

# Report on the Student Budget Consultation 2020/21



# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

This report provides students' priorities and perceived service gaps for consideration in the development of the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Budget 2020/21.

Since 2014, the Thompson Rivers University Students' Union (TRUSU) has worked with TRU to develop the Student Budget Consultation as a means to ensure proactive and meaningful consideration of students' priorities and perceived service gaps in university budgeting and planning. Since 2019, the process has also identified areas of excellence, improvement, and responsiveness to provide a balanced approach of both request and recognition.

Budget priorities and service expectations are identified through a two-stage consultation involving a survey of opinions on a comprehensive inventory of experiences and a Town Hall to investigate the key priorities in depth. Areas of recognition are identified through the survey as well as responses to prior year reports.

*In the Student Budget Consultation Report 2020/21, excellence is recognized in the campus card, Wellness Centre, and the Library services. Improvement is recognized in transportation alternatives, food services, and academic advising. Responsiveness is recognized in food services and study space.*

The *Student Budget Consultation Report 2020/21* identifies and reinforces previous calls for action on five priorities: parking, food services, study space, course materials, and course offerings. Because each of these priorities has been identified and reported in previous Student Budget Consultations, consideration has been given to any actions taken, in progress, or planned by the university that may address the related concerns.

Students' top priority is parking and transportation. On parking, they seek improvements to the availability of spaces, means to locate available spaces, and space management. They further want parking pricing to better reflect issues of affordability, fairness, and value. Students want alternative transportation options to be made more widely viable while recognizing the limitations of TRU-Kamloops as a commuter campus. This includes efforts with the City to improve services and infrastructure connecting campus by transit, cycling, and walking as well as greater promotion and scalability of alternative transportation services. A further concern has developed to improve campus walkability and pedestrian safety.

Students' second priority is food service. Focus remains on variety, options, and accommodation as well as price, value, and quality. These are raised in the context of suggestions for food service operations including increased hours of operation, improved locations and spaces, more diverse food providers, and expanded amenities. These, in turn, are evaluated in terms of their support of campus life. The recent food service consultation provides direction and recommendations that may address these issues.

Students' third priority is study space. They are concerned with the availability of sufficient space that is dedicated and appropriately managed, particularly for quiet study. They are further interested in better designed study space with appropriate amenities, such as a variety of comfortable and functional furniture for a range of study tasks; electrical outlets; accessible computers, technology, and software; and food preparation facilities. Students continue to call for greater cleanliness and maintenance across spaces and amenities.

Students' fourth priority is affordable textbooks and course materials. They want both the university and individual instructors to pursue and support open educational resources and other low and no cost materials as well as a Library textbook reserve program. They further want more effective use and reuse of course materials. Finally, students are concerned with the increasing use and cost of private, third-party learning platforms.

Students' fifth priority is course offerings that address course gaps in established programs, gaps in and demand for new or expanded programs, and gaps in and demand for instructional content. They further seek improved course delivery in terms of frequency, scheduling, and cancellations and changes to facilitate timely paths to graduation. Finally, students identified a need to improve course registration in terms of information, user-friendly processes, and waitlisting.

Students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that address these priorities and service gaps.

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# Methodology

## Methodology

The *Student Budget Consultation Report 2020/21* identifies and describes budget priorities and service expectations through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. A comprehensive survey served to quantify student opinions of and priorities amongst an inclusive inventory of experiences as well as to collect open qualitative comments. A subsequent Town Hall on key topics from the survey provided further qualitative data.

## Quantitative Measures

Quantitative data were gathered through the online survey.

The survey was administered between January 07 and 25, 2019 and participants were recruited through electronic newsletters, social media, campus advertisement, and hand billing. The profile of the 306 respondents closely resembles the student population across age, gender, Indigenous/non-Indigenous identity, domestic/international status, and faculty of study.

The survey utilized three quantitative indicators of students' priorities, allowing for tests of convergent validity.

The first indicator is a direct response. Respondents were asked, "If you were in charge of TRU, what would your top three priorities for improvement be?" by category, and then asked "Is there a specific area that is particularly important to you?" in each prioritized category. A weighted calculation identified the most highly prioritized items. This allows students to report their own priorities with minimal analytic abstraction.

The second indicator is a satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Respondents provided both satisfaction and importance ratings for each of a comprehensive series of items on four-point, forced-choice scales. Items for which the importance assigned is greater than satisfaction are flagged for attention and ranked by the degree of the difference. This provides strategic focus on areas that are not only important to students, but also where efforts to improve have greater potential.

The third indicator is a derived-importance measure. Respondents provided a satisfaction rating for their overall TRU experience on the same four-point, forced-choice scale, and these ratings were correlated with satisfaction ratings of individual items. A greater correlation coefficient combined with the potential to improve satisfaction indicates a greater "derived importance" of an item to overall satisfaction. This provides further strategic focus on areas where potential for improvement is also more likely to improve satisfaction with the university overall.

Comparison of the priority list, the gap analysis, and the derived importance provided for the selection of the top five items.

## Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data related to the top five priorities were compiled from open-ended comments in the survey and discussion in the Town Hall.

The survey provided a number of opportunities for open-ended responses related to the full range of experiences explored. Those recorded for the top five priorities were identified for consideration.

The Town Hall on the five top priorities identified in the survey was held on campus on January 30, 2019. A facilitator led participants in semi-structured discussions in which a series of questions on each issue were posed to prompt dialogue and probing questions provided clarification or investigated emerging themes. Discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative data from all sources were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. A process of coding based on a close reading of the data lead to the iterative development and focusing of concepts that were then grouped thematically.

# Excellence

## Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness

The Student Budget Consultation offers an opportunity to not only identify students' priorities for future improvement, but also to recognize and celebrate the ways in which Thompson Rivers University excels, improves, and responds to the needs of students.

### Excellence

These areas are recognized for excellence as represented by significantly above average levels of student satisfaction in this and previous Student Budget Consultations.

#### *Campus Card (Student Identification)*

The campus card is a student's personal connection to and identification with the university. It is used to access a range of critical services including Library services, the TRUSU UPASS, and discounts from local businesses.

The campus card has consistently achieved exceptional student satisfaction, regularly amongst the top items in the survey and the highest of any item in 2019. In 2019, nine of ten respondents were satisfied with the campus card, and more than half were very satisfied.

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to all those across campus who contribute to the production and value of the campus card on a job well done.

#### *Wellness Centre*

The Wellness Centre provides students with holistic supports, guidance, and events. From mental health and substance use to nutrition, sleep, and exercise, the Wellness Centre helps ensure students have a balanced and healthy university experience.

The Wellness Centre has consistently achieved excellent student satisfaction, regularly amongst the top items in the survey and second highest in 2019. This satisfaction, furthermore, has increased in each of the past two years. In 2019, nine of ten respondents were satisfied with the Wellness Centre, and half were very satisfied.

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to the Wellness Centre faculty and Student Wellness Ambassadors on a job well done.

#### *Library Services*

The Library provides a comprehensive range of academic services from research assistance to resource identification to citation that critically complement the classroom learning experience.

Library services have consistently achieved exceptional student satisfaction, regularly amongst the top items in the survey and third highest of any item in 2019. This satisfaction, furthermore, has increased in each of the past three years. In 2019, nine of ten respondents were satisfied with library services, and half were very satisfied.

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to the faculty, staff, and administration of the Library on a job consistently well done.

# Improvement

## Improvement

These areas are recognized for improvements in student satisfaction, particularly as a result of initiatives to respond to students' prioritization and recommendations in previous Student Budget Consultations.

### *Transportation Alternatives*

Transportation alternatives are critical to advancing the university's priority of sustainability as well as providing students with affordable and functional access to campus. Students identified parking and transportation alternatives for improvement in every Student Budget Consultation Report for the years 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The City of Kamloops and BC Transit launched live bus-tracking in the summer of 2018 and added 7,200 service hours in September 2018. Student satisfaction with cycling, walking and transit facilities had the greatest increase of any item last year (1.45/3.00 in 2018 and 1.96/3.00 in 2019).

The university has developed a transportation webpage to help the campus community make informed decisions about commuting to and from campus, including alternatives such as the Zip Car and Rideshare programs. Student satisfaction with the Zip Car increased since its launch last year (1.46/3.00 in 2018 to 1.66/3.00 in 2019). Student satisfaction with the Rideshare similarly increased (1.34/3.00 in 2018 and 1.51/3.00 in 2019).

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to the officials and staff of the City of Kamloops and BC Transit as well as the staff and administration of the Office of Sustainability on improvements to transportation alternatives.

### *Food Services*

Food is a critical part of the university experience, from well-being and success to diversity and campus life. Students have identified food services for improvement in the *Student Budget Consultation Reports* for each year from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The Food Services department has worked since 2017 to address students concerns by, for example, permitting food trucks, providing greater dietary information, expanding options, extending hours, and providing more timely service. Efforts have begun to pay off as student satisfaction with food services increased substantially over the past year (1.22/3.00 in 2018 to 1.43/3.00 in 2019).

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to the staff and administration of Food Services, on successful efforts to improve the dining experience.

### *Academic Advising*

Academic advising is a foundational service, facilitating students' selection of meaningful educational goals and planning efficient paths to program completion and graduation. Students have identified academic advising for improvement in every Student Budget Consultation Report from 2015/16 to 2019/20.

Enrolment Services and advisors across the university have responded with both systemic reform and front-line service improvements. Efforts have consistently paid off as student satisfaction with academic advising has increased in each of the last four years (1.63/3.00 in 2015; 1.66/3.00 in 2016; 1.82/3.00 in 2017; 1.85/3.00 in 2018; and 1.95/3.00 in 2019).

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation and congratulations to the staff and administration of Enrolment Services, as well as faculty and staff program advisors, on continued successes in improved service.

# Responsiveness

## Responsiveness

These areas are recognized for undertaking initiatives that respond to students' prioritization and recommendations in previous Student Budget Consultations, and that may be expected to improve student satisfaction going forward.

### *Study Space*

Study space is an integral learning environment that supports students' work between lectures, seminars, labs, and other formal instructional sessions. Students identified study space for improvement in the *Student Budget Consultation Reports* for 2017/18, 2019/20, and 2020/21.

In October 2018, the university committed to calculate the total amount of study space per student and take action if it is below the accepted standard amongst universities. Actions would include exploring options to renovate existing spaces or under-utilized classrooms to be study-appropriate (i.e. study carrels, desks, outlets, sound dampening) and re-configuring existing study spaces to better separate individual and group study with signage to encourage associated behaviours. Further, the university committed to make modernized classrooms available for study space when not in use, and to develop a website/app to let students know which and when classrooms are available.

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation to the staff and administration of Facilities Services on the willingness and commitment to respond to students' priorities and recommendations. Impacts on the student experience are eagerly anticipated.

### *Food Services*

Food is a critical part of the university experience, from well-being and success to diversity and campus life. Students identified food services for improvement in the *Student Budget Consultation Reports* for each year from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The TRU Board of Governors supported a call for fulsome consultation of the campus community on the future of food service following the spring 2018 expiry of the exclusive food service contract. Food Services, supported by a representative committee and industry-leading consultant Porter Khouw Consulting, led the resulting consultation from September through November 2018. This included data analysis, focus groups and stakeholder interviews, an online survey with over 2,800 responses.

On behalf of our members, the Students' Union offers appreciation to the staff and administration of Food Services, as well as the Board of Governors, on following through on the commitment to consult the community on the future of food on campus. Further impacts on the student experience are eagerly anticipated.

# Priorities & Services Gaps

## Priorities and Service Gaps

The Student Budget Consultation 2020/21 identified five priorities: parking, food services, study space, course materials, and course offerings. The following presents, for each priority, a background and context outlining previous recommendations, commitments, and actions, as well as external and anticipated changes; the priority's quantitative ranking in the survey; a thematic report of qualitative data; and a conclusion summarizing themes.

### PRIORITY 1: PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

Students' top priority is parking and transportation. On parking, they seek improvements to the availability of spaces, means to identify available parking spaces, and space management. They further want parking pricing to better reflect issues of affordability, fairness, and value. Students want alternative transportation options to be made more widely viable while recognizing the limitations of TRU-Kamloops as a commuter campus. This includes efforts with the City to improve services and infrastructure connecting campus by transit, cycling, and walking as well as greater promotion and scalability of the Rideshare, Zip Car, and other services. A further concern has developed to improve campus walkability and pedestrian safety.

#### Background and Context

Parking has been an issue of concern and contention on campus for some time. This is the fifth Student Budget Consultation Report to identify it for attention. For two years now, the issue has been raised in the context of the *Sustainable Parking Framework* as well as campus construction projects.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2016/17* parking was a student priority for improvement. The dominant concern was price, but students also raised six more pointed issues: affordability, value, use of revenue, space and demand management, rate options, and viable transportation alternatives.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18*, parking was recorded in the data as students' highest priority. Rather than reiterate the priority, the Report simply noted the lack of formal response or action to that point.

By February 2017, the *Sustainable Parking Framework* was announced with a series of actions that came into effect in September 2017. Demand management was to be addressed through conversion of employee lots to reserved lots with a student-employee ratio for efficiency and fairness. Five price tiers were created to push parking to the edge of campus. Transportation alternatives were to be addressed through the Rideshare carpooling program and the Zip Car car-sharing program. Unfortunately, rate options and use of revenue were not addressed. The availability of parking spaces was to decline as central lots are replaced with buildings, and affordability would worsen through future rate increases, on top of rate increases introduced by the new tiered system.

The *Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19* was released just as the *Sustainable Parking Framework* was implemented. Parking was again students' top priority for improvement. Students remained concerned with affordability, demand management, rate options, and viable alternatives. A lack of parking became increasingly important in anticipation of fewer spaces.

In January 2018, reports on the early experience with the *Sustainable Parking Framework* were unclear or underwhelming. On demand management, a report to the Parking Appeals and Advisory Committee suggested permitted lots were underutilized. On the shift to alternative transportation, tracking of single-occupancy vehicle use was not available. Neither the Rideshare nor Zip Car services met target utilization. Finally, while calls for structured parking were rejected, the creation of temporary lots at the edge of campus was promised to address demand during construction.

The *Student Budget Consultation Report 2019/20* was released following the first full year of experience with the *Sustainable*

# Parking & Transportation

*Parking Framework*, and students' opinions largely matched the reported data. The new reserved lot system introduced new challenges of efficient use of spaces, and students continued to be concerned with fairness. Affordability and demand management suffered without flexible rate options, particularly short-term rates. There was also a growing sense that parking space is lacking, exacerbated by construction and enrolment growth. Students again reported that efforts to shift transportation away from single-occupancy vehicles would only be effective if alternatives are viable.

In 2018/19, few changes were made to campus parking and transportation to and from campus. The most significant was that the City of Kamloops and BC Transit launched live bus-tracking and added 7,200 service hours, which significantly increased students' satisfaction (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above). TRU developed a transportation webpage to help the campus community make informed decisions about commuting.

TRU will begin its third year of experience with the *Sustainable Parking Framework* in September 2019. It is in the context of this growing experience that students' continued prioritization of parking and transportation improvements must be considered.

## Quantitative Results

	Prioritization	Gap Analysis	Derived Importance
Parking	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b> <hr/> out of 71 items	<b>0.68</b> Satisfaction <b>-2.78</b> Importance <hr/> <b>-2.10</b> Action required	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b> <hr/> out of 71 items
Alternate Transportation	<b>33<sup>rd</sup></b> <hr/> out of 70 items	<b>1.96</b> Satisfaction <b>-2.71</b> Importance <hr/> <b>-0.75</b> Action required	<b>39<sup>th</sup></b> <hr/> out of 71 items
RideShare	<b>59<sup>th</sup></b> <hr/> out of 70 items	<b>1.51</b> Satisfaction <b>-2.41</b> Importance <hr/> <b>-0.90</b> Action required	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b> <hr/> out of 71 items
Zip Car	<b>70<sup>th</sup></b> <hr/> out of 70 items	<b>1.66</b> Satisfaction <b>-2.23</b> Importance <hr/> <b>-0.57</b> Action required	<b>17<sup>th</sup></b> <hr/> out of 71 items

# Parking & Transportation

The quantitative data from the 2019 Student Budget Consultation survey rank parking as students' top priority overall. Alternative transportation facilities (campus infrastructure to support transit, cycling, walking, etc.), by contrast, have become less of a priority, due to increased satisfaction with transit compared to the previous year (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above). TRU's alternative transportation services (the Rideshare and Zip Car) remained a lower priority. While these also achieved increases in satisfaction, that satisfaction remains amongst the lowest of all items. Together, the data point to a need for attention on how students commute.

In a weighted prioritization, parking ranked first of seventy-one (1/71) items. In students' own evaluation, parking must be targeted for improvement. Alternative transportation facilities attracted less student attention, but are seen as somewhat important, ranking thirty-third of seventy-one (33/71) items. The Rideshare and Zip Car have, however, largely failed to capture students' consideration, ranking fifty-ninth (59/71) and next to last (70/71) in direct prioritization. This suggests that students identify commuting as a challenge, but are either unfamiliar with, uninterested in, unconfident in, or unable to use the current alternatives to driving.

The prioritization of parking is corroborated by the satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Parking received an extremely poor satisfaction score (0.68/3.00), which is by far the lowest of any item in this or any previous year of the survey. Most respondents (79%) had negative opinions of parking, and a sizable majority were 'not at all satisfied' (60%). At the same time, parking received a critical importance score of 2.78/3.00 with most (85%) describing it as 'very important'. This provides for the greatest gap analysis (-2.10) in any year of the survey, and represents a significant opportunity for improvement.

The satisfaction-importance gap analysis maintains the prioritization of alternative transportation facilities. Alternative transportation facilities received an average satisfaction score (1.96/3.00) with a strong majority of respondents (73%) holding positive opinions. This is the greatest improvement of any item from the previous year. At the same time, almost all respondents (97%) held alternative transportation facilities as important, leading to an increased importance rating of 2.71/3.00. This provides for a significant gap analysis (-0.75), and suggests a strategic opportunity for improvement.

The satisfaction-importance gap analysis also demands greater attention to TRU's other transportation services. The Rideshare and Zip Car received the third and fifth lowest satisfaction scores (1.51/3.00 and 1.66/3.00, respectively), and half of respondents had negative opinions of both (54% and 47%, respectively). However, the considerable dissatisfaction with these services is coupled with ambivalence. The Rideshare and Zip Car are not seen as relatively important (-2.41/3.00 and -2.23/3.00, respectively). This nonetheless provides gap analyses greater than most other items (-0.90 and -0.57, respectively). Current alternative transportation services are neither raising nor satisfying expectations, but improving this type of services may still prove a strategic opportunity.

Finally, parking and the Rideshare had the first (1/71) and fourth (4/71) highest derived importance, respectively, for improving overall satisfaction with TRU. (Zip Car and alternative transportation facilities had significantly lower derived importance.) Commuting continues to prove to be a consequential experience. In the case of parking, the correlation of its satisfaction score with overall satisfaction (0.34) was average, but the overwhelming level of dissatisfaction (79%) makes it a clear strategic choice for improvement. In the case of the Rideshare, its correlation with overall satisfaction (0.41) was amongst the highest of all items. Combined with a high level of dissatisfaction (44%), this also provides strategic value in improving this alternative transportation service.

Overall, the quantitative data on parking and transportation suggest a considerable frustration. This is underscored by the fact that transportation items are all amongst the ten worst satisfaction scores in the survey. At the same time, students prioritize improvements in parking while showing ambivalence towards current alternatives, contrary to the intended direction of the university. This suggests that work to realign transportation needs, expectations, and realities could yield considerable benefits.

## Qualitative Results

In the 2019 Town Hall and open survey comments, students identified four concerns related to parking. These include issues of space, finding space, and space and demand management; pricing for affordability, value, and fairness; the viability of alternative

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transportation options; and an emerging issue of campus walkability and safety. These concerns continue to be shaped significantly by the experience of the Sustainability Parking Framework and campus construction.

## *Parking Spaces and Management*

A primary feature of the *Sustainable Parking Framework* has been to shift parking to the periphery of campus and to manage demand within the resulting tiers of lots: premium, general, and economy. Further, it aims to maintain the same number of parking spaces even as the campus population grows. Accordingly, much of students' feedback has been in relation to space and to space and demand management efforts. They raise concerns about how the implementation can better reconcile with needs and whether strategies are effectively achieving intended outcomes.

There is a continuing sense that parking space is lacking, exacerbated by the impact of construction and enrolment growth. The consensus established over the past years, and the impact on the student experience, is illustrated in these examples:

- “ *I should not have to show up forty-five minutes early to my class in order to ensure I have a parking spot. I come from twenty minutes out of town as it is and do not need additional time added onto my day because of the university's inability to provide enough parking for the quantity of students paying to attend the school.*
- “ *I think that over the past couple years it has been more and more difficult to find parking at all. A few years ago there was definitely parking available around the peripheral edge, like in Lot N or something, but there have definitely been days now where I go to Lot N and there is no parking at all.*
- “ *There are progressively less spaces available for parking as a result of construction.*

Other students have expressed the issue not necessarily as a lack of total spaces, but rather in terms of the challenge of finding an available space. This challenge is often described in terms of the time it requires:

- “ *Parking is the biggest issue in regards to being a student at TRU. Every day is a hassle, and I must make sure to leave at least one hour prior to my class just for a chance to find a parking spot.*
- “ *My roommates have to leave an hour before their classes every day because it can take them up to forty-five minutes just to find a parking spot!*
- “ *Sometimes people have a test and can't drive around for twenty minutes to find a spot.*

Accommodations made in the past year with new lots at the edge of campus (Lots NT and XT) have restored the number of spaces previously lost to construction, but do not seem to be familiar to or impactful for some students. By contrast, students continue to seek structured parking as a more space-efficient and effective solution, as these students suggest:

- “ *Pushing for a parkade and an actual solution to parking before building more residences or education buildings is absolutely necessary.*
- “ *Perhaps get some parking garages going because it doesn't matter how far you put the lots there isn't enough spots.*
- “ *Consider upgrading to parkades instead of lots. Build higher or lower not wider.*

# Parking & Transportation

The university has indicated that building structured parking presents challenges they consider too great. In the meantime, however, students have also continued to identify a need to improve space and demand management. Demand management is one of the primary features of the *Sustainable Parking Framework*. However, with growing experience of the system, many students continue to identify challenges.

As in prior years, students remain interested in means to better manage the existing space by distributing demand across time. This student, for example, experienced a challenge in finding parking during peak hours:

“ *Parking space is limited and it is particularly difficult to find spots during busy times of the day.*

An increasingly dominant theme in student's comments, however, is that the attempt to distribute demand across campus through the tiered lot pricing system isn't working as intended. For those students purchasing a premium or general pass, the challenge is that paying more doesn't provide access to the associated lot(s). These students believe the passes are being oversold:

“ *The parking here is a complete disaster, and it's never been great. This last year they have introduced this premium parking thing that costs a fortune and does not guarantee a spot for those who purchase it. This needs to be fixed!*

“ *Parking is so unfair. Paying so much money while the parking is way oversold. I end up not being able to ever park where I have paid for. Such a rip off and disappointment.*

“ *Too many permits sold [and] not enough spaces available.*

This issue has a reciprocal and cascading effect on those who choose to buy a lower level pass or no pass at all, and find the general and economy lots limited. These students explain:

“ *The premium parking was not a smart move, This got rid of all the decent parking and made economy parking impossible.*

“ *The premium parking should not exist and parking should exist on a first come first serve basis.*

“ *I think there should be no premium parking and that all spots should be available for general parking and should be a first come first serve basis. [It] also needs to be less expensive! It makes me very angry when I have to pay \$250 per semester, but become late for classes because of unavailable parking.*

As noted in the background and context, reports on the efficiency of space use under the *Sustainable Parking Framework* support students' assessment that demand management measures need to be adjusted to achieve the better use of space that was intended.

## *Pricing Parking for Affordability, Fairness, and Value*

After space, a prominent concern about parking remains price in relation to affordability, fairness, value. At the most straightforward level, students describe parking as too expensive. For example, these students protested:

“ *We need more [parking], and more reasonable parking rates.*

“ *Parking on campus is far too limited and is increasingly expensive.*

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“ *Parking is way too expensive. Again, we are poor.*

“ *Parking is absolutely ridiculous and expensive.*

More specifically, it was again noted that price is a particular hardship for those with modest means, including the typical student, given limited income and growing educational expenses. These students contextualized the price of parking in terms of equity, fairness, and the broader challenges of living expenses and educational costs:

“ *You have created quite the class gap on campus. All the well-off kids have premium parking with new cars while those of us struggling to make ends meet realize there is no more parking...*

“ *I don't believe that the parking is in favor of the students or even the staff. It looks like a money grab. I don't know all the reasoning behind it but from a student and staff perspective it doesn't seem fair.*

“ *It is too expensive and is unfair. The premium parking cost is horrendous and makes unfair opportunities for students.*

“ *Parking should be free. We pay an arm and a leg for tuition and housing. We are drowning in debt.*

Because pricing is the key mechanism of demand management, the challenges of demand management outlined above are also identified as an issue of value. These students find the cost of a pass unjustifiable given the lack of availability:

“ *If I purchase a general permit for \$250 a semester, I would like to be guaranteed a spot somewhere, at some time. Not my own specific spot, but a spot, somewhere, that reflects that I do pay. As it stands, next semester I will be getting a premium permit, paying the extra amount, even though I should not have to. Consider only selling the amount of permits for the amount of spaces, or reduce the price.*

“ *The parking lots are way too full and it is a waste of money buying a parking pass when there is nowhere to park.*

“ *I have a general parking pass, but the premium pass is only thirty dollars more. I think that, in a way, if you are paying for that privilege maybe it should be more expensive, and the general one should be a lot cheaper. Because I'm paying \$250 to come to school and often not get a spot.*

At the same time, those students seeking affordability and flexibility have limited rate options:

“ *[We] need more low-cost parking spaces – i.e. more economy and general spaces.*

“ *Parking on campus seems overly expensive and not a lot of options for shorter time periods - basically the visitor lots and “N” lot only for those staying under two or four hours.*

The price of parking is more than an inconvenience for many students because they are already financially stretched thin. Greater consideration of affordability and differing means is still needed. Finally, a disconnect between the price of passes and the spaces available in associated lots as well as a lack of rate options is proving to make pricing for value a challenge.

## *Improving Alternative Transportation Options*

# Parking & Transportation

Parking difficulties are frequently justified in terms of the potential to encourage more sustainable transportation choices. While some students spoke to this effect, many others identified the limitations of current alternatives. Within these limitations, students provided suggestions for improvement.

## *Limitations of a Commuter Campus*

The primary limitation of alternative transportation options is the character of TRU-Kamloops as a commuter campus. These students spoke to a disappointment that this reality is neglected in plans to compel behavioural change:

“ *It's just really frustrating for me [because] I would love to be Ms. Sustainable and go out and do that, but one thing I feel like we're not being heard about is that we are a commuter campus. We have so many people who live outside of the central hub of where TRU is or where it's easy to walk or bus and its efficient. So I struggle with that.* ”

“ *There is a parking crisis at TRU that continues to get worse as the university gets bigger. It's difficult to get home or around if you live out of town and having the ability to have a car as a safe way home at TRU is very important to me.* ”

“ *Parking is necessary for students, especially in this isolated campus.* ”

This student further suggested that changing the campus character through increased student housing would be more effective than attempting to force behavioural change through disincentives:

“ *I think if TRU appropriated more land specifically for student housing and made the campus a walkable environment, then that would be the best option to get people out of their cars and not have to use transportation at all.* ”

Absent this structural change, alternatives will only be viable for some of the campus community.

## *Transit*

The primary alternative, transit, provides a good example of this limitation. These students highlighted that the accessibility of transit in a geographically dispersed city and region creates very different possibilities for different members of the community:

“ *I understand that TRU is trying to promote being green but a lot of people live outside of Kamloops and cannot bus around.* ”

“ *Taking transit in Kamloops is just not a viable option for everyone and as the campus continues to grow (which it is!) this will only become worse.* ”

“ *I am personally fortunate enough to live along a bus route that is actually viable to get to school so I never drive. But many students don't have that luxury.* ”

It is also worth noting that transit use can be challenging for those within its service area. Challenges were identified in terms of travel time, frequency, scheduling, and capacity. For example, these students explained that using transit was an inefficient means of commuting from their homes:

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- “ *Transit does not go close enough to my house to be worth taking, and I find that there are not enough buses coming around, so it takes a long time to get places by bus. I must drive to school because of this.*
- “ *I know when you're not taking the [transit route] number nine, it becomes increasingly difficult to come to campus in a timely matter. If you're in Barnhartvale or even somewhere like the North Shore it can be pretty problematic. So it's harder to justify taking public transit.*
- “ *I live in Westsyde, like last stop by The Dunes, Westsyde. And I used to take the bus for two years and I was just so frustrated because it was fine with getting to campus. I had no problem during the day. Yeah, it sucks. It takes an hour to get there, but it was after when I would be done classes, done school, any time after 6:00PM it would take me an hour and a half to two hours to get home when it takes me half an hour to drive.*

Others highlighted issues of service frequency as limiting the feasibility of using transit to get to campus:

- “ *So I take the bus seven, and from my experience ... [t]he bus seven takes a long time for any to come by. So it's very difficult in my case to count on public transportation to get to campus or to get downtown...*

Similarly, when those who drive to campus were asked what would lead them to choose not to drive, frequency of transit service was the determining factor:

- “ *Much better bus service. Except for the [transit route] number nine, which comes every thirteen minutes, all the buses are pretty terrible... I would not drive if the bus service was better.*

A related issue was identified in the scheduling of service, particularly in off-peak hours. This student explained why current transit service did not meet their class schedule:

- “ *I live over in Sun Rivers, and we recently got new bus service last September and the bus service started coming every hour. I was really excited to take the bus, but it just wasn't efficient enough because it was an hour distance and it was so hard to catch a bus if the last bus leaves here at six o'clock at night. Most of my classes are later than that so I wouldn't be able to get home unless I was walking. So for me, the transit as it was just wasn't a viable option.*

Again, this factor can determine whether a change in behaviour is possible. This student describes their shift to transit only after scheduling improved:

- “ *I can speak from experience that I only made the switch to using the bus even just from Aberdeen when they upped the service to include TRU specific timeframe – extra buses – in the morning and in the afternoon, which meant that I could reliably get to school at the time that I wanted to. Before that, it just wasn't an option.*

Disincentives to driving may be necessary to promote transit, but it is not sufficient for many without transit improvements. Fortunately, better frequency and scheduling, as well as live bus tracking, have recently made transit use possible for more students. In combination with enrolment growth, a new challenge has emerged in terms of transit service capacity on high-demand routes. These students provide examples:

# Parking & Transportation

“ I live on the North Shore and typically the bus is full when it gets to my stop. I’m right before the bridge and they just don’t even pick me up. So that’s why I come to school in a car.

“ I tried to take the [transit route] number nine to come, but actually it’s not as good as it’s supposed to be. Even though it comes every thirteen minutes, it’s overly crowded. Usually, the bus driver has to tell us, ‘If you’re after the red line, just get off the bus.’ Since we’re on the way on secondary schools, it’s always crowded on the way back and forth. I think it’s important to make more buses available for more students. It’s also dangerous to have so many students on the bus.

Many of these challenges will require action from the City of Kamloops and BC Transit, which can build on their recent successes (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above). However, the university can also work to better accommodate students for whom transit is not an option and for whom price disincentives for parking are ineffective.

## Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling are other often promoted alternatives to driving, but generated little commentary from participants in this consultation. Those who did comment raised concerns about environmental conditions and infrastructure. This student explains that active transportation can only serve to complement other modes at favourable times of the year:

“ It does become winter here. It is not fair to expect people to walk and bike all year.

More importantly, many students identified a lack of related infrastructure in the city and on campus to facilitate walking and cycling as safe options:

“ When the government helped TRU buy Upper College Heights, the issue was raised about students crossing the road, the Summit Connector, and there was talk of building a bridge. And that was some kind of plan however long into the future. That obviously remains an issue on the university’s plate.

“ The onramp leaving [Summit Drive] to TRU where it’s just that really skinny road there’s no sidewalk or anything but people use that like there is a sidewalk all the time.

“ We have few areas that is safe to ride a bike.

To generate interest in walking or cycling as alternatives, work with the City of Kamloops is necessary to develop the needed infrastructure to integrate the campus and surrounding neighbourhoods. The university can also work directly on its own infrastructure to make campus more walkable and safe for pedestrians and cyclists (see *Campus Walkability and Pedestrian Safety* below).

## TRU Rideshare and Zip Car

Finally, TRU operates or hosts two further alternative transportation services, the Rideshare Zip Car. As noted above, the quantitative data suggest that students are ambivalent about these services. The qualitative data supports this if only because it is so limited and suggests a lack of familiarity. For example, one of the few comments on the topic is a question:

“ What even is Rideshare? I’ve been at the university for five years now and I have no idea.

# Parking & Transportation

When participants in the Town Hall were prompted to discuss these services, there were no comments forthcoming. These services are not currently seen as alternatives to commuting.

Overall, a balance between the disincentives to park and the viability of other transportation methods is needed to realize the environmental and land use benefits intended.

## *Campus Walkability and Pedestrian Safety*

A new concern emerging as a consequence of changes to campus parking is a decline in campus walkability and pedestrian safety. This concern is a function of both infrastructure and behaviour.

In terms of infrastructure, the shift of parking spaces to the periphery of campus has not yet been accompanied by improvements in walkability from those new lots. These students explain that this creates an undesirable experience:

“ Often, if you aren't at least a half hour early, you may not get a space, or you may be a long walk from the trades building with no real supported walking area. It's just a sidewalk and in places there are no sidewalks near the new lot.

“ That new Lot, NT – there are a lot of folks walking to and from, and maybe if there was more pedestrian infrastructure to and from rather than walking on the road – they could put in a pathway or something for folks riding their bikes so they don't have to cross the road or something like that.

“ [It is] very difficult to walk through the parking lots to get to classes without interrupting traffic.

Of greater concern is that others expressed the situation in terms of safety:

“ A lot of the outside lots around the perimeter don't have any kind of pedestrian access. If you have any sort of difficulty walking or mobility issues or you're carrying something heavy, it would be difficult to do it safely. And you typically have to walk on the road.

Safety was also the primary concern in terms of the changes in behaviour resulting from the changes to parking. This student highlighted that the challenge of identifying available parking spaces has led to dangerous driving in parking lots:

“ It used to be really easy to come get a spot here right beside AE, but I feel like the environment, especially in the morning, is becoming really hostile and dangerous... [P]eople are speeding to get to your parking stall and I think that's ... definitely really concerning ... I'm seriously concerned about the safety of pedestrians and people trying to find a stall.

This was also identified in the campus roadways for the same reason, as explained here:

“ Another spot that I find is kind of dangerous too is that one four-way stop going into the visitor parking in front of Old Main coming down from the bus stop. There's tons of traffic from students getting off of the bus there and also students rushing to get a parking spot in the visitor parking area. It seems like there's always someone about to get run over there.

One of the purposes of changes to parking has been to create a more walkable campus. Unfortunately, the process of change has had the opposite effect. Greater attention is needed to fully integrate changes as they are implemented to maintain safety, and improvements to demand management gain a greater urgency for the same reason.

# Parking & Transportation

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, students' top priority for improvement in 2020/21 is parking and transportation to and from campus. Students seek means to efficiently find available parking spaces in the short-term and for the university to build spaces more efficiently in the long-term. They seek more effective space and demand management strategies and pricing that balances demand management with affordability, fairness, and value. Students want recognition of the limitations of disincentives for parking at a commuter campus. This requires more efforts to facilitate safe and efficient transit, walking, and cycling through both campus and City of Kamloops services and infrastructure. Finally, additional transportation services need promotion and scalability to have meaningful effect.

As a result, students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that

- **Provide means to efficiently identify available parking spaces**
- **Improve parking space and demand management**
- **Better address affordability, fairness, and value in parking pricing**
- **Improve alternative transportation options through service improvements and infrastructure to match parking disincentives**
- **Improve alternative transportation services through promotion and scalability**
- **Improve campus walkability and pedestrian safety**

# Food Services

## PRIORITY 2: FOOD SERVICES

Students' second priority is food service. Focus remains on variety, options, and accommodation as well as price, value, and quality. These are raised in the context of suggestions for food service operations including increased hours of operation, improved locations and spaces, and more diverse food providers. These, in turn, are evaluated in terms of their support of campus life. The recent food service consultation provides direction and recommendations that may address these issues.

### Background and Context

Food services on campus have been challenged in satisfying the growing and changing demands of the student body. This is the fourth Student Budget Consultation Report to identify food service for improvement. Changes in the recent past have improved student satisfaction, and a campus consultation led by an industry-leading consultant provides direction for further improvements (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above).

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18*, food service was students' top priority for improvement. Above all, students sought market competition in food services to empower student-consumers. This was seen as a means to greater variety, dietary accommodation, better value, extended hours, and prompt service. Students were also open to other efforts towards these ends.

In December 2016, the TRU Food Services department responded. Variety was to improve through food trucks, independent providers in private campus development, and redeveloped offerings in existing outlets. Dietary information was to be made readily available. Hours of operation for key outlets were extended. Timely service was to be addressed by efficient processes and new 'line up' cameras. Unfortunately, value for price was not addressed.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2018/19*, food service was students' second priority for improvement. Improvements announced in December 2016 had not had time to make an impact. Therefore, concerns remained unchanged. Students also maintained a strong desire to rethink the campus food service system altogether. The expiry of a five-year exclusive food service contract presented a rare opportunity to do that. As a result, the *Report 2018/19* and the Students' Union's Hungry for Choice campaign recommended that the university conduct a full and meaningful campus consultation to shape any new or renewed campus food service contract(s).

In December 2017, the TRU Board of Governors agreed with the need to consult the community on the future of campus food services. With this encouragement, administration established a Food Services Review Committee responsible for overseeing a consultation leading to a new or renewed long-term contract by April 2019. Porter Khouw Consulting (PKC), a firm with many years of experience in university food service, was selected to conduct the consultation.

In the Student Budget Consultation 2019/20, food service remained students' second priority for improvement. With the food service consultation pending, students continued to seek improved options and variety, price and value, and hours of operation. They further drew attention to these issues as they relate not only to food outlets, but also event catering as a function of campus life.

In the fall of 2018, PKC conducted the food service consultation with data analysis, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and an online survey with over 2,800 responses. PKC made a series of recommendations. In the short-term, they suggested expanding the number and variety of food trucks, adding seating and variety in existing food service spaces, expanding (potentially independent) retail offerings in additional spaces, extending the hours of operation at central retail locations; and expanding offerings to include breakfast. Importantly, these directly reflect what students had shared in the Student Budget Consultation over the previous three years. In the longer-term, PKC recommended constructing a central dining hall with expanded amenities and meal plan options.

It is in the context of recent changes and the recommendations of the food service consultation, that students' continued prioritization of food service improvements should be considered.

# Food Services

## Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the 2019 Student Budget Consultation survey rank food service as students' second priority overall.

In a weighted prioritization, food services ranked eighth of seventy-one (8/71) items. In students' own evaluation, food services should be targeted for improvement.



This prioritization is corroborated by the satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Food services received a poor satisfaction score of 1.43/3.00, the third lowest of any item in the survey. Importantly, it also had the third greatest improvement in satisfaction over the previous year (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above), but more work is needed. A majority (54%) of respondents had negative opinions of food services, and one in five (20%) was 'not at all satisfied'. At the same time, food services received a critical importance score of 2.68/3.00 with three in four (74%) describing it as 'very important'. This provides for the third greatest gap analysis (-1.26) and provides significant opportunity for improvement.

Finally, food services had the second highest derived importance (2/71) for improving overall satisfaction with TRU. Eating on campus is not just an afterthought for students; it is a critical part of their daily experience. The correlation of satisfaction with food services and overall satisfaction (0.42) was amongst the highest of all items. Combined with the high levels of dissatisfaction (54%), this makes food services a strategic choice for the allocation of improvement efforts and resources.

## Qualitative Results

In the 2019 Town Hall and the open survey comments, students continue to make many of the same requests as in previous years. They continue to want increased variety and options for meal types, health, and dietary accommodations. They continue to seek better value and food quality for the prices paid. They continue to offer suggestions for food service operations such as additional hours of operation, improved locations and spaces, and more diverse providers. While some issues with food services have advanced, improvement remains possible. The recent food service consultation provides direction and recommendations for this further improvement.

### *Variety, Options, and Accommodation*

The most consistent issue students have raised about campus food services is the need for more variety and options for the sake of appeal, a range of meals, and health as well as to meaningfully accommodate dietary needs and cultural diversity.

At the most straightforward level, student expressed a disappointment in variety of food available:

“ The options and pricing of the food services around campus is horrible.

“ There are few options on campus.

# Food Services

“ Need longer hours and more variety on campus.

More specifically, students noted a lack of differentiated food services options, serving neither variety nor a range of meal types. For example, these students noted that food service outlets on campus have limited types of offerings:

“ There are just a few restaurant options. TRU should have a bigger restaurant to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner, like there are in some American universities.

“ Even though Starbucks is there [in Old Main], there's no real food options that are available later in the evening.

“ Bring back the breakfast egger.

The desire for this more meal types is also reflected in appreciation where they have been expanded, as in this example:

“ So I've really enjoyed the fact that Scratch Market has a legitimate breakfast now. That's like a game changer. It's open early enough that you can get it before class and stuff. Scratch Market is doing good work as always.

Variety was also a concern in terms of access to healthy food, which, where available, was seen as unaffordable or overpriced. These students explained this challenge:

“ Food services have been improving but there is still a lack of healthy, tasty, affordable options. The Culinary Arts Building is great and the food place upstairs in CAC is good too, but other buildings are lacking.

“ We should have a salad bar or something with healthy options that doesn't cost a fortune.

“ We need less coffee shops and more affordable bistros or healthy alternatives to sugary muffins, bakery sweets and addictive caffeine.

“ I want real food and things that are lactose-free. I want to see my food cooked fresh. I want to feel good about eating on campus.

Finally, there was concern expressed regarding the accommodation of dietary restrictions, dietary choices, and food cultures. The most common of these concerns was the need to better accommodate plant-based choices. Some of the many related comments included these:

“ I would like to make healthy, inclusive food more available for students with dietary restrictions. Ex. more plant-based options.

“ In most of the cafés, I've noticed that most of the [vegetarian] options are a little cup of hummus or a banana or an apple, and the vegetarian options are very limited.

“ As a vegan, I have found there aren't very many options for 'quicker' meals and snacks.

# Food Services

This is an area Food Services has already taken action on, and improvements have been appreciated, as here:

“ Last year, I complained about the lack of vegan options on campus, and this year and I have been frequently at the ... Urban Market. And they have a weekly, rotating vegan special that's different styles, but it's very good! I've been impressed. They've upped their vegan game on campus.

Another area of accommodation raised was for cultural dietary restrictions, particularly Halal. The following requests demonstrate this need:

“ The food services could include Halal non-veg food items. I would really appreciate it.

“ If they can increase the menu items for Halal food – Halal is not only good for the people who strictly follow that diet, but for everyone else who is having those options. It's really healthy, so if Halal options are [increased] that will be much more a benefit for the common people.

Finally, those with allergies found difficulty eating on campus including these students:

“ There are few options for people with dietary restrictions - ie. gluten. It is difficult to find a good gluten-free meal that doesn't cost a fortune.

“ I have a horrible food allergy and about 95% of the vendors here serve shrimp, and I can't go there. I can't eat there. So that's my biggest thing is, living on campus, it would be very nice if there was something that didn't have seafood in it.

Students spend long periods of the day on campus and expect food services to meaningfully fulfil their nutritional needs over the course of that time. This includes providing the necessary variety to satisfy interest and balanced diets, and, importantly, to accommodate the allergies and the ethical and cultural dietary restrictions of campus communities.

Fortunately, the 2018 food service consultation final report provides many recommendations for immediate implementation that reflect and address these issues. This includes expanding the number and variety of food trucks, improving the existing spaces to provide more variety, offering new spaces to independent owners/companies, and expanding menu offerings to include more breakfast items.

## *Price, Value, and Food Quality*

The next most consistent theme of students' comments on campus food services continues to be price, value, and food quality, and their relationship to each other. Students are disappointed in not finding affordable food options and that the products often fail to meet a standard of value and quality for the prices paid.

Many students are looking to campus food services for means to eat on a budget, and are struggling to do so. For example:

“ Food services are way too expensive.

“ It's really important to me that there is reasonably priced food available at TRU.

Students' assessment of affordability is importantly connected to their financial situation as students with increasing educational costs and limited or fixed incomes. For example, these students evaluate campus food affordability as distinct from the general population eating out at a restaurant:

# Food Services

“ *The food is incredibly expensive considering the clientele are students.*

“ *[The Den is] really overpriced. Like the food is super, super expensive. I think a regular burger is fifteen or sixteen bucks! It's a university bar, for God's sakes, and it's priced like any other restaurant in town. It's pretty ridiculous.*

This assessment is supported by the experience of other university campuses that are seen to provide food options as an affordable service:

“ *When it comes to price, I know they can do better because I've spent time at other universities on field trips, and they've been able to provide me with full meals – packaged or fresh! – for three to six dollars. So I know that if other universities, like Laval for example, can offer that, TRU should be able to do the same. / Just to build on that idea, the McGill student bar had nothing on the menu over nine dollars. The most expensive sandwich on that menu was nine bucks. So I think [name] was absolutely right. We could do a lot better. I feel like they're just nickel and diming us, you know?*

To an even greater extent, however, students expect that the dollars they are willing to spend will purchase food of decent value and quality. These students suggest that campus food services are not delivering on this expectation:

“ *[F]ood is expensive and quality is medium.*

“ *The food on campus is terrible in comparison to other universities! It's so expensive and mediocre.*

“ *I treat food service here as like a last resort. Sometimes I just don't eat and wait until I go home rather than buy something here, because it is expensive here. / And low quality. / Low quality, yeah.*

“ *I don't like a lot of [food] on campus ... but the things I do I find are really overpriced ... I think that's the really big thing. The things that I would eat I find are really overpriced. I don't want to pay that much, whatever it is.*

As noted in examples provided above and again here, these expectations of affordability and value also relate to healthy options, meals types, and accommodation:

“ *Food services have been improving but there is still a lack of healthy, tasty, affordable options.*

“ *It is difficult to find a good gluten-free meal that doesn't cost a fortune.*

“ *We need less coffee shops and more affordable bistros or healthy alternatives...*

“ *More affordable food options because the main reason I don't want to stay on campus in the evening is because of the lack of options.*

“ *We should have a salad bar or something with healthy options that doesn't cost a fortune.*

Students will inevitably rely on campus food services for at least some of their meals. They expect that those food services will be organized accordingly as a necessary, student-centred service that supports healthy nutrition and a manageable budget. The

# Food Services

2018 food service consultation final report provides a recommendation for the coming years that reflects and addresses this issue, namely the creation of a dining hall and meal plans that offer value and quality.

## *Food Service Operations and Campus Life*

Students have also provided a growing set of recommendations for improving food service operations. Many of these build on improvements the university has made so far, and all are supported by the 2018 food service consultation final report. They include extended hours of options, improved food service spaces, and diversified food providers. All speak to the role of food in campus life.

Students continue to note that food service hours of operation still fall short of activity on campus. Students are on campus for classes, studying, and other activities spanning more than sixteen hours of any given day. Students, such as these below, are seeking hours of operation that more closely match that activity:

- “ *Food services aren't made for people with night classes.*
- “ *Limited hours in comparison to late night classes on campus. Food services often are closed during evening breaks.*
- “ *[E]verything closes early well before most students have finished studying.*
- “ *[I]t's important that food offerings are open as long as classes are running, this means up to 9:00PM in some cases, so that options are available for dinner. So students don't go hungry if they have back to back classes into the evening.*

Students not only want food service to be available when they need to be on campus, but also cite it as a factor in remaining on campus. For example, this student simply leaves campus once food service is unavailable:

- “ *[T]he main reason I don't want to stay on campus in the evening is because of the lack of options.*

TRU expanded hours of operation at two outlets in 2017 with success. Students want the university to continue expanding hours at additional outlets, particularly in the evenings, to support campus activity.

In addition to when, students are also interested in improving where they can access food service on campus. These students expressed a desire for a centralized dining hall or cafeteria for the purpose of access, dedicated space, and value through meal plans:

- “ *Food is scattered all over the place. One centralized food court please. That will save me time.*
- “ *There needs to be a cafeteria. Also, a better meal plan for students who live on campus.*
- “ *TRU does not offer a meal plan!*
- “ *I think it's always really hard to find a place to sit as well. A lot of the food services places, excluding The Den – the areas where you want to sit to enjoy your meal are exactly the same as where the study areas are. And people are looking to study and don't have enough space, and people are looking to enjoy their lunch and don't have enough space to do so.*

# Food Services

There was a further desire for a more vibrant campus pub as a cornerstone of campus life. For example:

- “ *Please make The Den a proper pub again. We are the only school that has a dead school bar on Friday nights.*
- “ *I was kind of torn when they turned Heroes into The Den ... It was so great to have a pub on campus where they would have like Halloween parties, they would bring in a DJ, and clubs could book it out and host events kind of like you do at CJ's, and have a karaoke night. That definitely creates campus culture.*

The role of food in animating the campus was also connected to a diversity of food providers. Students, like these, want the connection between campus and the Kamloops community that other food businesses and organizations can offer:

- “ *I would like to see more locally owned businesses on campus. Why have franchises being run that do nothing to return to the Kamloops community and TRU campus?*
- “ *I would love to see ... a Farmer's Market of some sort on the weekend at TRU. Have the Food Bank or Food Share come up here where students can go and get maybe healthy food options and not walk somewhere. But just involving and making that bridge between the campus and community. I would really love to see more of that or some creative ways of showing that.*
- “ *I really love it when the food trucks are on campus because I feel like we're kind of supporting the Kamloops community in a way.*

As the last comment notes, food trucks have been a successful way the university has allowed access to more food providers. Students are interested in seeing this approach expanded. In particular, students found the option has not been adequately promoted, as explained here:

- “ *On the movie night that the student union organizes I've seen that a couple of food trucks are around. If they could stay for, let's say, a week or we can test it out for a month, then it would be a great food option ... There is one food truck at Old Main and they are sometimes there and sometimes not, so if I could get the TRUGo app to tell me if there is a food truck around or not that would be really helpful.*
- “ *For the food trucks, it would be better if we knew they were coming and if it was just better promoted because they are here all the time, but I have no idea what's here or when they are here. When I tell people, they are like, 'What are you talking about?' 'There's a food truck right there.' 'What's their schedule?' 'I have no idea' 'How do I find out?' 'Nobody knows.'*

Students identify food service that is available when they need it, delivered in dedicated, appealing social spaces, and from diverse providers as an important foundation for campus life. The 2018 food service consultation final report provides recommendations for immediate implementation that reflects and addresses these issues. This includes expanding the hours of operation at central retail locations to better meet the needs of the campus community in the morning and late into the evening, offering new spaces to independent owners/companies, and expanding the number and variety of food trucks.

# Food Services

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, students' second priority for improvement in 2020/21 is food service, and they continue to seek improvements in variety, options, and accommodation as well as price, value, and quality. These foundational issues are raised in the context of concerns and suggestions for food service operations such as additional hours of operation, improved locations and spaces, and more diverse providers. These, in turn, are evaluated in terms of their support of campus life. The recent food service consultation provides direction and recommendations that address these issues.

Students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that implement the recommendations of the food service review in order to:

- **Increase food variety, options, and accommodations**
- **Improve food price, value, and quality**
- **Extend food service hours of operation**
- **Enhance food service spaces and amenities**
- **Broaden the diversity of food service providers**
- **Increase the impact of food service on campus life**

# Study Space

## PRIORITY 3: STUDY SPACE

Students' third priority is study space. They are concerned with the availability of sufficient space that is dedicated and appropriately managed, particularly for quiet study. They are further interested in better designed study space with appropriate amenities, such as a variety of comfortable and functional furniture for a range of study tasks; electrical outlets; accessible computers, technology, and software; and food preparation facilities. Finally, students continue to call for greater cleanliness and maintenance across spaces and amenities.

### Background and Context

As TRU has grown in terms of its diversity of programs and its number of students, the need for more dedicated study space has grown. This is the third Student Budget Consultation Report to identify study space as a priority for attention. There have been efforts to address study space since it was first raised, and small projects have been completed. However, an institution-wide approach has remained unfinished.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18*, study space was students' third-highest priority for improvement. Students identified a need for more study space, but saw that need as a function of management rather than infrastructure. They called for dedicated spaces managed to facilitate studying as distinct from socializing. Students further wanted purpose-built spaces for group work as well as individual study to complement open spaces. The spaces also required amenities to support both personal needs and productivity. Finally, students sought additional hours of operation and the expansion of successful 24-hour study spaces to match their schedule of activities.

In response to these calls, a proposal was developed in 2016 to convert the House of Learning into a 24-hour study and student service space. Unfortunately, the proposal was opposed by impacted members of the campus community who did not feel properly consulted. The project was indefinitely delayed. By summer of 2017, a similar proposal was submitted under a new capital projects planning process. While this proposal was approved as part of TRU's *5-Year Capital Plan* in June 2018, its implementation remains uncertain in terms of schedule and space. In the meantime, a number of smaller study space projects have been completed between 2016 and 2017 in various classroom buildings.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2019/20*, study space was once again students' third-highest priority for improvement. With major developments delayed, students' concerns remained largely unchanged. They wanted dedicated and appropriately managed study space, particularly for quiet study. They were further interested in better study space amenities, electrical outlets, and greater cleanliness. Finally, they wanted a balance between central study space and study space in classroom buildings.

In October 2018, the university committed to calculate the total amount of study space per student and take action if it was found below the accepted standard amongst universities. Actions would include exploring options to renovate existing spaces or under-utilized classrooms to be study-appropriate and reconfiguring existing study spaces to better separate individual and group study, with signage to encourage associated behaviours. Further, the university committed to make modernized classrooms available for study space when not in use, and to develop a website/app to let students know which and when classrooms are available. Finally, study spaces have been incorporated the new Industrial Training and Technology Centre and the nearly-completed Nursing and Population Health Building.

It is in the context of these proposals for study space renovation, reconfiguration, and repurposing as well as new study space developments that students' continued prioritization of study space improvements must be considered.

### Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the 2019 Student Budget Consultation survey rank study space as students' third priority overall.

# Study Space

In a weighted prioritization, study space ranked seventh among seventy-one (7/71) items, up from the previous year. In students' own evaluation, study space should be increasingly targeted for improvement.

This prioritization is corroborated by the satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Student satisfaction with study space is poor (1.69/3.00). Further, study space received the fourth highest importance rating (2.82/3.00) of all items in the survey, with an overwhelming majority (85%) describing it as 'very important'. This provides for the fourth greatest gap analysis (-1.13) in the survey, and provides significant opportunity for improvement.



Finally, study space had the seventh highest derived importance (7/71) for improving overall satisfaction with TRU. The correlation of satisfaction with study space and overall satisfaction (0.38) was higher than most items. Combined with the considerable levels of dissatisfaction (41%), this makes study space a strategic choice for the allocation of improvement efforts and resources.

## Qualitative Results

In the 2019 Town Halls and open survey comments, students identified a lack of study space and a need for better space management, particularly for the purposes of quiet study. They further sought improved study space design and amenities that create comfort, encourage appropriate behaviour, facilitate productivity, and support personal needs. Finally, students have highlighted that without proper maintenance and cleanliness, no study space design or amenities will be of ongoing value.

### *Lack of Study Space, Quiet Space, and Space Management*

As in the student budget consultations held in 2016 and 2018, the central theme of students' comments on study space remains a need for more of it. This need is seen in terms of its impact on commuter students, location, and peak hours. Most important is the need for quiet space and the space management necessary to secure it.

The university has committed to calculate the amount of study space available per student, and to compare it to the and accepted standard amongst university. While this will provide hard numbers, many students, such as these, expressed their sense that space falls short:

- “ Study spaces always feel limited and consistently full or squishy.
- “ More seating should be made available. I rarely come to campus because of how hard it is to find somewhere to sit.
- “ A lot of us spend a lot of time on campus, a lot of the time it's hard to find a quiet place to study or a social space! It would be nice to have another building just like HOL in the future to expand on this!

# Study Space

This sentiment was expressed specifically in relation to the greater needs of commuter students who want to spend more time on campus before, between, and after classes in order to minimize the need to travel to and from their homes. For example:

“ I would love more study space as I, and many people I know, spend lots of time on campus because we live a ways away and it would be great to have more spaces to study and be productive.

“ I think TRU could use more seating areas. I live off campus so if I want to study between classes I need a place to sit - I often can't find one that is quiet and comfortable.

This reflects a key rationale provided in the 2016 proposal to convert the House of Learning into a 24-hour study and student service space, and confirms that this rationale remains valid.

As in previous years, students also identified buildings that they feel are underserved in terms of available study space. This included the central, common study building, the House of Learning, as here:

“ Why do they keep shifting the use of the first floor HOL computer lab? This study area has always been packed when the lab was at its maximum computers. Now they've nearly cut it in half ... If they would've done a study, I bet this area was one of the most busy per square foot on campus for studying.

Others focused on classroom buildings where they would like to be able to stay and study between classes. A common building identified was the Science Building, as described here:

“ Need more study spaces, not just chairs in the hallway in the Science Building.

“ I'm often in the Science Building to study and your options are either in the hallway or in the little room they have beside the Bean Me Up café.

Arts and Education was another building commonly attracting concerns such as this one:

“ I also wish there was some better study spaces. Some times during the day I cannot find a space to sit and study in the building I am in. AE is especially bad for this.

Overall, students continue to look for a balance of study spaces between the classroom buildings they frequent and the central buildings they can seek out for dedicated study time. Regardless of location, students are concerned with access, as here:

“ HOL is nearly always full of people, OM is too loud, A&E has very minimal spaces...

“ Spaces are rarely available, and are very loud making it difficult to study... Very few spaces for students in the science building, [and] spaces available in other buildings on campus are often crowded and unavailable.

In addition to where, many students expressed their concerns in terms of when they can access study space, and identified a lack of space at peak hours:

“ More study spaces are needed with outlets as it is hard to find a space during certain hours with TRU's population growth.

# Study Space

“ Study space becomes a premium during peak times in campus and silent study space is next to impossible to find.

“ It is also become very hard to find a place to study without someone already taking up majority of the tables. In HOL and IB there is usually no open spots. To study at TRU you basically have to arrive after 5:00PM.

Finally, and most importantly, students have identified a lack of dedicated quiet study space.

“ This school is in desperate need of quiet study spaces for individuals.

“ There are far too few designated quiet study spaces on campus. This is incredibly distracting, especially during midterms and final exams when quiet space is an essential.

“ TRU does not offer many quiet study spaces for students.

The key consideration here is the management of study spaces. This was repeatedly raised in terms of the need for quiet study space where appropriate behaviors are maintained. For example:

“ There needs to be more silent study space and stricter enforcement of study space that is supposed to be silent.

In particular, these students identified the central, common study spaces such as the Main Library and the House of Learning as requiring better management:

“ There is only one quiet area on campus (Old Library) and this rule is never enforced... This is a university where people pay a lot of money to come and learn and study, so no, we do not need more 'social space'. We could use a lot less.

“ I think there's only one really quiet place, and that's the old Library. And come exam time, it is very hard to find a spot in there. So there needs to be more spaces that you have to be quiet in.

“ Upper level students are outnumbered by lower level students. This causes conflict when study space is needed as space is not used effectively. HOL should be called 'House of Socializing' as opposed to 'House of Learning'.

While concern with the distinction between quiet study space and social space in the Library and House of Learning have been raised in previous consultations, an new area of concern was raised this year in terms of computer labs. For example:

“ Computer labs need more supervision at later hours because people start acting like idiots.

“ I find some people treat the computer labs like they are a social space. And they come in there with food and water and all their friends and it is incredibly hard to get any work done with all the distraction. And I just wish there were some enforcement on having a little bit of community respect in the computer labs.

# Study Space

Students want campus to be a place that supports their education, and an important aspect of that education is time spent on reading, reviewing, writing, and other activity outside the classroom that requires specific and dedicated spaces. Currently, those spaces need to be expanded and better managed.

## *Study Space Design and Amenities*

In considering the expansion and management of study spaces, students have also highlighted the important role of design and amenities to support productivity and comfort for varied activities and to encourage appropriate behaviours. These design considerations include a supportive and appealing atmosphere, distinct needs and activities, comfortable and purpose-driven furniture, access to electrical outlets, access to technology and software, and food preparation.

The physical design of study space is a key consideration in their success. Students identified a range of factors in this regard including sense of scale, natural light, colour, and noise management:

- “ *We need more cozy study spaces on campus. HOL is pretty, but such a waste of space. Instead of dramatic open-concept library space, the university should have prioritized comfort of studying. It's a library after all.*
- “ *Windows and, colour on the walls and nice seating goes a long way. IB classrooms are an example of a nice atmosphere.*
- “ *The walls [in the House of Learning study rooms] are not sound-proof, so can you kind of hear what is happening in the other room.*
- “ *[The Science Building study room is] not quiet. It's really, really loud because the door is always open and it's right beside all that traffic.*

While these are common considerations for designing study space, students also identified the need for purpose-built spaces for activities that have become necessary as the university has grown. The examples below of graduate student offices and rest areas highlight the needs of a changing student population:

- “ *Many MSc students do not have an office of workspace, or a work computer. These things make it much easier to do our work, as we can have access to software that the school has.*
- “ *Perhaps having a sleeping area with couches or cots would be very helpful! Something that might be open regularly or maybe around exam period open 24/7 so that students needing to pull all-nighters might have a place to rest.*

Space design can be a large investment and existing spaces in particular may have limitations on what is possible to construct. Fortunately, students have also identified the possibility to improve both the comfort and function of study spaces through furniture. For example:

- “ *There needs to be lots of plug-ins for laptops in rooms and useable chairs.*
- “ *AE is a great spot to study, but they only have those lounge chairs on the top floor. If there were some desks up there, then that would be a great place to sit and study.*

# Study Space

Others suggest that furniture designed for specific purposes would improve the distinction between group and individual work.

- “ *There should be more individualized seating areas in the libraries.*
- “ *Have more tables for individuals. I often see one person at a four person table with no one else. Look at UBCO library – they have great study spaces with lots of plugs.*

In addition to furniture, amenities can provide for further comfort and productivity. More than any other particular amenity, students continue to highlight the need for electrical outlets. This has been a consistent theme in *Student Budget Consultation Reports* in relation to both study space and classrooms over multiple years. Again, these are just a few of the many students who called for more working electrical outlets in study space:

- “ *More spots for outlets (charging tablets, phones, and laptops) would be helpful. Sometimes finding these in a spot that would be convenient to work can be a challenge.*
- “ *There needs to be more study spaces and more electrical plugs around campus. Super annoying when you can't find a spot to study because you need a plug.*
- “ *In many places where study spaces are available the power outlets are not available, and if it is there it's not working.*

Electrical outlets are critical as students are increasingly using their own devices in and between classes. This year, the use of technology was also raised in terms of the need to access computers and software provided by the university itself. For example, these students highlighted the need for central study spaces like the House of Learning to incorporate computer labs:

- “ *Why do they keep shifting the use of the first floor HOL computer lab? This study area has always been packed when the lab was at its maximum computers.*
- “ *I am spending most of my time in HOL too. It's because there are computers there, and I don't want to carry around my laptop every time. Since the Writing Centre has moved to HOL, it's even more difficult to find a space to study and to get a computer.*

Others identified computer labs in other buildings as part of their study space environments:

- “ *I would prefer to study in AE because I usually use computers. I always bring my laptop to campus. But the computer labs in AE are ... not open for longer hours. So maybe if one computer lab could be open for a longer time it would be good.*

Further, as the use of technical software grows, study activity between classes also demands access to computers with licencing for that software. These students suggest that this need is not being adequately met:

- “ *It's extremely frustrating when I need to use specific software that is only available in one computer lab, and that lab is full of loud and obnoxious people playing music, laughing, yelling, talking etc.*
- “ *When it comes to computer labs – I often have to work on computers for certain programs they have in there.*

# Study Space

“ Speaking of computer labs and programs, I had a class where there was a program required for the class that was only available in one computer lab, and during the day it was absolutely booked. So there ... was just no way to access the class in a decent amount of time unless you were to go super late at night.

Students are looking for spaces that facilitate their productive study activities. A final consideration is that study spaces provide amenities that meet basic needs for food preparation so students can continue working for longer periods. For example:

“ Microwaves should be available in every space, printers, and the kettle also to boil water.

While the university does provide these types of amenities in many study spaces, students explained that they, along with electrical outlets, printers, etc., were not adequately maintained. This is explored in more detail below.

## Maintenance and Cleanliness

Maintenance and cleanliness were growing concerns with study space this year. Maintenance was identified as a necessary aspect of providing technology and amenities. Cleanliness has been raised in regards to both classrooms and study space in previous consultations, and is reinforced again.

These students explain that the technologies that are provided and that they rely on can undermine their productive study when they are not maintained:

“ Often equipment in classrooms is rundown. The most disappointing for me is the study rooms which are very poorly maintained – dirty, broken cables, and smart boards that serve no purpose because they’re broken.

“ Computer labs don’t always have working printers, and it makes it frustrating when trying to print off a paper or important information.

“ There is a problem with the maintenance of the computers in the study area. There’s a lot of dust and the printers are damaged and it takes weeks to repair.

Similarly, the primary comment from students regarding the provision of food preparation amenities has been a frustration with the lack of maintenance, as in these examples:

“ The second floor of Old Main has one or two microwaves that look like they came out of someone’s house ten years ago. [Laughter] And sometimes both of those don’t even work. One year – this was last year – the microwaves didn’t work for like six months.

“ There’s microwaves everywhere on campus, and there’s this one in HOL – people have to hold it to make it work. Basically, it doesn’t work unless you put a weight on it. So I guess that it’s a thing that has to be looked into – how to maintain the areas.

In addition to seeking functionality through maintenance, students are eager to see the university improve the condition of spaces through cleanliness. These students describe concern with the current state of sanitation:

“ All rooms, regardless of whether or not they are scheduled for renovation, need a good cleaning. Some of the walls have dirt and markings that are unfitting of a University experience.

# Study Space

“ *The tables aren't wiped down. There's food on it, and it's not quiet ... It's just really gross to try and warm up your food in there and try to study. It's just like – everything's dirty. It's not really a good environment.* ”

While students want the university to expand available study space and improve its design and amenities, they also stress the need for ongoing upkeep to maintain the value and function of these spaces.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, students' third priority for improvement in 2020/21 is study space, and they are seeking expanded study space, better quiet space management, improved space design and amenities including furniture, electrical outlets, and technologies. They further highlight the importance of ongoing maintenance and cleanliness to sustain the value of study space over time.

Students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that:

- **Provide adequate study space, particularly quiet space**
- **Improve study space management**
- **Improve study space design and amenities**
- **Improve the cleanliness and maintenance of study spaces and amenities**

# Course Materials

## PRIORITY 4: COURSE MATERIALS

Students' fourth priority is affordable textbooks and course materials. They want both the university and individual instructors to pursue and support open educational resources and other low and no cost materials as well as a Library textbook reserve program. They further want more effective use and reuse of course materials. Finally, students are concerned with the increasing use and cost of private, third-party learning platforms.

### Background and Context

Textbook affordability is a growing concern for students throughout North America and beyond, and TRU is no different. This is the fourth Student Budget Consultation Report to identify course materials as a priority for improvement. This prioritization is increasingly reflected at TRU, and growing efforts to create alternatives will need continued support.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18*, course materials was students' fifth highest priority for improvement. At that time, the issue was investigated as a function of the Bookstore. On course materials themselves, students' overwhelming concern was price and affordability in a predatory publishing industry. They sought reprieve through an improved 'buy-back' program, a textbook reserve system, and digital textbooks. Critically, students also sought to turn the publishing industry on its head with open educational resources (OER).

In the 2017/18 budget cycle, the Bookstore committed to seek greater value from the buy-back program and savings from used textbooks by encouraging longer-term use of textbooks by faculty. On the other hand, the Library rejected a comprehensive textbook reserve system on budgetary grounds. The Students' Union itself recognized the financial and pedagogical potential of OER. The Open Textbooks campaign was launched in August 2016 to scale and mainstream OER through a call for an Open Textbook Grants Program. The campaign educated and gained support from thousands of students, and presented to many university governance bodies. A number of stakeholders committed to help develop a funding request for the Open Textbook Grants Program.

In the Student Budget Consultation 2018/19, course materials were investigated as a stand-alone item and were students' fifth priority for improvement. Students reiterated concerns on the price and affordability, and confirmed two desired alternatives in a textbook reserve system and greater use of OER.

In 2017, a partnership between the Students' Union and a number of university units developed a funding request for an OER Development Grants Program, which was successful. Further, the Library reconsidered the request for a textbook reserve system and committed to investigate.

In the Student Budget Consultation 2019/20, course materials were students' fifth priority for improvement yet again. Again, students reiterated concerns on price and affordability. They called on TRU to build on successes with the OER Development Grants Program, and encouraged the Library to continue exploring a textbook reserve system. To this they added a call for instructors to make greater use of OER and other low and no cost course materials and otherwise make more effective use and reuse of course materials.

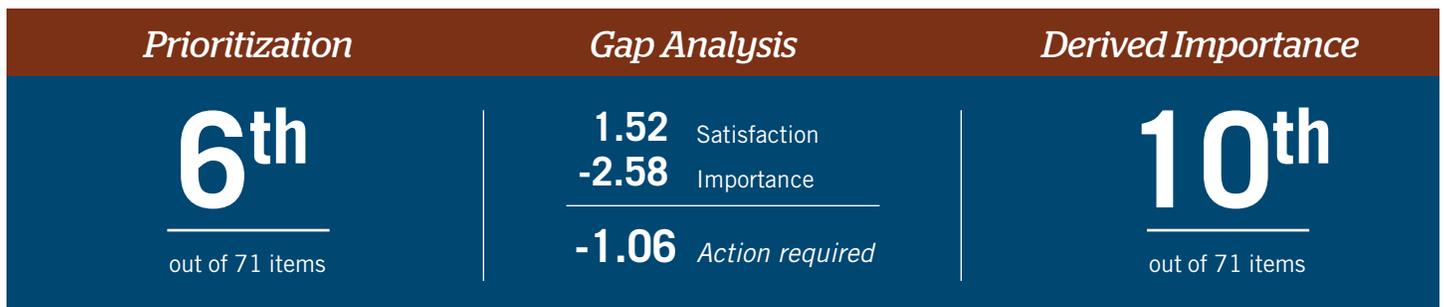
In 2018, the OER Development Grants Program awarded \$45,500 to eight faculty members to create new open resources by summer 2019. When used in TRU courses, these are expected to impact 2,200 students and save them \$250,000 per year. The program also received so many worthy applications that it was expanded and will receive funding for even more projects in 2019 and 2020. The Library also maintained its commitment to determine how a textbook reserve system might be operated.

It is in the context of these growing successes to support affordable access to course materials that students' continued prioritization of course materials must be considered.

# Course Materials

## Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the 2019 Student Budget Consultation survey rank course materials as students' fifth priority overall. In a weighted prioritization, course materials ranked sixth among seventy-one (6/71) items. In students' own evaluation, course materials should be targeted for improvement.



This prioritization is corroborated by the satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Course materials received a very poor satisfaction score (1.52/3.00), which is a significant drop from the previous year (1.68/3.00) and makes it the fifth lowest of all items. Further, students placed considerable importance on course materials (2.58/3.00) with two out of three respondents (65%) describing it as 'very important'. This provides for a gap analysis of -1.06, and provides significant opportunity for improvement.

Finally, course materials have the tenth highest derived importance (10/71) for improving overall satisfaction with TRU. The correlation of satisfaction with course materials and overall satisfaction (0.32) was average, but substantial levels of dissatisfaction (47%) make course materials a strategic choice for the allocation of improvement efforts and resources.

## Qualitative Results

In the 2019 Town Hall and open survey comments, students restated the affordability of textbooks and other course materials as their primary concern. They identified the cause of the problem in the publishing industry, and raised the alarm about the industry's proliferating and invasive tactic of third-party learning platforms. They continue to call for the university to pursue alternatives by supporting the creation and use of open educational resources and a comprehensive Library textbook reserve system.

A key point that students made about reversing the trend of unaffordability in course materials was the power of instructors. Students request and support instructors in engaging with open educational resources and other low or no cost course materials, making more effective use and reuse of commercial course materials, and participating in the Library textbook reserve services.

## Price and Affordability

The primary concern that students have about textbooks and course materials is affordability. Course materials constitute a significant and growing proportion of the rising cost of post-secondary education. These students describe their struggle with this cost in addition to fees and other expenses:

“ It shouldn't cost so much to buy books when students don't have a lot of money anyways.

“ Please make textbooks/mandatory course packs less expensive. We are poor.

# Course Materials

- “ *I like the initiative taken to reduce costs of textbooks, but, come on, \$200 for a textbook that will serve me during a single course is an additional 50% of the cost of tuition. Ridiculous.*
- “ *I’m already paying more than the local student who is studying over here. I’m paying \$7,000 and then I have to spend \$500 on books. I have other expenses also. With this additional expense – and then I’m not able to sell the previous books. So it gets hard.*

The situation, however, goes further than a financial struggle to substantially undermine students’ education. A troubling theme of students’ comments relate their access to courses or course materials due to cost. For example:

- “ *Affordability of textbooks is the main priority of students, as well as a major obstacle in preventing students from taking essential courses.*
- “ *Some textbooks are pretty reasonable, but some are not as they cost over \$100. Not every student has the option to buy a textbook that is out of their range, for example the sociology textbook, which was around \$170.*

Affordability is a growing problem in post-secondary education, but perhaps the challenge is mounting with the least justification and least constraint in terms of course materials. Students are looking to the university to continue promising efforts to tackle this issue.

## Third-Party Learning Platforms

The rising cost of course materials has long been associated with the profit-seeking tactics of the publishing industry. Students are raising the alarm that the university is falling behind or falling prey to increasingly sophisticated tactics in the digital environment. The proliferation of for-profit, learning platforms represents the latest financial barrier and burden for students to access course content.

These students highlight the troubling aspect of making purchasing access to a private tool a requirement of a course:

- “ *With Biology, you have to buy the Biology textbook, which is like \$180, and then you have to buy Mastering Biology to do your homework. Instead of just submitting your homework to your teacher in person, you have to do it online and you have to pay \$80 dollars for the subscription.*
- “ *Some profs require you to purchase additional resources such as Top Hat, Pearson, etc. that certain marks are tied to. I find it deplorable that I pay full tuition for a course and am still only allowed to achieve 70% of my grade without forking over an additional \$100+... If profs want to use these addition resources they should be required to also provide free alternatives (posting slides to Moodle, paper quizzes, etc.).*

The second comment leads to the important possibilities of the university and instructors to make choices that better support their students. Free alternatives to third-party learning platforms are available, and the university officially supports Moodle in that capacity. These students express frustration that this option is being overlooked at their expense:

- “ *The use of alternative platforms by teachers is awful. We have Moodle, and SoBE teachers make you pay for others like Top Hat, that have the same features as Moodle. Between textbooks and these, a course may end up costing \$300 in such add-ons.*

# Course Materials

“ I don't know if you guys have heard of Connect... but it's supposed to cost \$100 for everyone and you cannot share. You're supposed to get in there and do your assignments. I thought that's what we're supposed to have Moodle for – to complete your assignments, right? But apparently it was absolutely essential and you cannot get by in the course without that. So everyone has to pay \$100 for this software and I think it's just too expensive. / So adding to that actually – because we are in the same class – so this is the third course where we're required to buy Connect. So we have spent \$300 on just Connect.

“ At TRU, we use Moodle as the main platform to support our studies, but some instructors require us to buy extras platforms, up to ten like Top Hat. Last semester I bought Pearson. I bought a video game in my Intro to Business – quite a few things that are apart from the main things that we are supposed to use. Basically, we all know that textbooks are really expensive. It's part of the experience for everyone. Some instructors understand that, and might try to get you other alternatives instead of buying a textbook, but there are some instructors that actually don't understand that and also require you to buy extra things... [S]ome instructors will say, 'You will buy it, or you cannot attend this class,' for the very first sessions of the course. So we have to do it. We have no option.

The mandatory nature of purchasing access to these platforms is made worse by students inability to plan for these costs because they are imposed outside of the formal channels. This student explains the shock of being informed of additional costs after starting a course, and demands more transparency:

“ I had one course where we not only had to buy a textbook but we had to register for two different programs. So we had to use Top Hat because she didn't want to use Moodle, and we also had to register for a simulation – a business simulation. Which would be fine if one were warned ahead of time instead of coming to class and going, 'Okay, well now you've got the textbook. Spend another 100 bucks for these two programs.' ... So if they are going to use outside stuff, then they should let us know in the course outline when your deciding your courses.

When participants in the consultation town hall were asked to indicate if they had been required to purchase access to a third-party learning platform, nearly every hand was raised. The university must take action on this proliferating trend to have meaningful success in providing affordable and fair access to course materials.

## Open Educational Resources (OER) and Low or No Cost Course Materials

Students understand that the driving force behind the unaffordability of textbooks and course materials is the publishing industry. One of the most promising alternatives to the publishing industry and its affordability problems is open educational resources (OER). OER can provide free or low-cost course materials to students while providing instructors with real influence over their curricular choices.

As use of OER at TRU increases, students are expressing their support and appreciation:

“ I've been noticing a lot more of my professors doing a lot more PDFs and online textbooks that you can get for free and stuff like that – or really cheap.

“ I have a good experience from last fall semester. One of my professors started using an open textbook, and she developed her course books so that was really cheap for us, around fifteen bucks.

# Course Materials

As noted in the background and context, TRU has established an OER Development Grant Program to support the creation, adaptation, and supplementation of OER. Students will continue to support these efforts. Students are also recognizing other means that instructors can and are using to provide low or not cost course materials. For example:

“ *I think textbooks are really useful for first and second year classes. Upper-level should be primarily online articles, or otherwise a combination of online articles and maybe one or two books – actual books on the subject not just some textbook where some guy is giving you the basics of something. I also have lots of professors shifting towards online articles and I think that's really good.* ”

There is a wide range of options, aside from traditional commercial textbooks, that can be used or created as course materials. Students are supportive of instructors who explore these options and encourage others to do so as well.

## *Effective Use and Reuse of Course Materials*

Students also recognize that not all instructors or courses are going to immediately adopt OER or other low or no cost course materials. In the meantime, an area that students have identified for improvement is the effective use and reuse of commercial materials. This is critical to ensure that, where students are required to purchase materials of significant cost, they receive a commensurate value in terms of learning through the course and in terms of the possibility of resale.

The most common theme of these comments was a frustration with spending large sums of money on course materials that are underutilized. These are some of the many examples of this complaint:

“ *I have found that some textbooks are not relevant with courses and the teachers do not use them as they have their own lecture and slides.* ”

“ *Textbooks are made mandatory and we pay hundreds and then only use them a handful of times.* ”

Beyond the lack of use, students were also frustrated with being unable to sell back their used copies to the Bookstore as a result of textbooks not being used more than once:

“ *The Bookstore only takes used textbooks at a quarter of the price.* ”

“ *Another ridiculous thing is when you want to sell [a textbook] back. It depreciates down to almost 20% of the actual cost, so what's the use of selling it back to the Bookstore and getting 20% of the cost?* ”

This can often be a result of the publishing industry tactic of edition changes, but may also be due the use of an entirely different textbook from year to year. In any case, students want instructors to be considerate of the impact of changing texts and editions. These students called on instructors to consciously counter this trend as well:

“ *[Instructors] should think before moving onto a new edition of a book, because it's not a big difference between the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Only two or three pages have changed, and still teachers want to change to the newest one. So every book goes out because once the new text is in the Bookstore you can't sell back [the old one].* ”

“ *Last semester, I had an experience where an instructor was insisting on buying the US version, which was really expensive and unnecessary, whereas the Canadian version was cheaper.* ”

While students are most optimistic about the use of OER and other low and no cost course materials, they also want instructors using commercial textbooks to be wary of industry tactics that drive up costs and to make considered choices about the use and reuse of materials to provide the greater value.

# Course Materials

## *Library Textbook Reserve System*

A final option students continue to identify for saving money on textbooks is to access copies of textbooks on reserve in the University Library. The current practice at TRU is limited to instances where course materials are proactively provided by departments or instructors.

A number of students expressed disappointment in the limitations of this piece-meal approach, as in these examples:

“ *The textbooks are extremely expensive and it's almost impossible to find them in the library.*

“ *In one of my courses, the professor directly said that if we wanted to pass the course we need to buy the book. I started my course and no copies were in the Library...*

Where textbooks are on reserve, students, like this one, are concerned with availability based on the number of copies:

“ *The TRU Library has some of the reserved course books, but they were limited to about five or six books so the students cannot borrow it. If they can increase the number of reserve books, it would be so helpful for students.*

Students' aspirations for the practice expand to other notions of reliability to include the comprehensiveness and clarity that systematization could provide. For example:

“ *The library should have textbooks for all courses on hold that do not leave the library, for study purposes.*

A purposive, systematic approach to textbooks on reserve would help financially stressed students plan their access to course materials in the most affordable or effective ways. Fortunately, as noted in the background and context, the Library has committed to investigate current practices at other universities to determine the possibility of establishing a program at TRU.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In sum, students' fifth priority for improvement in 2020/21 is affordable access to course materials. Textbook affordability is becoming a crisis, with costs rising 88% in the last decade – four times the rate of inflation. The problem originates in the commercial educational industry, which is adopting increasingly sophisticated tactics to control course content and secure students' money. The university and individual instructors have the capacity and obligation to challenge these trends. In the immediate term, a textbook reserve system can support access to materials for students in the greatest financial difficulties. In the longer-term, the OER Development Grants Program puts control over course material back in faculty hands. Instructors can make choices to reduce the cost of course materials in the courses that they teach through each of these means and others.

Students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that improve the affordability of course materials, such as:

- **Curtail the use of third-party learning platforms**
- **Support increased creation, adaptation, and use of OER and other low and no-cost course materials**
- **Encourage the effective use and reuse of course materials**
- **Support a comprehensive and systematic textbook reserve system in the Library**

# Course Offerings

## PRIORITY 5: COURSE OFFERINGS

Students' fifth priority is course offerings that address course gaps in established programs, gaps in and demand for new or expanded programs, and gaps in and demand for instructional content. They further seek improved course delivery in terms of frequency, scheduling, and cancellations and changes to facilitate timely paths to graduation. Finally, students identified a need to improve course registration in terms of information, user-friendly processes, and waitlisting.

### Background and Context

Course offerings are foundational to the university experience, making them an unsurprising focus for student attention. Two previous *Student Budget Consultation Reports* have identified course offerings as a priority for attention, and a third identified course delivery as a factor in improving academic advising. While improvements to academic advising over the past three years have had an impact on course delivery, specific work remains to be done on course offerings themselves.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2015/16*, the first such report and based on a more limited consultation, summer course offerings were a priority. Summer sessions were seen as opportunities to complete a credential more efficiently, but courses were often not available or not in insufficient number to warrant staying on campus rather than returning home or pursuing employment.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2016/17*, course offerings were students' first priority for improvement. Students identified two concerns. The first was the lack of specific, desired programs, courses, and course topics. The second was course delivery with issues including frequency of offerings, lack of summer offerings, scheduling conflicts, lack of capacity, and course changes and cancellations. Each created difficulty in course planning leading to increased time to graduation and decreased retention.

Unfortunately, these budget cycles were early in the development of the Student Budget Consultation, and no formal responses were provided by the university to address course offerings or other priorities.

In the *Student Budget Consultation Report 2017/18*, academic advising was students' fourth priority for improvement. It had also been a priority alongside course offerings in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 reports. In the 2017/18 report, however, the two issues were explicitly connected. Students repeated concerns with course delivery including frequency of offerings, reliability of offerings, scheduling conflicts, and course changes and cancellations. Again, in the context of academic advising, these created difficulty in course planning leading to increased time to graduation.

By February 2017, the university had made progress in responding to students' priorities from the first two consultations, primarily through a student services review. The Student Services Review Final Report committed to improve academic advising through the implementation of DegreeWorks, a software that allows advisors and students to track and plan progress towards completing program requirements. Staffing was also provided to ensure DegreeWorks provided consistent and accurate program requirement information for students. In addition to advising, this work provided an additional benefit of better aligning course delivery and information on websites, the Academic Calendar, etc.

From 2017 onward, the university has successfully improved student satisfaction with advising services through the implementation of DegreeWorks and front-line service delivery efforts (see *Excellence, Improvement, and Responsiveness* above). This may have had indirect positive impacts on the organization and communication of course delivery, but specific efforts to address course offerings as raised by students have not yet been reported.

It is in the context of improvements to academic advising but also the absence of specific action on course offerings that students' continued prioritization of course offerings must be considered.

# Course Offerings

## Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the 2019 Student Budget Consultation survey rank course offerings as students' fifth priority overall. In a weighted prioritization, course offerings ranked second among seventy-one (2/71) items. In students' own evaluation, course offerings should certainly be targeted for improvement.



This prioritization is corroborated by the satisfaction-importance gap analysis. Students are nearly as satisfied with course offerings (2.00/3.00) as with their experiences on average (2.02/3.00). However, students see course offerings as an essential aspect of their experience (2.78/3.00) with virtually all (98%) assigning it some importance and an overwhelming majority (80%) describing it as 'very important'. This provides for a gap analysis of -0.78, and provides opportunity for improvement.

Finally, course offerings had the eleventh highest derived importance for improving overall satisfaction with TRU (11/71). The relatively low levels of dissatisfaction with course offerings (22%) reduce the scale of potential improvement. However, the correlation of satisfaction with course offerings and overall satisfaction (0.41) was amongst the highest of all items. This maintains course offerings as a strategic choice for the allocation of improvement efforts and resources.

## Qualitative Results

In the 2019 Town Hall and open survey comments, students identified course and program content, course delivery, and registration as areas for improvement. Courses and programs have perceived gaps and opportunities for enhancement or expansion. Greater focus on career development is also sought in course content. Course delivery presents challenges for students to find a timely path to graduation as a result of the frequency of offerings, course capacity and waitlists, scheduling conflicts, and course cancellations and changes. Finally, registering for courses is challenging due to limited information, difficult processes, and confusion in the waitlist system.

### *Program and Course Content*

The most common area of concern in course offerings was perceived course and program gaps and gaps in course content. While course gaps were varied, areas of concentration became apparent in Arts, Science, and notions of breadth versus specialization. This was extended to perceived gaps in programs, in which key opportunities were found in expanding existing programming through laddering and other enhancements. Finally, across existing programs and courses, students identified a desire for content that focused on career development.

In the Faculty of Arts, students' perceived course gaps were concentrated in English and Modern Languages; Visual and Performing Arts; Philosophy, History, and Political Science; Sociology; and Psychology. A common element was increased limitation in upper-level courses. While it is impossible to capture the full ranges of comments, these are select examples:

# Course Offerings

- “ I would like to see upper-level Spanish classes.
- “ Expansion of language/culture based courses, perhaps even leading up to an Arts degree in the field.
- “ There also aren't very many Visual Arts courses at TRU and I understand why but I wouldn't mind having more courses to choose from.
- “ I wish the Philosophy Department was bigger and that TRU Administration had not completely gutted the English Department. A tragedy of Chaucerian proportions.
- “ The variety of courses offered in some departments (such as sociology and political science) is frustratingly sparse compared to other academic institutions.
- “ TRU needs more upper-level psychology programs, especially neuropsychology.

The Faculty of Science had the next greatest concentration of students identifying course gaps. Again, these represent only select examples:

- “ I'm in Computing Science and I feel like there aren't enough course offerings to choose from to really learn a lot on one subject. We also lack a lot of applied learning in my opinion, which is essential in Computing Science.
- “ Computing Science needs more upper-level offerings.
- “ I would love to see some better math and physics offerings!

Beyond specific Faculties and Schools, students expressed a desire for more breadth of courses to expand their options, as here:

- “ Program and course offerings I think are lacking in comparison to other schools, making it difficult to truly find what I want.
- “ I would like to see more electives such as language courses available.
- “ In both my degrees I find my course selections for electives is so limited and doesn't allow for self-exploration and interests.

In addition, or perhaps in contrast, these students sought an expansion of courses not for breadth, but for specialization:

- “ More special topics courses being offered. For example, Chinese politics or history.
- “ Very few course options tailored for specific majors.
- “ Greater selection of courses would allow students to tailor degrees to their interests and future fields of work.

# Course Offerings

“ *The MBA program could involve an internship accommodated at some point during the course of the two years. It would really be immense if we could chose a specialization during the second year of the MBA.* ”

While offering all desired courses is not possible and there are limitations on the total breadth and specialization that can be provided, a targeted investigation of gaps could yield important improvements. This investigation could be gainfully expanded to programming gaps. Some students, like these, expressed a desire for new programs for the sake of breadth:

“ *Improving program and course offerings could significantly improve the appeal of TRU for many individuals. I have many friends from high school who had to move elsewhere in order to complete the education they were interested in.* ”

“ *Having more diverse programs will attract more students and, since the university is expanding, that might be something to look into!* ”

Many more, however, identified opportunities to expand upon TRU's existing programs to offer more value. For example, these students see benefit in the university's developments in engineering:

“ *It would be nice if there even more full engineering programs at TRU. As well as, one day, Pharmacy.* ”

“ *I wish there was a really thorough engineering program in place at TRU so that students have more options for engineering degrees.* ”

Others identified disciplines where TRU currently offers minors or diplomas as opportunities to provide majors or degrees:

“ *I have completed the ECE diploma, but wish there was a Bachelor degree in early childhood education so that I could stay here rather than going elsewhere to finish my education.* ”

“ *I would love to be able to complete a Geology Degree here.* ”

“ *I would like the inclusion of an Anthropology major for the Bachelor of Arts.* ”

Similarly, the opportunity to provide honours options in existing degree programs was sought after by these students:

“ *More honours programs would be nice.* ”

“ *Being told that the honours thesis in economics exists 'in theory' after already being in the program was a big let-down.* ”

Finally, in addition to course and program development, students provided direction to improve the content of existing courses. These students called for the curriculum to be more geared to practicality and employability:

“ *I would generally say there could be better real-world course offerings.* ”

“ *Offering courses that actually teach the software skills that employers are looking for... Everything is done in Excel or other programs, and we need to have working skills and abilities in those programs, not on paper.* ”

# Course Offerings

- “ I would prefer if the NRS degree courses had more field opportunities.
- “ In my opinion BA students get the short end of the stick when it come to the co-op program! Only recently did they start gearing it towards BA students, but even so there is not a whole lot of options for job placement in the different fields!
- “ The certification courses like Leadership in Environmental Sustainability and Global Competency – I've heard a lot of really positive things about them and they look great on a resumé. They're pretty easy to do, and they're definitely easy to take. I'd really like to see some more of those offered to students.

Program and course content is the core of the university and of the student experience. No university can be everything to everyone, but there are opportunities for TRU to work with students to investigate gaps and desires within limitations and building from strengths.

## Course Delivery

Students' second area of concern in course offerings relates to issues of delivery. Students report challenges planning for courses as a result of the frequency of offerings, course capacity and waitlists, scheduling conflicts, and course cancellations and changes.

Predictable and systematic course delivery is critical for students to complete their program requirements in an efficient manner. Unfortunately, many students reported that infrequent delivery or unreliable delivery is prolonging their time to graduation. For example:

- “ I know more than a few students who have to delay their graduation due to not being able to take required courses.
- “ There are very limited upper-level course options for upper-level BA programs, and they are offered so infrequently that it prolongs the graduation date.
- “ Some less popular degrees have very limited course options and are only offered every two years making timetables very inflexible.
- “ I ran into a bit of a problem going through my degree. The courses I needed to graduate were simply not offered and ultimately my graduation was going to be delayed. Required courses should be offered at least once a year – not the dreaded 'every second year, subject to instructor availability.'
- “ As a Math major, I am seeing my degree drawn out because I have to wait for required upper-level courses to be offered. I would like to see at least these required courses offered every semester or at least once a year.

The sequencing of course delivery has a similar impact. Students who arrive or become “out-of-sequence” can get caught in costly delays and find it hard to catchup, as these experiences illustrate:

- “ Seems like all of the courses I need to take are in the Fall semester each year and there is little to choose from in the Winter semesters.

# Course Offerings

“ It’s often hard to get all of one’s requirements in because (required) courses are not offered often enough, and taking them in the summer is not an option as our summer course offerings are brutal.

Where courses are being delivered, students are also finding obstacles when there is not enough room in the course sections that are available. These students explain that capacity can be as much of an issue as frequency of course offerings:

“ The course offerings need to be increased. The GIS and Population Biology courses were very overfilled this year, and there was enough people on the waitlist to make a second course section. At least two programs need this course for graduation.

“ A lot of my classes have definitely been full, and certain professors are now encouraging students to take certain classes in the summertime... they’re like, ‘Don’t even bother trying to get into this during the school year. Your best bet is to take it in the summertime,’ which is really frustrating if you don’t live in Kamloops during the summer so...

“ I remember this one course and there was just two offerings of it. Both fit forty students, and as soon as it – like a week after registration was open they were already completely full and waitlisted. I couldn’t get in.

A final challenge that students face in getting into courses, assuming they are offered and have capacity, is securing a timetable without conflicts. These students provide problematic examples of scheduling conflicts within programs, both in terms of required courses and electives:

“ I know Tourism is a small department, but there were little upper-level courses being offered this semester and many of them were scheduled at the same time.

“ My graduation has been delayed because all of the courses I needed to finish my degree (all fourth year in the same major) had overlapping times.

“ The algorithm that the Registrar uses to set courses up works fine with me. Some courses, however, especially in programs that require multiple upper-level requirements from different programs (like a Chem-Bio degree), have conflicted. Furthermore, upper-level Biology courses conflict with other upper-level Biology courses. That is really bad considering that many students require them for graduation.

“ In the Law program, course offerings are good but scheduling is awful. For example, in one section of a mandatory course almost all the electives conflicted.

Once students are in the courses they need, they report two additional challenges. The first, closely related to scheduling, is room assignment. These students offered examples of both rooms that were too small and those that were too large:

“ Having classrooms of appropriate sizes assigned to us would be great. I’m in a class of eighty people in a room that has approximately sixty-five seats, and that feels like it shouldn’t happen.

“ There is a maximum capacity for humans in a room for safety reasons. Why would you attempt to shove a clearly unsafe number of students into a tiny computer lab where there is such limited space?

# Course Offerings

“ Mostly it’s forty or forty-five that’s offered in the registration, but if you actually go to the classes they’re like half empty. And basically there’s more students who could come in and actually learn, but due to the restriction of the rules or whatever it is there’s actually seats in the class that go vacant.

The second challenge of course delivery once students are registered is in course cancellations and changes, which can happen with little notice or time to make arrangements. These changes often had to do with scheduling, as here:

“ A few months before, I planned for my Winter semester, and at that time I had a perfect schedule ... [S]uddenly in the second week of classes they changed all the schedules. So it’s like they are changing them anytime, which is clashing the timetables for us.

“ Last semester I actually had to drop a course because the times changed and they overlapped two of my class times. And I had to talk to the Registration staff and there was nothing they could do so I had to drop a course.

“ Particularly with sessional faculty that might only be available for a certain period of time, the course schedule will change even a week into classes being started. And if that course schedule doesn’t fit with you, you drop the class.

The primary purpose of attending university is to earn a credential. Students depend on the university to ensure course delivery provides them with an organized and efficient way to do so. Frequency, capacity, scheduling, and predictability are needed for this purpose.

## Registration

Students identified the process of registration as a new area of concern in course offerings. Comments addressed information and communication, difficult systems and interfaces, and particular challenges with waitlists.

Information available for the purposes of registration was important to students in a number of ways. For example, this student was disappointed in promotion to ensure offerings are viable:

“ The field schools should be advertised better so they don’t get canceled all the time and more resources should be given to students with financial need who would like to attend them...

Others were concerned with the accuracy of information provided regarding courses in multiple locations. Discrepancies provide for frustrations like this:

“ Online and on the course sheet it states multiple courses as being available, yet whenever I check each new semester to see if they’re now offered, they are not. For instance, the only language I am interested in taking is Chinese (Mandarin), and for two years it has been stated as a course, but is yet to be available to register...

Finally, students are seeking more fulsome information about courses and course sections during registration in order to make specific decisions about their preferred educational journey. For example:

# Course Offerings

- “ Teachers aren’t always listed for course planning which is difficult when you appreciate the teaching style of certain profs.
- “ Some classes barely show any info when you need to register such as the teacher, which is quite important.

Having greater and more reliable information about courses will improve students’ ability to get the most of their time at TRU. Having made their course choices, however, students also noted that the registration system is not user-friendly. These students reported confusion and complications:

- “ The course registration system is extremely hard to use and is very time consuming. Newer versions are difficult to use and understand.
- “ The website is very confusing if you don’t have someone to help you who knows what they’re doing.
- “ Registration needs to be simplified and website needs to be more accessible and less complicated.
- “ The course registration program is awful. Half the time it doesn’t recognize my prerequisites and courses I’ve already taken and I often have to ask an advisor to override courses when registering.

Finally, particular challenges related to both communication and processes as described above arise when students encounter waitlists. This example summarizes the many elements well:

- “ When you’re on a waitlist for a course and it’s a lecture and a seminar, you can’t get into the seminar so it doesn’t show up anywhere on your scheduling. So you’ll get a schedule and it will look like this and you’re waitlisted for this class, but really that class actually goes for three hours instead of an hour and a half. It doesn’t show up. It’s also a pain in the ass to be waitlisted for the first few weeks and not have any idea if they going to open a new section. And there’s just no communication at all... That’s frustrating, especially when you’re trying to schedule extracurriculars and all the things like work... [You don’t know if you] should buy the materials until you’re weeks into the semester.

Both the content and process of course registration can be improved to provide students with the information they need to make choices about their educational journey and the ability to secure those choices.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, students’ fifth priority for improvement in 2020/21 is course offerings, and they are seeking efforts to address course gaps, program enhancements, and practical instructional content. They seek organized, predictable course delivery that meets demand and offers timely paths to graduation. Finally, they call for improved processes of course registration.

Students request and look forward to service plans and the allocation of resources that:

- Investigate and include students in addressing perceived course gaps in established programs
- Investigate and include students in addressing perceived gaps in and demand for new or expanded programs

# Course Offerings

- Investigate and include students in addressing perceived gaps in and demand for instructional content
- Improve course delivery in terms of frequency, scheduling, and cancellations/ changes to facilitate timely paths to graduation
- Improve course registration in terms of information, user-friendly processes, and waitlisting

# Summary

## Summary of Priorities and Recommendations

The Thompson Rivers University Students' Union requests that the following priorities and recommendations be considered in the development of relevant administrative and academic unit service plans and requests for the Thompson Rivers University Budget 2020/21:

### 1. Parking and Transportation

- a. Provide means to efficiently identify available parking spaces
- b. Improve parking space and demand management
- c. Better address affordability, fairness, and value in parking pricing
- d. Improve alternative transportation options through service improvements and infrastructure to match parking disincentives
- e. Improve alternative transportation services through promotion and scalability
- f. Improve campus walkability and pedestrian safety

### 2. Food services

- a. Increase food variety, options, and accommodations
- b. Improve food price, value, and quality
- c. Extend food service hours of operation
- d. Enhance food service spaces and amenities
- e. Broaden the diversity of food service providers
- f. Increase the impact of food service on campus life

### 3. Study space

- a. Provide adequate study space, particularly quiet space
- b. Improve study space management
- c. Improve study space design and amenities
- d. Improve the cleanliness and maintenance of study spaces and amenities

## 4. Affordable course materials

- a. Curtail the use of third-party learning platforms
- b. Support increased creation, adaptation, and use of OER and other low and no-cost course materials
- c. Encourage the effective use and reuse of course materials
- d. Support a comprehensive and systematic textbook reserve system in the Library

## 5. Course offerings

- a. Investigate and include students in addressing perceived course gaps in established programs
- b. Investigate and include students in addressing perceived gaps in and demand for new or expanded programs
- c. Investigate and include students in addressing perceived gaps in and demand for instructional content
- d. Improve course delivery in terms of frequency, scheduling, and cancellations/ changes to facilitate timely paths to graduation
- e. Improve course registration in terms of information, user-friendly processes, and waitlisting



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