open textbooks at TRU. Working from there with a growing network of campus partners, a request has been submitted to fund the grants program in the coming year.



Recruiting Students for the Caucus



# University Affairs

On academic advising, the Student Caucus pressured administration to put the necessary focus and resources toward implementing a critical tool, Degree Works, to help students and advisors build clear and effective plans to graduation.

On campus parking, the Student Caucus struggled to effectively lobby the university administration leading to new challenges for students. However, it learned important lessons about the dangers of negotiating with authorities who have their own agendas, and the central role of community involvement in solving campus issues.

Overall, the Student Caucus had another year of both successes and growth.

## Student Caucus and Student Representation

As a model for supporting student representation, the Student Caucus has continued its success as it enters its seventh year. To reflect this growing experience, its organization has been formally established in the Union's Bylaws as well as enhanced to be more accountable, effective, and well-resourced. It maintained its successful track record in the recruitment and nomination of a comprehensive range of student representative positions across the institution while enhancing its support and engagement through the creation of a peer-to-peer team leader system.

### *Student Caucus Organization*

As the Student Caucus becomes increasingly established as a central function of the Union and a recognized group in university governance, its organization has both evolved and been formalized. This has provided for increased clarity, resources, and the possibility to plan with greater confidence.

In 2017, the Student Caucus made substantial changes to enhance its organization through special resolutions at the Union's Annual General Meeting.

A Bylaw amendment was passed to establish the Student Caucus Steering Committee as a Standing Committee of the Students' Union. This reflects the continuing development of the Student Caucus as one of the central means to fulfil the Students' Union's constituted purposes and vision, mission, and values.

The amendment also set out a new membership for the committee. Two elected committee representatives were added. This provides for the direct election of a greater proportion of members working on university affairs, and provides formal representation of university affairs work at the Board of Directors. The Graduate Students' Representative and International



### Student Caucus Orientation

Students' Representative, which previously served on the Equity Committee, were added. This better represents the related constituencies, graduate students and international students, as having interests primarily in relation to their experiences with the university. Finally, the number of Student Caucus members-at-large was reduced from five to three to reflect the addition of four elected members of the Board of Directors. This continues to provide opportunities for greater engagement and leadership by volunteers. Overall, the membership of the committee grew from six to eight, providing more resources to address university affairs work.

In 2018, a further opportunity to reflect and clarify the evolution of the Student Caucus will be presented to the Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors has submitted a special resolution that would change the name of the Student Caucus Steering Committee to the "University Affairs Committee." This would better reflect the content of the committee's work as well as being more readily understandable and concise.

### *Student Caucus Membership*

The Student Caucus continued a successful, student-centred approach for recruiting student representatives in 2017. Results continued to demonstrate success in measurable indicators of student representation, and in the quality of the experience of those involved.

The engagement-focused approach to recruitment continued to provide multiple points of contact and information when students needed it. The September recruitment drive collected the contact information of 241 students interested in becoming involved in university governance. These students were

# University Affairs

invited to an information session, and twenty attendees took advantage of comprehensive Student Caucus Information Guides and presentations explaining responsibilities, schedules, representative positions, and projects. They were invited and supported to submit informed and considered applications, and, with further online applications, more than fifty were received in total.

The Student Caucus continued to limit appointments to positions that provided an expectation of meaningful engagement while declining to appoint to committees that had not met regularly or considered substantive business. This ensured a learning experience or impact could be realized.

At the same time, the Student Caucus continued to expand its membership in new areas of decision-making and in existing areas that have sought its involvement for the first time. The Student Caucus appointed representatives to the new Academic Computing Technology Advisory Committee, to the Business and



Open Textbook Tabling

Economics Faculty Council, and to the majority of the numerous student positions on the Arts Faculty Council. While the Social Work and Education Faculty Council moved to an internal selection process for its student representative, that position retains its membership in the Student Caucus.

Student Caucus membership in 2017 consisted of fifty-six representatives across sixty-three positions, and the Union filled 93% of student representative positions to which it nominates or appoints.

## *Orientation, Support, and Engagement*

Student representatives in 2017 had meaningful and effective experiences. The Student Caucus provided an interactive orientation and an ongoing communication and coordination platform, and support and engagement for members was enhanced through a new team leader system. Members had regular opportunities to engage through both meetings and activities.

The Student Caucus orientation for the 2017/18 cohort of student representatives was held on September 30, 2017. Participants gained, or reinforced from the information session, an understanding of the Student Caucus and university governance. They further gained practical skills for meeting participation and campus outreach, and learned about key projects. This was concluded with a social with food and refreshments to build a sense of camaraderie in the group.

The Student Caucus also improved student representative engagement through regular activities and communication, and a new peer leadership system.

In a growing recognition that members have varied commitments and availabilities, the Student Caucus continued to provide consistent engagement through monthly, predictable meetings. The meeting agendas have been revised to be more interactive. Presentations have been tailored to seek feedback, reports have been minimized, and workshops have had practical topics and group activities. Meetings have been complemented by regular contact through Basecamp, an online team-working system that provides access to documents, a schedule, task lists, message forums, group chat, and individual messaging.

This support and team-building was supplemented for the first time through a team leader system. Student Caucus Steering Committee members enhanced their support role by each acting as a team leader for a group of Student Caucus members organized based on themes of their respective committees' mandates. Team leaders served as a member's primary point of contact and proactively checked in on progress, encouraged meeting attendance, and invited participation in project-based activities according to availability. This peer-based system has created a greater sense of community in the Student Caucus, and increased meeting attendance levels.

In 2018, the Student Caucus will continue to refine the team-leader system and engage in a survey of members concluding their term to identify further opportunities to improve the experience.

# University Affairs

## Student Budget Consultation

The Student Budget Consultation provides the most influential role for students in any university budget model in Canada, and provides critical direction from the student body in selecting Student Caucus projects and issues to address.

In 2014, the TRU Board of Governors determined to replace an inflexible and unresponsive budget process, as the Union had called for in previous years. The Union participated in developing and supported a more strategic, transparent, and consultative budget model. That included an agreement to recognize a formal Student Budget Consultation to provide student input for consideration in the development of service plans and budget requests across the university.

In 2017, the Student Caucus continued to improve participation in the Consultation and to refine the survey tool to better record students' experiences and opinions. It continued to make progress toward having students' priorities reflected in university planning, including securing a response to every recommendation in the Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18. Work on the Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19 has addressed the challenge of repeating student priorities while seeking more timely and collaborative responses and more systematic incorporation into plans and budgets across the university.

### *Participation and Results*

The Student Budget Consultation in 2017 provided an increasingly robust opportunity for students have their opinions accurately and effectively understood and reported to the university.

Students' budget priorities in 2017 were again identified through a comprehensive survey. This process has been increasingly successful in engaging students, and more nuanced in registering their opinions.

In 2017, the Student Budget Consultation survey again achieved a greater participation rate than prior years with 365 respondents completing the extensive questionnaire in full. The profile of the respondents again closely resembled the student population across age, faculty of study, gender, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal identity, and domestic/international status. This continued improvement reflects both the growing familiarity with the process amongst the membership and improved promotion and incentive efforts.

The 2017 survey also enhanced the way students identify priorities through three perspectives. First, the survey continued to provide for direct prioritization to allow students to report

their own priorities without being filtered by analysis. Second, the survey continued to perform a satisfaction-importance gap analysis to provide strategic focus on areas that are not only important to students, but where efforts to improve also have greater potential. A third indicator, implemented for the first time, uses the correlation between satisfaction with individual items to overall satisfaction with TRU to indicate a "derived importance." This provides further strategic focus on areas where potential for improvement is also more likely to improve satisfaction with the university overall. A comparison of the priority list, the gap analysis, and the derived importance provided for the most reliable and useful selection of the top five items.

In the previous two years, Town Halls were held to gather details of service gaps and expectations for priorities leading to focused and tangible recommendations. However, in 2017, for the first time, the top five priorities arising from the survey were recurring from previous years. As a result, the Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/2018 compiled prior year Town Hall results with current year open survey comments, which confirmed and refined the themes for each priority. This also meant the Report provided, for each priority, a background and context outlining previous recommendations, commitments, and actions, as well as external and anticipated changes, and recommendations were formulated in that context.

The five priorities identified in Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18 were parking, food services, Student Awards and Financial Support, academic advising, and course materials. The Report made thirteen recommendations to improve those priority areas.



Hungry for Choice Petition



# University Affairs

## *Securing Responses to Students' Priorities*

Securing responses to Student Budget Consultation priorities and related recommendations is a critical aspect of making the process meaningful to participants and impactful for the student experience. Since the beginning, and through 2017, this has also proven to be one of the most challenging aspects of the process, requiring intensive communication, coordination across the complex structures of the university, and negotiation with administrative authorities who have their own objectives. How and to what extent meaningful responses are secured continues to develop.

In 2016, and continuing through the first semester of 2017, measures were taken to ensure the response to students' input would be more meaningful. The Student Caucus had learned that Reports were not widely known of, or understood, and it was unclear how or whether it was being considered in budget development. The Caucus did not expect that every priority be acted on, but that detailed responses be provided as to whether, how, and why issues will or will not be addressed.

As a result, the Report was not only submitted to senior administration, but was further distributed directly to the heads of all academic and administrative units for consideration in unit planning, and presented to the Budget Committee of Senate to prepare its members to review unit services plans and ensure consideration of students' priorities. The Student Caucus further communicated directly with budget-holders with direct responsibility for priorities to ensure consideration and secure adequate responses. Finally, the Student Caucus developed a

web-based tracking and publication system for recommendation responses so students could understand how their input was reflected.

Significant improvement was made, and by March 2017 the university provided responses to all twenty-three recommendations from the Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18. Moving forward, more timely and collaborative responses remain desirable, as well as a more systematic incorporation into unit-plans and budgets. The Students' Union remains committed to this continuous improvement.

Responses are now being sought to recommendations from the Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19 with this improvement in mind.

The Report was submitted to senior administration and distributed to all individuals in positions of leadership and management at TRU in mid-October 2017, and it was presented to the November 2017 meeting of the Budget Committee of Senate.

Further, communications to ensure consideration and secure adequate responses were changed to improve coordination, standardization, and collaboration in responses. Each request for a response to a recommendation was sent together to the budget-holder(s) with direct responsibility, the budget-holder(s) significantly affected or operationally involved, the relevant direct manager of those budget-holder(s) (if any), and the relevant senior executive of those budget-holder(s). The request further provided a template for responses to ensure sufficient detail and relevance. Finally, requests were presented in a more open and descriptive way that encouraged dialogue.

As this process began somewhat late in this year, there were no responses received by the end of 2017, but the Student Caucus is confident that responses will be forthcoming in the early months of 2018. The webpage tracking and publication system has been updated, and will reflect responses as they are received.

## **University Issues**

In 2017, the Student Caucus continued to work on long-standing student priorities including food services, course materials, academic advising, and parking. Addressing issues that have been raised in previous years brought new challenges and opportunities. The Student Caucus sought to adapt to changes and build on established achievements, and refined its strategies from both successes and failures while delivering important progress to a better overall student experience.



Open Textbook Presentation

# University Affairs

## *Food Service - Hungry for Choice*

The Hungry for Choice campaign built on previous successes and pursued a new opportunity in 2017 to create an avenue for further food services improvements to be actively shaped by campus stakeholders. This advanced an important recognition of the relationship between food and community in terms of health, success, diversity, and social activity.



Students at the Food Truck Festival

In the Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18, students' top priority for improvement was food services. Students wanted increased variety and nutritional and dietary options; better value and quality per dollar; extended hours to support campus activity; and reduced lines and wait times. More broadly, students identified exclusive food service contracts as a barrier to improvements.

In 2016, the Student Caucus responded to these concerns with a successful Hungry for Choice campaign to have TRU introduce market competition to campus food services in order to empower students as consumers. As a result, TRU committed to allow food trucks on campus as of the Winter 2017 semester, open the TRU Community Trust properties to independent food providers by summer 2018, and make improvements to existing food services in the meantime. In 2017, the improvements have begun to materialize. One food truck began operating once weekly on campus starting in March 2017. A second truck joined in the Fall 2017 semester. In existing food services, some outlet's hours were extended and nutritional information was better communicated. Issues of value, quality, and lines remained unaddressed.

In 2017, the Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19 again identified food services as a top student priority. The themes of students' feedback were consistent with the previous year. As a result, the Student Caucus sought to build upon the initial improvements it won. It followed up with Ancillary Services to discuss the details of implementing the prior commitments, particularly the introduction of food trucks.

Importantly, the Caucus also sought to take advantage of a new opportunity – the 2018 expiry of the current food service contract. It proposed that Ancillary Services work together with the Student Caucus to engage the campus community in shaping the future of food at TRU in any new or renewed contract. Initial meetings and discussions in the summer positively broached food truck policy and practice as well as identifying several possible service ideas. Unfortunately, when pressed on the importance of the contract renewal, Ancillary Services ceased responding altogether.

The Student Caucus determined that this opportunity was too rare and impactful to miss, regardless of the administration's willingness to partner. It determined to launch a campaign to call on TRU to hold a full and meaningful consultation to shape any new or renewed campus food service contract(s).

On September 21, 2017, the new Hungry for Choice campaign was launched. Based on the success in the previous year, the launch event was a food truck festival. Six local food trucks set up in the Campus Commons before and during the annual Movie Night. Over 600 people attended the festival and the Movie Night, providing the first opportunity to collect petition signatures in support of a consultation on the food service contract. In the following weeks, the campaign was promoted through an open letter to the community, social media announcements of endorsements, and media coverage in the Omega Student Newspaper, Kamloops This Week, and CBC Radio. Outreach on campus gathered a total of 1,691 petition signatures. This demand from individual community members was complemented with endorsements from 28 campus groups that make up the campus social fabric, represent its diversity, and organize much of the activities that make the campus vibrant.

On December 08, 2017 the campaign presented the call for a consultation to the TRU Board of Governors. The Board was very receptive of the presentation and agreed that a consultation was needed and worthwhile. In the following weeks, a confirmation was sent that TRU will hold a consultation, and that the administration is developing a consultation plan to be shared with the Union and other stakeholders in early 2018. This was a critical first achievement for the campaign, creating the opportunity for campus community members to be heard.

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In 2018, the Student Caucus will seek out the consultation details and work to facilitate meaningful participation by students and others on campus.

## *Affordable Course Materials - Open Textbooks*

The Student Caucus continued its initiative to address the growing crisis in the affordability of textbooks through open copyright course materials, which are available to students and instructors free of charge. Efforts are gaining ground, in part through a partnership between the Student Caucus and stakeholders from across the campus.

In the Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18, students' fifth priority was the Bookstore. On further investigation, students identified the price and affordability of textbooks and other course materials as their primary concern. In the Student Budget Consultation 2018/19, the survey was revised to seek opinions on course materials as a distinct topic of consideration. Course materials themselves then became students' fifth priority, and price and affordability remained the central issue.

Textbooks constitute a significant and growing proportion of the rising cost of post-secondary education. Students are increasingly frustrated that, at the same time that they are paying more and more each year in tuition fees, textbook prices have also risen 88% between 2006 and 2016 – more than four times the rate of inflation during the same period. This creates frustration with the textbook industry and a desire for the university to more actively and effectively pursue alternatives.

In 2016, the Student Caucus first recognized the potential of open educational resources to provide substantial financial and learning benefits if their use could be scaled and mainstreamed. It launched the Open Textbooks campaign in August 2016 with the objective to have an Open Textbook Grants Program at TRU similar to those successfully established at four other British Columbia universities. The campaign further established a greater understanding of open educational resources amongst students and faculty. A petition drive collected over 1,100 signatures by the end of 2016 in support of the program and greater open educational resource use.

In 2017, the campaign was continued. Further outreach led to a total of over 1,600 petition signatures. A presentation was also made to each of the Faculty Councils throughout the Winter semester with robust and promising discussions at each. This led to a presentation to the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) of Senate on April 13, 2017. The APPC

provided an endorsement of the Open Textbook Grants Program, and the University Librarian and the Interim Vice President Open Learning committed to work with the Students' Union to develop a 2018/19 Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) request for the program.



## Club Endorsements for Hungry for Choice

Since that time, the Students' Union, the Library, and Open Learning have begun to establish a partnership, building from the current SIF, to develop a funding request for an Open Textbook Grants Program as part of the full range of open education activities and projects of campus. In 2018, the Student Caucus will continue to pursue this partnership.

## *Academic Advising – Degree Works*

The Student Caucus made important progress in 2017 on a longstanding student priority to improve academic advising. This came from successful pressure to more quickly implement a software system, Degree Works, that would significantly improve the accuracy, consistency, and transparency of educational planning for both advisors and students.

Academic advising has been one of students' longest standing priorities, having been raised with the university repeatedly over four years. Students' concerns were first raised in an August 2014 forum with the Students' Union and the University Registrar. Academic advising was subsequently a top priority in the Student Budget Consultation Reports 2015/16 and 2016/17. It was further listed in the Student Budget Consultation 2017/18 as a priority for which a substantial response was lacking. Throughout four years of student feedback, themes have included a lack of



# University Affairs

accessibility and capacity (i.e. lineups), a lack of planning tools, a lack of service continuity (i.e. between central and program advising), inaccuracy and lack of information, and a poor service relationship. Further, a lack of predictable course offerings was also prioritized and linked to advising challenges.

Since 2014, TRU's responses on academic advising have been mixed. It is important to note that some improvements have been made. Satisfaction with advising in Student Budget Consultation surveys improved steadily between 2015 and 2017, likely due to improved processes and service delivery on the front-lines. Those efforts have been appreciated. However, systematic reform to academic advising remained unfinished.

In the Student Budget Consultation 2018/19, advising was therefore identified as a priority again, and service continuity, inaccuracy, and course offerings remained as challenges.

A fundamental piece of the solution is the implementation of Degree Works, a "comprehensive academic advising, transfer articulation, and degree audit solution." ([elucian.com/degreeworks](http://elucian.com/degreeworks)) The intent to implement Degree Works was communicated to the Students' Union as early as 2014. However, the formal Degree Works Implementation Project did not start until March 2016, and quickly fell significantly behind schedule. The target date of January 2017 for use by advising staff in all programs passed with less than 25% progress. Complicated software set-up; revision of out-of-date and complicated academic programs; and resource demands across implementation and ongoing support led to delays.

In 2016, the University Registrar requested additional funding to address the delays and support implementation of Degree Works, but the request was unsuccessful despite its strategic importance and prioritization by students. This left the date of full implementation uncertain.

In 2017, the Student Caucus determined to take action to get the Degree Works project the focus, commitment, and resources it needed to be successful and deliver improvements to students.

This began with a meeting with the Degree Works team including the Registrar, Assistant Registrar, and Project Manager, on July 27, 2017. This meeting served to establish a shared understanding of the status of the project. The Student Caucus learned the full extent of the delays, and that the primary cause was a lack of resources and coordination across the university.

To secure university-wide focus and resources, the Student Caucus sent a letter on August 03, 2017 to the senior administration, the Registrar, and all Deans. It outlined the demand to act on advising issues, expressed disappointment in

delays, and called for a concerted effort to get the project back on track. This led to a September 19, 2017 meeting with the Provost, the Registrar, and the Degree Works Project Manager. While the administration raised points of difficulty, the student representatives insisted that all necessary steps be taken to address those difficulties and get results for students who had already waited years. A commitment was made that the Registrar would meet with the Deans to determine possible solutions. Over the following weeks, the Student Caucus continued to press the university for a concrete plan. In early October, the Provost informed the Student Caucus that the Deans were given a January 2018 deadline to have a Degree Works implementation plan ready for their respective Faculties/Schools.

In 2018, the Student Caucus will follow up with the Provost and Deans to confirm that Degree Works implementation plans are in place and will lead to full use of the advising software in a reasonable timeline.

## Campus Parking

The Student Caucus faced challenging setbacks in 2017 in its work to make campus parking more affordable, flexible, and convenient. University administration made a final decision on changes discussed in previous years that have been unfavourable overall to campus parking users, including students. Important lessons were learned, and in the future the Student Caucus will seek greater community involvement in any work on this and other issues.



Recruiting Students for the Caucus

# University Affairs

Parking at the TRU Kamloops campus has been an issue of common concern for students, staff, and faculty for some time. In September 2017, these concerns were brought to a head as the campus community wrestled with the combined challenges of construction that reduced vehicle access points to campus and available parking lots, and the implementation of the new Sustainable Parking Framework that has not worked well for anyone.



## Open Text Books Presentation

The university administration has suggested that student interests and the Student Caucus drove these changes, so it is important to clarify what the Caucus did and did not do. The Student Caucus did advocate strongly for changes to parking, but in doing so made mistakes. The intention was to advance a parking system that works better for all stakeholders – one that addresses a broad range of concerns including access, affordability, infrastructure, efficiency, fairness, flexibility, and sustainability. In the end, the changes made do not meet a majority of these concerns, and were the result of decisions in which the Caucus did not have a say.

The Student Caucus first raised students' concerns with parking in the Student Budget Consultation Report 2016/17, following two years of parking fee increases. The Report highlighted unaffordability; poor value for service; the need for transparent reinvestment of revenue; the need for space and demand management; the lack of rate options; and the lack of viable transportation alternatives.

Based on these issues, the Caucus began advocating for parking changes in the summer of 2015. In an initial discussion, the Vice

President Administration and Finance insisted that any proposed changes not result in revenue losses. From that starting point, the Caucus attempted a good faith negotiation by proposing a new parking system to address students' concerns within administration's revenue requirement. It offered TRU concessions that students would not otherwise support to generate revenue for other benefits a new system might realize. This later proved to be damaging, as the university administration took political advantage of the compromises and eventually made a unilateral decision.

The Caucus proposal was shared with the staff and faculty unions, submitted to university administration, and from there directed to the Parking Appeals and Advisory Committee. The committee considered it and a staff union proposal starting in November 2015. The topic was contentious. However, the student representatives built a consensus on one idea that parking should be made equally available to all campus users – students, staff, and faculty – rather than limiting preferable lots to employee groups. Despite minimal administrative support in terms of parking data or advice, the committee made its recommendations by May 2016.

The Sustainable Parking Framework was not released by administration until February 2017 – nearly a year after the committee made its recommendations. The Student Caucus had no role in the development of this plan during that period, nor was it consulted on the end result prior to its release. As a result, it reflects only a small minority of students' interests and raises many more concerns.

In short, the new parking system is not a Students' Union plan. However, in its eagerness for change for the better, the Student Caucus inadvertently opened the door to change for the worse. For the hardships and aggravations students experienced, the Student Caucus apologizes.

The Student Caucus has learned a number of lessons from the approach to parking taken by the university administration. First, administration created the Sustainable Parking Framework unilaterally, but has sought to deflect criticism of it, usually toward the Students' Union. Second, administration used data to justify its parking system and positions rather than facilitate community decisions. Third, and most concerning, administration asserted that the community did not understand its own parking challenges in the midst of the confusion and stress of the September changes. In short, the open and collaborative decision-making critically necessary to successfully address complex public issues was missing.

# University Affairs

As a result, the Student Caucus has and will made community involvement a keystone of its campaigns, as exemplified in the Hungry for Choice campaign to secure a food service contract consultation (see above).

Moving forward on parking, the Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19 again prioritized this issue. It again identified affordability, demand management, rate options, and alternative transportation as needed. It further reflected a growing space shortage. The recommendations, in light of the tumultuous recent changes, focus on evaluating and reporting on their effects in order to rectify negative experiences. Specific recommendations address the most immediately identified problems to replace lost spaces and stop proposed rate increases in the coming two years. The Student Caucus will seek responses to these recommendations. However, improvements to parking are not likely unless the fundamental need of community involvement in decisions is acknowledged by administration.



Hungry for Choice Food Truck Festival



# Campaigns



## Campaigns

In 2017, the Union continued to deliver and expand its campaigns and government relations agenda. This included an expanded focus on engaging the Kamloops community and broader region in a dialogue on the problematic areas of provincial government funding to TRU, working with all levels of government to set budget priorities, and ensuring that students have all of the information they need to meaningfully engage in elections at the provincial and municipal levels. These campaign actions continued to engage students on important political issues, and to influence decision makers to make positive changes.



Fund the Future Outreach at Clubs Day

## Fund the Future

The provincial government consistently underfunds TRU, adding up to over \$80 million of underfunding in the last five years alone. This is a serious problem for students, faculty, and staff at TRU, but also for the entire Kamloops community. In just over a decade TRU has fallen from being the 4th best funded institution in the province to being 20th today. The average institution in BC receives \$11,000 in funding per student while TRU only receives \$7600 per student. And this inequity only seems to be growing, with some other universities in this province receiving more than double the per student funding of TRU. It is time for our region to get a fair share. To this end, in 2017 the Union had an expanded focus on educating the broader region on the problems with the current provincial funding formula and actively built support across the community to have the TRU funding formula re-evaluated by the provincial government.

## Outreach

In 2017 the Union significantly expanded its Fund the Future campaign from the campus into the broader Kamloops community and region. The two primary components of this strategy were to deliver presentations on the issue to a large number of community organizations across the college catchment region and to significantly expand social media content on TRU underfunding. The goal of this campaign strategy was to ensure that it is common knowledge across the community that TRU is underfunded.

In July and August the Union started work on the community outreach component of the campaign by building a comprehensive

# Campaigns

list of community organizations to request times to present and designing a PowerPoint presentation and other materials to use in presentations across the community. The presentation included information on how post-secondary funding works, TRU's level of funding per student relative to other institutions, the impacts of TRU's underfunding level on the community, and a request for letters of support to have TRU's funding formula re-evaluated.

To engage people in the region, the Union started reaching out to community organizations in October. This included neighbourhood associations, faith groups, Chambers of Commerce, City Councils, and other community organizations. From October to December 2017 the Union presented to 27 community organizations, including in Williams Lake, Ashcroft, Barriere, Chase, and Kamloops. As a result, 18 organizations voted to provide letters of support for a full re-evaluation of the TRU funding formula, including from organizations such as the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, the Williams Lake City Council, the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, and many others.

To engage the broader Kamloops community online, the Union produced a series of infographics and videos to raise awareness about the impacts that underfunding has on our community. This included releasing two infographics and three videos in the fall semester. Across these posts the Union reached over 40,000 people on Facebook.

The Union also engaged in limited on-campus outreach for Fund the Future, primarily to target students who are new to campus in 2017. This included handbilling at the International Student Orientation and setting up a table at Clubs Day in September 2017. At these events the Union shared educational campaign materials with students, including a bi-fold with detailed information on TRU's funding level, as well as buttons for members to wear to show their support for the campaign. Approximately 400 new members signed their names in support of the campaign across these two days.

The Union will continue to expand the Fund the Future campaign's outreach strategy into the broader Kamloops region in 2018.

## *Institutional Relations*

While regional outreach on the Fund the Future campaign was the primary focus for the 2017 year, the Union also presented to the TRU Board of Governors on March 31, 2017. This presentation was to provide an update on the progress of the campaign and to request that the board co-sign a letter of support along with TRUFA, CUPE 4879, and the Students' Union to support a re-evaluation of the TRU funding formula.

While both TRUFA and CUPE signed the open letter in support, unfortunately the TRU Board of Governors decided not to sign. The chair of the Board of Governors expressed support for the campaign, but he also expressed that he did not believe that signing an open letter on the impacts of underfunding would be appropriate for the Board of Governors. The Union will continue to look for opportunities to engage the Board of Governors on this issue in the future.

## 2018 Provincial Budget Consultation

On October 12, 2017 the Union presented its priorities for the 2018 provincial budget to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The Union's submission for the upcoming provincial budget had two recommendations. First, the Union recommended that current provincial student financial aid programs are consolidated in order to create an up-front need based grants program. Second, the Union recommended that the provincial government re-evaluate how Thompson Rivers University is funded.

The Union's first recommendation was to eliminate the public investment in provincial RESP savings programs, education tax credits, and loan remission programs, and to re-invest these resources into the creation of an upfront need-based grants program. The Union made this recommendation because



Fund the Future Halloween Banner

effective financial aid increases participation rates in the post-secondary system, helps students complete their education, and helps students successfully transition from education into the



# Campaigns

workforce after completion. A need-based grants system is much more effective at all three of these measures primarily because it is targeted to students with the greatest need.

The Union's second recommendation was for a full re-evaluation of the TRU funding formula to reflect how the institution has changed and grown since 2005. For background, Thompson Rivers University has been underfunded by approximately \$80 million in the last five years compared to the average level of per student funding in BC. This level of underfunding has a significant impact on both the campus and broader community. The Union raised this issue with the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in order to ensure that the provincial government is aware of this issue in their upcoming budget cycle.

On November 15, 2017, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services released their report of recommendations for the upcoming provincial budget. Included in this report were two recommendations that reflected both of the priorities presented by the Union.

- Review funding formulas for post-secondary institutions to ensure that inequities between institutions are addressed, increased funding is provided where appropriate, and funding levels reflect the specific mandates of institutions across the province.
- Eliminate interest on student loans and introduce a comprehensive needs-based grants program for those attending BC post-secondary institutions.
- These recommendations will be considered by the provincial government in developing the 2018 provincial budget. The Union expects the budget to be released in February or March 2018.

## 2018 Municipal Budget Consultation

On November 6, 2017 the Union facilitated an on campus event for students to be able to ask questions and give feedback to staff people from the City of Kamloops in order to help shape the 2018 municipal budget. This consultation ensured that students had the opportunity to be heard on a wide range of municipal issues that impact their lives on a daily basis, such as transit, bicycle lanes, composting, recycling, green space, recreational facilities, and many other issues.

Approximately 40 students attended the event in the TRUSU Lecture Hall on November 6, 2017 from 12-2pm. Students had

the opportunity to ask questions as well as provide suggestions to staff people at five themed stations around the room. Students expressed support for inviting the City of Kamloops onto campus in the future to ensure that students are included in the budgeting process.



Voter Registration Tabling

## 2017 Provincial Election

The 2017 provincial election was held on May 7, 2017. In the months leading up to the election the Union worked to provide students with information on how to vote as well as information on candidates and parties.

To provide students with information on how to vote the Union launched a website that included information on who is eligible to vote, ID requirements, and polling locations for advanced and general voting. The Union also partnered with Elections BC to register students to vote in multiple locations across campus in the months leading up to the election. This helped to ensure that students received notice of the election as well as be able to ask questions of Elections BC officials leading up to the provincial election. Finally, to ensure that students had direct and convenient access to be able to cast their ballot in the election the Union partnered with Elections BC to host an on campus advanced polling station on May 3, 2017 in the Students' Union building.

To provide students with party and candidate information the Union conducted video interviews with every candidate running in the 2017 provincial election in the North and South Thompson



# Campaigns

electoral districts. This included eight candidates in total from the BC Liberals, BC NDP, BC Green Party, and the Communist Party of BC. The Union asked each candidate a variety of questions about their background, priorities, vision for the future, and other issues. These videos were posted on social media and on the TRUSU website to help students and community members make an informed decision at the polls in May.

To encourage students to meet the candidates and ask questions the Union also invited each of the candidates to campus for a Pizza and Politics event on April 5, 2017. Each of the candidates was given a table around the room and students were invited to meet candidates and ask questions. The Union also provided free pizza at the event to encourage students and others to participate in the event and get to know the candidates running. Approximately 200 students attended the event to meet the candidates.

Finally, in an effort to ensure that candidates running in the election understood post-secondary issues in the Kamloops community, the Union offered to share public opinion polling data with candidates running in the 2017 provincial election. Each year the Union commissions public polling on post-secondary issues through Vector Polling, a national polling firm. The polling report provides the opinions of over 600 households in the Kamloops North and South Thompson. The Union met with four of the candidates running in the 2017 provincial election and provided them with information on the current public opinion regarding post-secondary education.

## 2017 Municipal By-Election

The 2017 City of Kamloops municipal by-election was held on September 30, 2017. Twenty-one candidates entered the race for two City Council seats and six candidates competed for Mayor. The Union aimed to encourage students to participate in the by-election by providing accessible information on the candidates and on how and where to cast a ballot.

To provide students with information on how to vote the Union launched a website with information on who is eligible to vote, what ID is accepted, and when and where to vote. The Union also produced leaflets with this information and talked to students out on campus and in classrooms leading up to the by-election.

With the large number of candidates running in the by-election the Union also wanted to ensure that students had access to relevant information on each candidate. To this end the Union invited every candidate to participate in a video interview to share their background, priorities, and talk about issues relevant



### Pizza and Politics – Municipal Election

to students. The Union published a video interview with every candidate for mayor and eighteen of the council candidates on its website and through social media.

The Union also held a campus Pizza and Politics event for students to meet and ask questions of by-election candidates on September 27, 2017. Approximately 100 students attended the event to get to know the candidates. The Union provided free pizza at the event to encourage students and others to participate in the event.

## Campus Outreach

Outside of other initiatives, the Union also engaged in general campus outreach on student financial aid issues in British Columbia.

On January 10, 11, 23, and 24 2017 the Union set up an educational demonstration in Old Main. This demo used a large wheel that students were invited to spin to land on different categories to learn about financial aid systems across the country and win prizes. Approximately 300 students participated in the demonstration across the four days of outreach.

The Union also engaged students in learning about student financial aid at the Back to School BBQ on September 8, 2017. The Union set up a station with five multiple choice questions about student financial aid in BC. Students who answered all five questions were provided with three water balloons to try to hit someone dressed up as 'student debt'. Approximately 200 students participated in the demonstration.

# Equity



## Equity

In 2017, the Union's Equity Committee continued to address the systemic marginalization of different groups in society through both new and well-established activities. This included a series of annual and other events, participating in coalition partner equity campaigns, and working with TRU to address campus equity issues.

## Annual Events

### *Storytellers Gala*

The Storytellers Gala is established as an annual event to recognize the inequities that Indigenous people face in society. It brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss a variety of Indigenous equity issues including, but not limited to: racism, loss of culture and language, land rights and title, unequal economic development, and environmental degradation.

On November 16, 2017 the Equity Committee hosted its 9th Annual Storytellers Gala focused on the issue of clean water access for Indigenous communities across Canada. The event featured a panel of speakers including former Chief Fred Frederick Aleck of the Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation, TRU Social Work and Human Services Sessional Lecturer Jeffrey McNeil, the manager of the First Nations Health Authority Drinking Water Safety Program Sylvia Struck, the Chair of the Thompson Institute of Environmental Studies and coordinator of Amo-Aqua Ruth

Johannes Madsen, Urban Systems Drinking Water Engineer Lisa Clark, and TRUSU Aboriginal Students' Representative James-Dean Aleck. The panel addressed why hundreds of Indigenous communities across Canada have polluted, toxic, and unsafe water, the negative impacts that unsafe water has on Indigenous communities, and what we can do to solve this issue to ensure everyone has access to safe water.

The discussion had 44 participants and included passionate panelist presentations and engagement with participants in a question and answer period. Each participant also left with a takeaway material answering some frequently asked questions about access to safe water in Indigenous communities across Canada and providing additional opportunities to take action to address the issue.

Finally, the committee conducted a survey of participants to solicit feedback on the discussion and ensure that awareness about access to safe water in Indigenous communities across Canada was raised. Survey results were very positive with the majority of respondents indicating satisfaction with the event and that the discussion raised their awareness.

The Equity Committee looks forward to hosting another successful event addressing Indigenous equity issues in 2018.

### *International Women's Day*

The Equity Committee hosts an annual event to mark International Women's Day on March 8 to recognize the inequities that women face in society. It brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss a variety of Women's equity



issues including, but not limited to: gender violence, misogyny, political and social disenfranchisement, and reproductive and maternal health.

On March 8, 2017 the Equity Committee hosted a lecture about overcoming the barriers that women face in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The lecture featured Dr. Elizabeth Croft, Associate Dean of Education and Professional Development for the Faculty of Applied Science from UBC, discussing why barriers exist for women in STEM, the impacts these barriers have on women, and how we can eliminate these barriers.

The lecture presentation and question and answer session had 60 participants who also left with a takeaway material answering some frequently asked questions about women in STEM and providing additional opportunities to take action to address the issue.

Finally, the committee conducted a survey of participants to solicit feedback on the discussion and ensure that awareness of gender barriers in STEM was raised. Survey results were positive and indicated that the majority of respondents found the event to be positive, the speaker to be very engaging, and the event was informative of barriers for women in STEM.

The Equity Committee looks forward to hosting another successful International Women's Day event in 2018.

## *Pride Parade*

The Equity Committee hosts an annual campus Pride Parade in September to bring together students, faculty, staff, and community members to raise awareness about the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community and to publically claim TRU as a safe and welcoming place for LGBTQ+ folks. The event also draws attention to a variety of LGBTQ+ equity issues including, but not limited to: LGBTQ+-phobia, legal equality for LGBTQ+ persons, social acceptance, and violence against the LGBTQ+ community.

On September 28, 2017 the Equity Committee hosted the 6th annual TRUSU Pride Parade outside Old Main in the Campus Commons. The parade began with welcoming remarks provided by the TRUSU LGBTQ Representative, and statements of support from CUPE Local 4879 President Lois Rugg, TRU President Dr. Alan Shaver, and TRUFA President Dr. Tom Friedman. The event continued with a colourful march around campus with banners, placards, and signs in support of a inclusive campus and concluded with a tabling fair with participation from campus and community organizations who provide services, education, and/or support to the LGBTQ+ community.



Equity Committee Members at the BBQ

The 6th annual Pride Parade continued to be one of the most engaging and largest TRUSU Equity events with over 250 participants and a growing awareness of, and expectation for, the event from campus and community members. This public demonstration was a strong and visible indicator of support for a diverse and inclusive campus.

The Equity Committee looks forward to hosting another successful event addressing LGBTQ+ equity issues in 2018.

## *International Days*

The Equity Committee hosts an annual event as a part of TRU's International Days celebration in the Winter Semester to recognize the inequities that marginalized groups face around the world. It brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss a variety of global equity issues including, but not limited to: the impacts of globalization, hunger, unequal economic development, environmental degradation, war and conflict, and resource scarcity.

On March 7 2017, the Equity Committee hosted a day of outreach in Old Main, Student Street to raise awareness about Islamophobia. The committee had meaningful conversations with over 250 students, faculty, and staff that addressed prominent Islamophobic myths and where they come from, the negative impacts these myths have on Islamic communities, and what we can do to debunk these myths in our communities and promote a better understanding and inclusion of Muslims.

The Committee was pleased to work with Muslim students and Islamic groups to host this outreach on campus. Throughout



# Equity

the day, takeaway materials were also distributed that answered frequently asked questions about Islamophobia while outlining how to take further action to address the issue.

The Equity Committee looks forward to hosting another successful International Days event in March 2018.

## *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*

The Equity Committee hosts an annual event to mark International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17 to recognize the inequities that poor and working class people face in society. This event brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss a variety of equity issues that impact poor and working class people including, but not limited to: poverty reduction, equitable funding of public services (like healthcare and education), low-income living conditions, and homelessness.



Anti-Islamophobia Tabling

On October 17, 2017 the Equity Committee hosted a panel discussion about housing affordability in Kamloops. The event featured a panel of speakers including TRU Associate Professor Dr. Terry Kading, City of Kamloops Social and Community Development Supervisor Jennifer Casorso, Vice President of Kelson Group Kelly Fawcett, Director of Housing at Ask Wellness Kim Galloway, and Audrey Shaw from the Kamloops & District Real Estate Association.

The discussion focused on how unaffordable is renting and real estate in Kamloops, what are the biggest housing challenges

we face, who are the groups most impacted by unaffordable housing, what we can do at the national and provincial level to create more affordable housing, and what we can do at the local level to create more affordable housing. A takeaway material was also distributed that answered frequently asked questions about housing affordability, how to take action to make housing more affordable in Kamloops, and where folks could go to find more information on the issue.

Finally, the discussion was successful in raising awareness about housing affordability in Kamloops with the majority of the 44 participants indicating through a feedback survey that they found the event satisfactory and that their awareness about housing affordability was raised.

The Equity Committee looks forward to hosting another successful event addressing socio-economic equity in 2018.

## **Other Equity Events**

### *International Holocaust Remembrance Day*

On January 27 2017, the Equity Committee hosted a day of outreach in Old Main, Student Street to mark Holocaust Remembrance day and raise awareness about how degrading and dehumanizing different groups of people in society encourages and permits genocide. Throughout the day of outreach takeaway materials were provided that answered frequently asked questions about how genocides develop and how we can take action to prevent genocide by disrupting that process through ending degrading and dehumanizing behaviors.

The outreach day was successful with committee members engaging over 100 students, faculty, and staff in conversations about how the casual and subtle dehumanization of equity groups can escalate into genocide. Examples of dehumanizing propaganda throughout history were utilized as visual aids to encourage discussion and attracted much interest from passersby in Old Main.

### *Black History Month*

On February 14, 2017 the Equity Committee hosted a screening of the film 'Loving', to celebrate Black History Month. The film tells the story of Richard and Mildred Loving, a couple whose US Supreme Court case invalidated state laws banning interracial marriage and guaranteed marriage equality for interracial couples in the United States.

The film provided a powerful examination of racial inequity and drew many parallels to ongoing discrimination against racialized

communities, however the small event attendance limited this awareness raising.

In response to this event's limited success, the Equity Committee will be hosting a new event to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in March 2018 to address racialized equity and engage the campus community with a more accessible approach.

## Coalition Partner Equity Campaigns

### *Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) Funding for Aboriginal Students Campaign*

The Government of Canada currently provides financial support to status First Nations and Inuit students through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). In August 2015, Justin Trudeau made an explicit election promise to not only lift the 2% annual funding cap on the PSSSP but to invest an additional \$50 million per year in the program over the next 4 years. In December 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau also committed to implementing all recommendations and calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which included "provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education." However, in the government's 2016 federal budget, they failed to deliver on this PSSSP funding promise to Indigenous students.

On January 17 and 20, 2017 the Equity Committee conducted outreach in Old Main, Student Street to raise awareness of this problematic underfunding and the government's promise and encourage TRU community members to send the federal government messages calling on them to fulfill that promise. The campaign successfully engaged 500 students, faculty, and staff who joined the campaign and sent the government messages requesting PSSSP investment in the 2017 federal budget.

On March 22, 2017 the Equity Committee was pleased to see the federal government announce that they would fulfill their election promise to Aboriginal students and add \$90 million to the PSSSP over the next 2 years.

### *End the Ban Campaign*

During the 2015 Federal election, the Liberal Party pledged to "end the discriminatory ban that prevents men who have sex with men (MSM) from donating blood," however MSM are still waiting for the government to end the one year 'deferral policy'

of Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec that prevents sexually active MSM from donating blood in Canada.



Between September 6 to 28, 2017 the Equity Committee campaigned across campus to raise awareness of the government's 2015 election promise and collected petitions calling on the government to end this ban that they themselves described as "ignoring scientific evidence," and "stigmatizing donor-screening policy."

The campaign was well received by the campus community with the Equity Committee exceeding petition expectations and sending 853 signed post-card petitions from students, faculty, and staff in October 2017 to Health Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor urging her and her government to fulfill their promise to end the blood donation ban for MSM.

### *Amnesty International Urgent Action Network*

In 2017, the Equity Committee joined Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network (UAN) in order to address serious inequitable treatment and human rights violations as they occur throughout the world. The UAN is a group of 165,000 volunteers in 55 countries who expose and pressure human rights violators to change their illegal and unethical behaviors including torture, extrajudicial executions, genocide, depriving equity groups of food/water/other necessities, etc.

After Amnesty verifies that these types of illegal activity are happening, they distribute an Urgent Action notice to the network

# Equity

and ask folks to send letters, faxes, emails, and other messages to the government or organization committing these crimes to inform them that the world is watching and pressure them to stop their illegal activity immediately.

In 2017, the Committee participated in 11 equity related Urgent Action requests on a number of issues like: the abductions and killings of men believed to be gay in Russia, the government persecution of the Mapuche Indigenous group in Chile, and the coordinated campaign of harassment against a lawyer protesting human rights violations against Dalit communities in India.

The Committee has found that the network provides an effective opportunity to combat the marginalization of equity groups on the international stage. Therefore, in 2018 the Committee looks forward to continuing to participate in Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network and address inequity around the world.

## Campus Equity Issues

### *Trans Inclusive Forms*

Trans and gender-variant people are an equity group whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex. As such, they often experience a lack of understanding or discrimination by the majority of people whose gender identity does correspond to their assigned sex (cisgender people). One of the ways in which this lack of understanding arises is when Trans identities are not recognized or they are looked down upon by cisgender people and society.

In 2017, the Equity Committee has been following up on the



End the Ban Campaign

commitment of the TRU AVP Strategic Enrollment and Registrar Michael Bluhm to implement Trans inclusive forms by Fall 2020.

The Registrar has been working with their provincial colleagues in the BC Registrar's Association (BCRA), the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), and the Ministry of Advanced Education to establish Trans inclusive gender and naming systems at universities across the province. In June 2017, the BCCAT and BCRA received the results of a research and consultation project Being Seen, Being Counted: Establishing Expanded Gender and Naming Declarations they launched to get options for Trans inclusive forms and systems. The BCRA voted to endorse the report and to implement a Trans inclusive gender and naming system in admissions processes, student data information systems (ie. Banner), government reporting, etc. This work is expected to take some time because of the large amount of changes and coordination required between government systems and each institution's systems.

In 2018, the Committee will continue to follow up with the Registrar about the implementation of a Trans inclusive gender and naming system at TRU in order to meet the deadline of Fall 2020.

### *TRU Sexual Violence Policy*

Since 2015, the Equity Committee has been working with students, faculty, staff, and administration to draft a sexual violence policy for TRU that protects victims/survivors and outlines how allegations of sexualized violence will be addressed on campus.

On March 31, 2017 the TRU Board of Governors passed BRD 25-0 Sexual Violence which defines what TRU considers to be sexualized violence, the process for investigating and addressing complaints of sexualized violence, and commits the institution to work to prevent sexualized violence against students, faculty, and staff.

As a result of this new policy, TRU has hired a Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Manager to coordinate campus efforts to prevent and respond to incidences of sexualized violence. The Committee has been pleased to support the work of the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Manager including, raising awareness about sexualized violence on campus, providing consent education, providing training to students, faculty, and staff who receive a disclosure of an incident of sexualized violence, and administering the sexual violence policy.

The Committee believes that the implementation of the sexual violence policy and the hiring of the Sexualized Violence





Inclusive Washroom Signage

Prevention and Response Manager has made progress towards addressing sexual violence at TRU. The Committee looks forward to engaging in the scheduled review of the sexual violence policy in 2018 and continuing to work with other campus stakeholders to address sexual violence at TRU.

## *Inclusive Washroom Signage*

In 2017, the Equity Committee took action to improve washroom signage in the Students' Union Building to better include Trans and differently-abled persons. The Committee researched the legal and policy requirements for inclusive washroom signage and looked at inclusive signage introduced by other institutions like the City of Vancouver, York University, the University of Toronto. The Committee then shortlisted three of the best inclusive signage options to consult the TRU community about.

From August 7 to September 1 the Committee hosted an online consultation on [trusu.ca](http://trusu.ca) about the shortlisted signage options and sought out feedback about preferred language, images, design elements, etc. The Committee received 60 responses

with 12 responders identifying as differently-abled/persons with a disability and 13 identifying as Trans or Gender Variant. Overall, respondents preferred 'all-gender' language, the inclusion of Braille, a toilet image, and an active wheelchair user image within the design. The Committee made a custom signage order in late September that fulfilled both the legal and policy requirements, and the requests of the consultation, and installed the signage on November 20.

The Committee looks forward to receiving additional feedback from the campus community about their experience with the new inclusive washroom signage, and plan on presenting that feedback to TRU in 2018 to encourage them to provide additional Trans and differently-abled inclusive washrooms across campus.

## *Challenging Differently-Abled Stigma Outreach*

Responding to a request from members, the Equity Committee committed to raise awareness about equity for people who are differently-abled/have a disability in 2017. Folks who have different physical, mental, and other abilities are often seriously disadvantaged by the environment and attitudes of our communities and the Committee wanted to start a conversation about these issues on campus.

In late-November and December 2017, the Committee launched an online outreach page to challenge stigma towards differently-abled folks on [trusu.ca](http://trusu.ca). This online material defined and explored the impacts of differently-abled stigma by debunking common myths and using a series of fun and humorous videos to engage visitors in learning. The material concluded with a list of resources and organizations that readers could explore to find more information or to get involved in challenging differently-abled stigma in different ways.

The Equity Committee was pleased to engage sixty-nine unique visitors to the webpage and received positive feedback about the content and subject matter of the online material.

# Services



## Services

Throughout 2017, the Union continued to deliver a consistent and comprehensive range of services, saving members both time and money, creating a community, and supporting and encouraging academic success.

## Students' Union Building

The Students' Union Building, now in the eighth full year since the completion of its revitalization project, continues to be a very important service for the membership and campus community.

The space continues to meet the needs of members, campus faculty and staff, and the broader community by providing space for social gatherings, club gatherings, studying, food services, and as the hub for members' services.

In 2017, the Union experienced a significant increase in the volume of traffic in the building with public spaces operating at capacity and bookable rooms continuing to be well used by campus and community groups in high numbers. Formal bookable rooms experienced 8,169.5 hours of use in 2017 in 3,021 bookings. Incorporating anecdotal evidence with the statistical data provided by the online booking service indicates the overall room usage in the Students' Union Building continues to meet desired daily usage capacity.

## Common Grounds

Common Grounds remains a successful student owned and operated food service outlet, as it continued to lead the campus industry in promoting ethical business practices that meet the Union's principles.

Traffic at Common Grounds continued to remain strong in 2017. The TRUSU Services Committee hosted the first Common Grounds Free Coffee Event. The event was successful in terms of raising awareness of Common Ground as a food and beverage alternative on campus; as well as thanking regular customers for their continued support. The Services Committee will continue to provide events such as the Free Coffee Event to keep Common Grounds on TRU Campus map.

In 2017, Common Grounds continued to deflate the notion that it is not possible to offer an ethical product at a reasonable price as a successful business operation in the campus environment, and was able to cover all of its own expenses continuing to be a self-sustaining enterprise. Common Grounds has proved to be a successful service offered to the campus, and the Union will continue to monitor progress in the future.



The Services Committee at the BBQ

## Graduation Gown Rentals

In 2017, the Union maintained a graduation gown rental service that is free of charge to the membership with usage by approximately 50 individual members. Continuing from 2014, independent photography companies utilized the service and rented gowns in conjunction with offering their services on campus. Given the low input costs and relative popularity amongst a number of constituencies the Union will continue to offer the service in 2018.

## Health and Dental Plan

In 2017, the Union's Extended Health and Dental Plan continued to provide exceptional coverage to members.

The plan continued to feature 100% drug coverage; 80% coverage on professional services, such as chiropractors or podiatrists; 100% coverage of optical exams and glasses; 80% coverage on basic dental services; accidental death and dismemberment insurance; and travel insurance. In conjunction with offering comprehensive coverage to our members, reasonable co-payment amounts and annual benefit maximums has ensured that premiums paid by the fees collected have remained sustainable. The fee charged to members to be active on the plan is \$248 per year, and is automatically applied members who are eligible. A similar plan on the private market would cost individual members upwards of \$2,000 a year!

In 2016, the plan had approximately 4,258 members automatically enrolled on the plan, with an additional 190 student opt ins, 52 single dependent opt ins, and 77 family opt ins. In 2017, the plan had approximately 4742 members automatically enrolled on the plan, with an additional 133 student opt ins, 24 single dependent opt ins, and 21 family opt ins. However, a successful referendum to include international students on the plan and the significant growth of student opt ins has meant significant growth for the plan in 2017.

The Services Committee has also introduced the first Health and Dental Information Sessions, for students to get hands on knowledge about how to access and use their student health and dental plans. The Union plans to continue hosting Health and Dental Information Sessions, to ensure students have information point of access on campus.

The TRUSU Services Committee also hosted 2 separate Health and Dental Tabling Sessions, one in Old Main and the other in the Trades Building. The Union is hoping to build a better communication strategy to ensure trades students have the



Services Committee Meeting

same level of access to information as academic students. Both tabling sessions proved to be constructive in terms of questions, and getting the information out to students.

The Services Committee also developed the first Health and Dental Introductory Video to create another avenue for students get more information about their health and dental plan. The Services Committee will continue to make a presence on campus promoting the health and dental plan, as well as a digital communications presence in order to ensure students have multiple sources of information about their health and dental plan.

## UPASS

In 2017, the UPASS continued to offer each member savings of over \$120 in monthly transit fares and further savings of over \$108 in gym membership fees at the Tournament Capital Centre per semester! Not including the free use of the aquatic centre, and reduced gas, parking, maintenance, and insurance expenses for private vehicles that are a product of using the UPASS. The Union worked with the institution to extend the tracking process to create an online system to track different data from the activated cards. This data included eligible head counts, opt outs, and cards encoded.

In 2017, the Union had 16,678 students eligible for a UPASS after opting out 183 students who fit the criteria for the process. With the 480 students opting in to the UPASS, the Union had an activation rate of 84.5% of students in 2018 with an active UPASS.



# Services



Leafletting for the Health and Dental Plan

## Employment Centre

The TRU Employment Centre has continued to provide excellent service to the membership, and has, overall, maintained its program offering. While the service continued to be of value to the membership, most are not aware of the Union's contribution to the Centre, and the relationship between the Union and the Centre has not involved a satisfactory level of reporting and collaboration. In 2017, the Union continued to work to ensure that the Centre was more closely integrated into the Union, including both regular reporting and the development of joint initiatives.

## Food Bank

In 2017, a number of factors contributed to the decline in use of the Food Bank. The Food Bank did not meet the number of donations as was provided in 2016.

In terms of use in 2017, an estimated 21 members of the Students' Union accessed the Food Bank. The TRUSU Services Committee plans to further promote the Food Bank, as well to implement an annual food drive, and develop new partnerships in order ensure the demand by students is met.

## Endowments and Bursaries

In 2017, the Union continued its annual contribution of \$15,000 to the Students' Union Endowment Fund. The fund is developing each year and its capacity to provide financial aid to students is growing. This growth allowed students to continue to access the

Endowment Fund, and in 2017, the Endowment distributed over \$14,531.97 to 18 students.

## Emergency Bursary Program

In 2014, the Union recognized there was a deficiency in funding for students who faced unforeseen barriers while studying at Thompson Rivers University. To help members overcome these obstacles the Union, the Office of Student and Judicial Affairs, and the Office of Student Awards & Financial Support (change name) worked to offer a TRUSU Emergency Bursary. This form of non-repayable, short time relief for members disbursed \$6,150, helping 12 students in 2017. Bursaries received by members were and will continue to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## Members Advocate Service

The Members Advocate provides students with support in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to attain their educational and professional aspirations. The Members Advocate provides services based on the needs of its students. Whether it's about being on academic probation to experiencing discrimination on campus; the service exists to make sure that members are valued and supported along the journey.

The Members' Advocate is your source of information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a student, tenant, worker, and individual. Whatever issue you confront, the Advocate will help you find a solution.



Grants Information Session

The Members Advocate Service remains a strong service offered to students through the Students' Union. The Services Committee has been promoting the service through hosting tabling sessions and handballing days on campus. The Members Advocate has seen a steady flow of students who seek advice, or help through the service.

## TRUSU Grants

2017 was the third year of operations for the TRUSU Grants program. This program is a partnership between the Union and the University through the Comprehensive University Enhancement Fund (CUEF). In 2017 the Union continued to see growth in all areas of the program and anticipates that we will reach full build out of the program in the coming year.

### Conference Attendance Grants

Conference attendance grants provide funding to cover a portion of students' expenses when attending a conference or competition related to their field of study. In 2017 the Union allocated one-hundred fifty-six thousand and forty-eight dollars to seventy-three conference grant applications. These applications allowed four-hundred and four students to attend conferences from Hong-Kong to Williams Lake. The Union saw an increase of thirty-eight percent in applications funded from 2016 to 2017.

### General Event Grants

General event grants provide funding to cover a portion of expenses for clubs to hold small-scale events with a general social benefit to campus and the community. In 2017 the Students' Union allocated twenty-four thousand six hundred and sixty-two dollars to general event grants. These funds allowed clubs and campus groups to host thirty-two events attended by more than three thousand five hundred people. We saw an increase in applications funded of fifty-two percent from 2016 to 2017.

### Educational Event Grants

Educational event grants provide funding to cover a portion of the expenses for clubs to hold events with a specific educational purpose and focus for attendees. In 2017 the Students' Union allocated forty-five thousand three hundred and ten dollars to Educational event grants. These funds allowed clubs and campus groups to host eleven events for more than two thousand five hundred attendees. We saw a thirty-seven percent increase in applications funded from 2016 to 2017.

## Guest Lecture Grant Applications

Guest lecture grants providing funding to cover the costs of bringing in a guest lecturer. As a new category of funding, we have experienced difficulty advertising this category of grants to the campus community. This year we have seen a significant increase in the number of applications received and funded. While this category remains under-utilized we anticipate that it will continue to grow over time. In 2017 the Students' Union allocated eleven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven dollars to guest lecture grants. This allowed faculties to host nine guest lectures attended by more than one thousand members of the campus and community. The Union saw a three hundred and fifty percent increase in applications funded from 2016 to 2017.

## Grants Promotion

In 2017 the Services Committee worked to increase awareness of the TRUSU Grants Program. The Services Committee hosted three Grants Information Sessions, allowing students to be able to learn more about the Grants Program and ask any questions they might have. In addition the Union sent targeted emails to club lists about event grants and faculty lists about Guest Lecture Grants. Finally, the Union included grants information in all of our regular communications mediums including email newsletters, newspaper advertisements, social media posts, and website content.



Health and Dental Information Session



# Entertainment



## Entertainment

The Union's Entertainment Committee continued to deliver safe and high quality events throughout 2017. These events served to develop a sense of community amongst members. Regardless, of the event, the Union continues to place safety and security of attendees as its first priority for all its events.

### Back to School BBQ

The Back-to-School BBQ provides an opportunity to welcome new and returning members to campus and to connect them to campus and community services. It also serves to provide students an opportunity to participate in activities that foster social cohesion.

On September 8, 2017, the Entertainment Committee hosted the 30th Annual Back-to-School BBQ in the Campus Commons. The Back-to-School BBQ had more than 150 vendors attending the event. The participation was diverse as the Union had intended. The 2017 Back-to-School BBQ had a diverse range of entertainment opportunities and activities to participate in, including over 150 interactive tables, a main stage including 5 musical acts, and a hot dog or hamburger lunch provided by TRU. The event was co-emceed by the Vice President internal and local CIFM radio personality Rich Woods. The Back-to-School BBQ provided more than 300 students an opportunity to make a new friend. Music and Entertainment from the stage was well received from members and the Entertainment Committee will continue to explore additional entertainment opportunities at the event in the future.

The Back-to-School BBQ remains the largest and the most anticipated event of the year and the Union looks forward to another successful BBQ in 2018.

### Clubs Day

The Union continues to support an ever-increasing number of Clubs. Clubs Day is an annual event hosted by the Entertainment Committee to create and foster opportunities for students to connect with each other around shared interests or perspectives.

On September 14, 2017, the Entertainment Committee hosted the annual Clubs Day on the basketball court outside of Old Main



Committee members at the BBQ



# Entertainment



Students at the Back-to-School BBQ

with over 50 clubs and more than 10 non-profit organizations participating in the event. The Union continues to receive interest from participating clubs and community organizations to participate in Clubs Day. More than 600 students participated at Clubs Day. Clubs Day continued to provide members with an introduction to student groups on campus and non-profit organizations, and an opportunity to get involved through their interests at the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year. The Union also set up a small stage and music. Unlike previous years, instead of providing members with ice-cream, the Union gave away Shaved Ice sourced from Sunmei Bubble Tea, a local restaurant. The Shaved Ice station was very popular and well received. The Union also set up tables for its Equity Committee, Campaigns Committee and Student Caucus to promote their respective upcoming activities.

Members, student clubs and community groups expressed positive feedback about the event.

## Outdoor Movie Night

The Outdoor Movie Night is an annual event hosted to engage members and to promote the Union.

On September 21, 2017, the Entertainment Committee hosted an Outdoor Movie Night outside the Campus Activity Centre in the Campus Commons, featuring Wonder Woman. This year, through the preview, the Union promoted various aspects the Union's advocacy, services, and entertainment.

More than 800 members attended the event. The Movie Night included a 50-foot blow up screen and stadium sound. The Outdoor Movie Night also had local food trucks as part of Hungry for Choice campaign by Student Caucus.

The movie night continues to be popular, well attended, and there was positive feedback from those in attendance.

## Common Voices

The Union hosts the Common Voices Lecture series to provide students and the broader community with an extra-curricular learning opportunity.

On February 7, 2017, the Union hosted its Annual Common Voices Lecture Series with the Keynote speaker Naomi Klein, an award-winning journalist, syndicated columnist and author of the international bestsellers, "This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs The Climate", "The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" and "No Logo". Ms. Klein spoke about climate change and indigenous rights.

The Common Voices Lecture Series is the Union's most established and well-branded event in the community.

## Clubs Activities

A significant part of the Union's entertainment consists of smaller events that are supported by the Union and hosted by Clubs recognized by the Students Union. A vibrant network of social,



Naomi Klein at Common Voices

# Entertainment

academic, common interest, and cultural clubs on campus allows members to connect to each other and the Union. The Union supports campus clubs by providing wide range of services and assistance to clubs.

In 2017, the Union resourced the variety of clubs. There were 86 clubs recognized by the Union, including 19 newly formed clubs. In 2017, the Union printed over 12,000 pages of event posters, leaflets, and other Club materials, and over 100 banners advertising club events with club branding. Club ticket sales from the Member Services Desk has enhanced the administrative process for ticket sales. The Union sold over 500 tickets from member services desk in 2017. Events included Nurses Ball, Holi, Dvrsty Fashion Show, and more!

The Union continues to produce certificates for clubs, helping them recognize participation, work and dedication of Club participants. In 2017, the Union produced more than 300 certificates for more than 25 clubs.



Musicians at the Back-to-School BBQ

# Board of Directors

## Board of Directors January 2017 to May 2017

President .....	Brian Chidduro
Vice President External.....	Amber Storvold
Vice President Finance.....	Oluwafemi Akinsnape
Vice President Internal .....	Gagandeep Singh
Aboriginal Representative.....	James-Dean Aleck
Graduate Representative .....	Yash Thakkur
LGBTQ Representative .....	Caitlin Orteza
International Representative .....	Chandan Sehgal
Women's Representative .....	Sierra Rae
Director-at-Large .....	Laura Santamaria
Director-at-Large .....	Gunveet Singh
Director-at-Large .....	Tatiana Gilbert
Director-at-Large .....	Cole Hickson

## Board of Directors May 2017 to December 2017

President .....	Tatiana Gilbert
Vice President Equity .....	Caitlin Orteza
Vice President External.....	Cole Hickson
Vice President Internal .....	Janelle Lapointe
Vice President Services .....	Gagandeep Singh
Aboriginal Representative.....	James-Dean Aleck
Graduate Representative .....	Gunveet Singh
LGBTQ Representative .....	Dale Drozda
International Representative .....	Simranjit Singh
Visible Minorities Representative .....	Inayat Ur-Rehman
Women's Representative (May-Sep) .....	Emiko Ohama
Women's Representative (Oct-Dec) .....	Saprina Chandi
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Aanchal Mogla
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Brandon Hayashi
Entertainment Committee Representative (May-Sep) .....	Usra Gohar
Entertainment Committee Representative (Oct-Dec) .....	Tarranum
Entertainment Committee Representative .....	Richard Abankwa
Services Committee Representative .....	Arjun Gill
Services Committee Representative .....	Inderpreet Bains
Student Caucus Steering Committee Representative .....	Mwansa Kaunda
Student Caucus Steering Committee Representative .....	Mico Meige-Moffat





Membership  
**YOU** can be  
proud of.