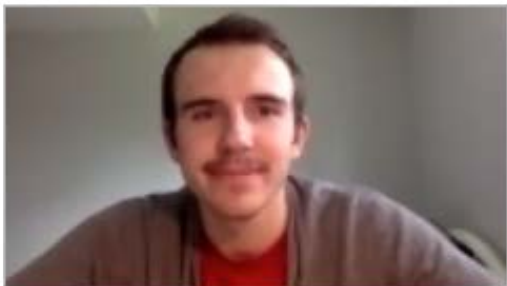
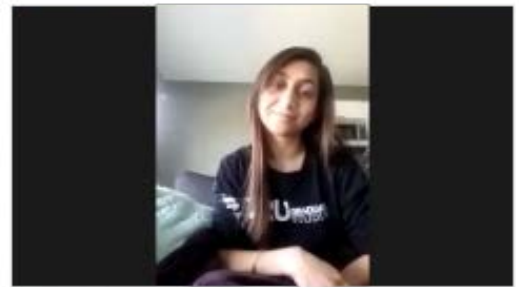


# 2020 Annual Report

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union



# Table of Contents

## Board of Directors.....3

January 2020 to May 2020..... 3

May 2020 to December 2020 ..... 3

## Campaigns Committee .....5

End the Ban..... 5

Senate Reform ..... 5

Fund the Future..... 6

Grants Not Loans ..... 6

British Columbia Election .....7

Federal Budget .....7

Provincial Budget ..... 8

Breaking Bread..... 8

Kamloops North Shore Plan ..... 9

Community Climate Action Plan..... 9

## Equity Committee .....11

Pride @ Home ..... 11

Community Equity Trainings..... 11

United Way's Period Promise.....13

RBG Film Screening.....13

Fast Fashion Outreach Day.....13

Amnesty International Urgent Actions.....13

Amnesty International Write For Rights .....14

TRANSform TRU .....14

Kamloops Equity Forum.....15

TRU Anti-Racism Task Force.....15

## University Affairs .....17

Student Caucus and Student Representation .....17

Student Caucus Membership .....17

Orientation and Support.....17

Engagement .....18

## Student Budget Consultation.....19

Postponing the Formal Consultation .....19

Action on Students' Priorities.....20

## University Issues.....20

University COVID-19 Response.....20

Summary of Meetings.....21

Affordable Course Materials.....21

Study Space.....23

International Students.....23

## Services ..... 25

Students Union Building .....25

Common Grounds.....26

Extended Health and Dental Plan.....26

U Pass.....27

Food Bank.....27

Endowments and Bursaries.....28

TRUSU Endowment .....28

Emergency Bursaries .....28

TRU Career Works .....28

Grants .....28

Club Activities .....29

## Entertainment Committee .....31

Common Voices .....31

Common Voices Lecture.....31

Campus Leaders Meeting with the Keynote Speaker.....31

Student Discount App Launch .....31

Clubs Day .....32

Virtual Games Night .....32

Care Packages .....33

# Board of Directors

Each year members of the Students' Union elect 19 members to serve on the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors appoints an additional fifteen members to serve as Members-at-Large on the Campaigns Committee, the Equity Committee, the University Affairs Committee, the Services Committee, and the Entertainment Committee. These individuals serve terms from May 1st to April 30th and work throughout the year to plan and implement a series of activities, events, and campaigns for students. The following pages of this report include an overview of the activities of these groups from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those members who sacrificed their time and energy to serve in 2020. Please see the following page for a list of all of the positions of elected representatives in 2020.

## January 2020 to May 2020

President.....	Sierra Rae
Vice President Equity .....	Brandon Hayashi
Vice President External.....	Kole Lawrence
Vice President Internal .....	Mackenzie Byers
Vice President Services.....	Sajeesh Soman
Indigenous Representative.....	Lesley Campbell
Graduate Representative.....	Danielle Olumide
LGBTQ+ Representative.....	Dallas Odsen
International Representative.....	Raj Soni
Visible Minorities Representative.....	Rida Zainab
Women's Representative.....	Mackenzie Francoeur
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Manuela Ceballos
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Ali Mulji
Entertainment Committee Representative.....	Kunwar Rajdeep
Entertainment Committee Representative.....	Paras Luthra
Services Committee Representative.....	Dipak Parmar
Services Committee Representative.....	Jessica Guthier
University Affairs Committee Representative.....	Shanta Tomar
University Affairs Committee Representative.....	Aria Appleton

## May 2020 to December 2020

President.....	Cole Hickson
Vice President Equity .....	Mackenzie Francoeur
Vice President External.....	Kole Lawrence
Vice President Internal .....	Keegan Lawrence
Vice President Services.....	Dipak Parmar
Indigenous Representative.....	Bailey Taranov
Graduate Representative.....	Amisha Patel
LGBTQ+ Representative.....	Eliana Baboiu
International Representative.....	Raj Soni
Visible Minorities Representative.....	Rida Zainab
Women's Representative.....	Manuela Ceballos
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Shantelle Bishop
Campaigns Committee Representative.....	Jordan Smith
Entertainment Committee Representative.....	Dev Shah
Entertainment Committee Representative.....	Sarvesh Khosla
Services Committee Representative.....	Ali Mulji
Services Committee Representative.....	Duong Trinh
University Affairs Committee Representative.....	Aria Appleton
University Affairs Committee Representative.....	Juliana Hazarika



missions & R

# STUDENTS NEED

# GRANTS

# NOT LOANS

HOW CAN WE GET AHEAD WITH DEBT DRAGGING US DOWN?



# Campaigns Committee

As with many organizations, the Union had to significantly rethink its community and government relations work in 2020 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this challenge, the Union continued to find new ways to advance student interests as well as empower students politically. This work included continuing to host small group discussions in a virtual environment under the Breaking Bread project, engaging in municipal planning processes that matter to students, helping to make it easier for students to vote in the provincial election, continuing education and lobbying work to end the discriminatory blood donation ban, and numerous other projects. Through this work the Union continued to provide members with opportunities to deepen their engagement as citizens, while also amplifying their voices on contemporary issues to the municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

## End the Ban

Currently, Canada has a blood deferral policy in place of three months for men who have sex with men (MSM). This means that, regardless of their relationship status, and regardless of their safe-sex practices, many gay men will not be permitted to donate blood for most of their adult lives. The federal government promised to end this discriminatory policy in both their 2015 election platform and again in their 2019 platform but have yet to follow through. This is an issue that impacts a number of the Union's members.

To pressure the federal government to address this issue the Union has been engaged in a variety of tactics in both community education as well as lobbying. In January and February 2020, the Union set up tables in buildings across campus to talk to members about this issue. At these tables the Union offered members the opportunity to share quotes on their feelings about the issue.

In summer 2020 the Union continued to look for avenues to pressure the federal government on this issue. Due



to the ongoing pandemic the Union chose to engage in a more targeted education and lobbying campaign. The goal of this work was to set up virtual meetings with individuals and organizations to educate them on the issue and request that they take an action to push the federal health minister to prioritize this issue. In November and December 2020, the Union set up twelve presentations with a variety of community leaders and organizations including city counsellors, union leaders, TRU administrators, and others. The Union will be continuing to work to leverage community leaders to take action on this issue early in 2021.

## Senate Reform

Thompson Rivers University is categorized provincially as a Special Purpose Teaching University (SPTU). This was a new categorization created in British Columbia in the mid-2000's for TRU along with five other universities which include Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Kwantlen University, University of the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island University, and Capilano University. SPTU's are distinct in their purpose, function, and legislation in a number of ways, but of key importance is their senate structure. Each of these institutions, including TRU, have only four student positions on senate while full universities have approximately twenty positions for students. This structural limitation keeps members from being able to fully participate in driving their own education. The Union has identified this as an important issue to address for a number of years but believed that the time was right in 2020 to start moving forward a broader campaign on this issue.

Given that this legislation impacts five other universities in BC, the Union's major focus in 2020 on this issue was working to create a coalition with other Students' Unions who are impacted in order to strengthen the case for legislation change. To this end the Union developed an in-depth presentation with background on this issue and delivered it to Union representatives at each of the Special Purpose Teaching Universities over the fall semester. Looking forward, the Union plans to bring together these organizations regularly to move the issue forward in 2021.

Students and their families have been waiting for a need-based grants program for over a decade.

Feb 2010



Feb 2011



Feb 2012



Feb 2013



Feb 2014



Feb 2015



Feb 2016



Feb 2017



Feb 2018



Feb 2019



Feb 2020

NDP

## Fund the Future

Fund the Future has been a longstanding campaign of the Union over the last six years. Work on this issue began out of the recognition that there was no clear formula for how universities are funded in BC to explain why some universities are funded better than others or how an institution can increase their funding level. TRU specifically has remained one of the lowest funded universities on a per student basis.

On November 26, 2020 the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training were provided with a mandate letter instructing them to conduct a system-wide funding review for post-secondary education. This funding review is an exciting development for the university community and the broader Thompson-Nicola Region.

As a starting point, the Union has sent correspondence to all past supporters of this issue and will work to continue to engage them in 2021 as there are new developments. The Union also requested a meeting with the new Minister of Advanced Education, Anne Kang, to learn more about her plan for moving forward the funding review.

## Grants Not Loans


On February 18, 2020 the BC Government announced the new "BC Access Grant" which would provide up to \$4000 in non-repayable assistance and would start rolling out to students in September 2020. BC has not had a comprehensive grants program for post-secondary students for approximately fifteen years and was one of the only provinces without such a program. This new policy reflects many years of lobbying and education by the Union and other organizations to encourage the provincial government to invest in helping students with the greatest need.

The final push for the government to announce this program was completed early in 2020. Leading up to Valentine's Day the Union created small valentines' cards that members could fill out to send to Premier Horgan with their wishes. The Union also shared this material with other students' unions across the province and encouraged them to participate in the action. In total, students at TRU created more than one hundred and fifty valentines that were sent to the government.



*Dear Premier Horgan,*

British Columbia continues to be the only province without a need-based grants program to improve access to post-secondary education. Students have had their hearts broken year after year with the release of the provincial budget.

For Valentine's Day this year we are calling on you to create a need-based grants program. 

*Program: Natural resource sciences.*

*Happy valentines day Premier Horgan! I'm an NRSC student struggling to make ends meet just so I can receive an education. Please help!*

*As a mature student, going back to school was a difficult decision we lost my income for 2 years, which was difficult for my family of 5. Its important for more families to have opportunities to go back to school in this changing world*



*Roses are red,  
violets are blue,  
Alberta has need-based grants,  
BC should too.*



## British Columbia Election

The 2020 British Columbia Election was announced on September 21, 2020 with a voting date only one month away on October 24. This short timeline combined with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made engaging members particularly challenging compared to previous elections. Despite this, the Union worked diligently to make available non-partisan election information in an online format during this period.

The Union planned to produce and share election content for every week leading up to the general voting date. In the first two weeks of the election the Union focused on informing members about their opportunity to vote by mail and deadlines to return their ballots. When possible, the Union also shared content about local candidates as they announced their candidacy and platforms. Following this, the Union pivoted to encouraging members to take advantage of advanced voting opportunities across the city. Due to the pandemic, hours and locations for advanced voting were expanded significantly compared to previous years. Finally, in the days leading up to general voting day on October 24, the Union reminded members to vote through sharing content of peers voting.

## Federal Budget

Each year the federal Standing Committee on Finance (FINA) hosts a pre-budget consultation to hear from organizations across the country on their priorities for the upcoming federal budget. In July 2020, the Union made a written submission to FINA to help students access education, find employment, and have good experiences in their education.

## Federal Budget Recommendations:



Extend the doubling of the Canada Student Grants program to three years



Expansion of the Canada Summer Jobs program.



Create a new international student strategy

The Union's first recommendation was to extend the doubling of the Canada Student Grants program to three years. In spring 2020 the federal government announced that they would double the value each student is eligible for in the Canada Student Grants program for the 2020/21 year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union believes though that students will be impacted by this global event for years to come so recommended that this be extended for two additional years.

The Union's second recommendation was for the expansion of the Canada Summer Jobs program. The current program is effective in helping students gain experience and find employment, but with the impacts of COVID-19 the Union believes that there will be additional demands on the program. Investing in this program will be an important part of an effective economic recovery strategy.

## Provincial Budget Recommendations:



Extend the BC Access Grant in response to COVID-19



Establish a provincial jobs program for post-secondary students



Create a province-wide international student strategy

The Union's third recommendation was for the federal government to create a new international student strategy. With numerous changes to the global post-secondary education environment happening in 2020 a new strategy would help give institutions and students themselves confidence and clarity.

Despite this rapid growth, regulation on international education recruitment is largely left up to individual post-secondary institutions. A province wide strategy could help to provide a significantly improved experience for international students in BC, while at the same time ensuring that post-secondary institutions and communities continue to benefit from internationalization.

## Provincial Budget

On June 19, 2020 the Union presented its priorities virtually for the 2021 provincial budget to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. Along with the presentation the Union also produced a research brief that outlined its recommendations.

The Union's first recommendation was to expand the new BC Access Grant in response to COVID-19. This recommendation was due to the extreme hardship many students were facing, and continue to face. With the expansion of numerous social programs at all levels of government over the past year increasing the value of the grants program seemed like an important measure to help post-secondary students.

The Union's second recommendation was to establish a provincial jobs program for post-secondary students. A Statistics Canada survey revealed that of students who had a confirmed start date for a summer job in March, only thirteen percent retained that job by May 2020. This reveals how precarious many young people's employment prospects were, and the need for government to step in.

The Union's third recommendation was for the creation of a province wide strategy for international education within BC. The number of international students in BC has increased by sixty-one percent from 2011 to 2016, representing \$4.2 billion in tax revenue in 2016 alone.

On August 21, 2020 the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services released their final report with recommendations for the 2020 provincial budget. Their report included recommendations that were in line with one of the Union's recommendations for the budget. The Union will continue to look for ways to work together with the Provincial government on advancing all three of these issues.

## Breaking Bread

Breaking Bread is project from the Union that aims to connect small groups of students with community leaders through topic-based intimate conversations. The Union started this project because the personal connections that students from both on campus and in the Kamloops community are a big part of finding success during their studies as well as after graduation. The aim of this project is to help students build community, share perspectives, and foster community connections.

The Union hosted Breaking Bread discussions throughout 2020 as both in-person lunchtime events in the early months and in a virtual format for the later parts of the year. The community leaders who took a leadership role in each discussion ranged from city counsellors, to academics, to professionals in their fields. Students from a wide variety of faculties took part in each discussion, providing opportunities for them to connect with each other in new ways.





There were some challenges with pivoting to an online environment, particularly in ensuring there were the right number of signups for each event and finding the right avenues for promoting the opportunities. In total more than fifty students participated in the Breaking Bread events in 2020. Looking forward the Union will continue to refine this program to improve the experience for students.

The list of topics, dates, and community leaders can be found below:

- January 27, 2020 | Social Justice in Health Care with Dara Johnson
- February 27, 2020 | The Role of Business in Community Building with Mike O'Reilly
- August 12, 2020 | The Role of Media in 2020 with Doug Herbert
- September 23, 2020 | The Evolving Role of Counselling in the Modern World with Deandra Dey
- October 6, 2020 | Indigenizing Higher Education with Tosh Southwick
- October 29, 2020 | Understanding the American Election with Jeffrey Meyers
- November 19, 2020 | After the American Election with Jeffrey Meyers

## Kamloops North Shore Plan

Starting in early summer 2020 the City of Kamloops started to create a new community plan for the North Shore. This plan was last updated in 2008 and the area has experienced significant growth and development since that time. There are many students, as well as recent graduates, who call this part of the city home and are interested in shaping its future.

The Union was invited to be part of the advisory group for this plan and participated consistently throughout the summer and fall. At in-person events in the fall semester the Union invited limited numbers of students to participate and provide their feedback. The Union promoted online engagement opportunities more broadly. The development of this plan will be ongoing until December 2021 and the Union hopes to be able to invite greater numbers of members to participate in the coming months.

## Community Climate Action Plan

In fall 2020 the City of Kamloops announced they would be creating a new Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP). The goal of this plan is to reduce local GHG emissions to be in line with national goals of limiting global warming effects to 1.5°C. The Union committed to participate in this plan as our members are interested in having a voice on important policy goals in regards to climate change.

The development of this plan started with stakeholder engagement during summer 2020 and expanded to broader engagement in early fall. Engagement opportunities for members to participate were limited due to COVID but the Union hopes to continue to participate on behalf of students in the early parts of 2021.

# RS' SERVICES DE

ompson Rivers University Students' Union  
Canada Federation of Students Local 15





# Equity Committee

In 2020, the Union raised awareness of the systemic oppression of marginalized groups in society, built up community capacity for equity through solidarity work, and challenged that oppression where possible on campus and in the community.

The Union did this by hosting a series of events, campaigns, and other activities with a particular focus on Indigenous people, women, racialized people, LGBTQ+ people, poor/working class people, folks living with disabilities, and other marginalized communities in society.

## Pride @ Home

As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic the Ninth Annual TRUSU Pride Parade could not go ahead as an in-person event as it had in previous years. As a result, the Union transformed the event into a digital celebration of the LGBTQ+ community and a public claiming of TRU as a safe space to study, work, and live no matter your sexual orientation or gender identity.

Over several weeks from September – October, the Union invited community members to send photos, videos, written submissions, and other contributions showing how folks celebrated Pride @ Home. These submissions were showcased on a web page to demonstrate that the work of celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and committing TRU to improve campus for Queer people continues even though many of us aren't physically present.

The Union was pleased to receive strong support from TRU faculty, staff, and senior leadership including a personal message from the President of TRU Dr. Brett Fairbairn, and from the President of the TRU Faculty Association Dr. Mónica Sánchez-Flores. A particularly moving and well received video message of welcome, solidarity, and support for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff was also created by several students and faculty in Social Work and Education. All of these community contributions and messages of support can continue to be seen on the Union's website.

## Community Equity Trainings

For several years the Union has heard consistent feedback that there's an appetite among campus and community groups to discuss equity issues, but that these groups don't know where to start and how to have a respectful inclusive approach for all their group members. In response to this need, in 2020 the Union developed and launched two new *Community Equity Training* modules to provide introductory knowledge to community organizations about regional equity issues.

The first module is *An Introduction To Anti-Oppression* which is designed to provide an introduction to equity, diversity, and challenging oppression.

### TRU LIBRARY PRIDE



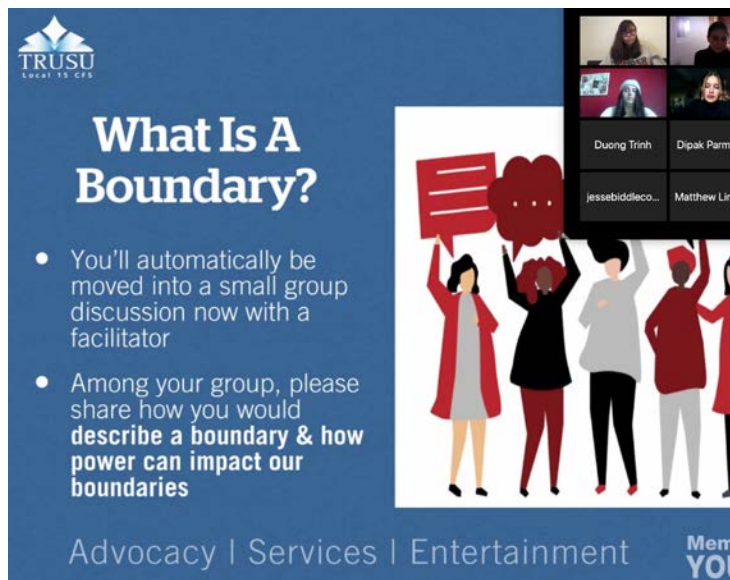
elianafelicia • Following



christineladam • Following  
Thompson Rivers University







In these sessions participants discuss topics like, what is oppression and positionality in society, who are marginalized groups, what is anti-oppression and why does it matter, how can you start practicing anti-oppression in everyday life, and where can you go for support with equity issues in the community. This session is intended to be a good option for community organizations without much previous discussion or experience with equity, diversity, and inclusion and was promoted to campus clubs and TRU groups, businesses, non-profits, and other organizations.

The second module is *An Introduction To Sexualized Violence Prevention And Response* which is designed in collaboration with TRU's Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Manager to provide an introduction to preventing and responding to incidences of sexualized violence. In these sessions, participants discuss topics such as what is consent and how to practice it, what are boundaries in sexual relationships and how power can impact these boundaries, how to be an active bystander and what types of harmful behaviour to look out for, how to support someone who shares that they experienced sexualized violence and the potential barriers to disclosing this violence, and where you can go for help with sexualized violence in the community. This session is intended to be a good option for campus or community organizations who want to have a more focused discussion on the topic of sexualized violence and on the communities disproportionately impacted by this violence including, but not limited to, women, LGBTQ+, and Indigenous communities.

As of the end of 2020, the Union has delivered these digital trainings to one hundred and seventy-two campus and community members from groups like TRUSU clubs; residence advisors; the City of Kamloops' Community Development, Arts, and Recreation Departments; and the Kamloops Arts Council. Feedback survey results from participants report well over eighty percent of respondents saying that their awareness about these important equity issues was improved by the training, and that the training made them feel better equipped to discuss equity issues in their organizations and workplaces. These trainings represent a new approach to the Unions' goal of improving equity and respect on campus and in our community and are intended to continue in 2021.



## United Way's Period Promise

From March 2 – 13, 2020 the Union participated in the United Way's *Period Promise* campaign to raise awareness about period poverty in our community and to invite donations of menstrual hygiene products to those in need. One in four Canadian women have struggled to buy period products for themselves or their children and this has resulted in many folks not being able to equally participate in work, school, and society. The Union raised awareness about this inequity digitally, and hosted a donation box on behalf of the United Way where students, faculty, and staff could donate to those in need. The Union was pleased to deliver a full box of community donations to the United Way at the conclusion of the campaign and plans to participate in the campaign again in 2021, COVID-19 health restrictions permitting.

## RBG Film Screening

On February 26, 2020 the Union hosted a screening of the film *RBG* to explore Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life, legal career, and significant impact on feminist movements in the United States. Participants discovered through the film how Ruth Bader Ginsburg was instrumental in winning more legal equalities for women in the US before and after she was appointed to the US Supreme Court. The event saw a good turnout from law students and members of the legal community and feedback regarding the event was overwhelmingly positive.

## Fast Fashion Outreach Day

On February 24, 2020 the Union hosted an outreach day in Old Main to raise awareness about the horrible impacts of the "fast fashion" industry on marginalized communities around the world. The Union discussed with participants the environmental degradation, child labour, union-busting, and exploitation of racialized women that many companies in the cheap apparel industry rely on to support their business. A takeaway material was also distributed to invite further discussion and to propose strategies for finding and supporting ethically produced apparel.

## Amnesty International Urgent Actions

The Union continued to participate in Amnesty International's Urgent Action network in 2020. The Urgent Action Network is a group of more than one hundred and sixty-five thousand volunteers in fifty-five countries who expose and pressure human rights violators to change their illegal and unethical behaviours, including torture, extrajudicial executions, genocide, depriving equity groups of food/water/other necessities, and more.

After Amnesty verifies that these types of illegal activities are happening, they distribute an urgent action notice to the network and ask folks to send letters, faxes, emails, and other messages to the government or organization committing these crimes to inform them that the world is watching and pressure them to stop their illegal activity immediately. The Union reviews each urgent action notice



from Amnesty, discusses the alleged rights violation, and decides if they want to participate. After approving participation, a letter is drafted fulfilling the requirements of the request, which is signed by the Union’s Executive Director and Vice President Equity and is quickly delivered by email, fax, or mail to the intended recipient.

In 2020, the Union participated in twenty-two urgent actions and delivered letters to various governments around the world requesting they investigate allegations of serious human rights abuses and take action against any illegal or unethical behaviour. All of the letters sent on behalf of the Union can be seen on the Union’s website.

## Amnesty International Write For Rights

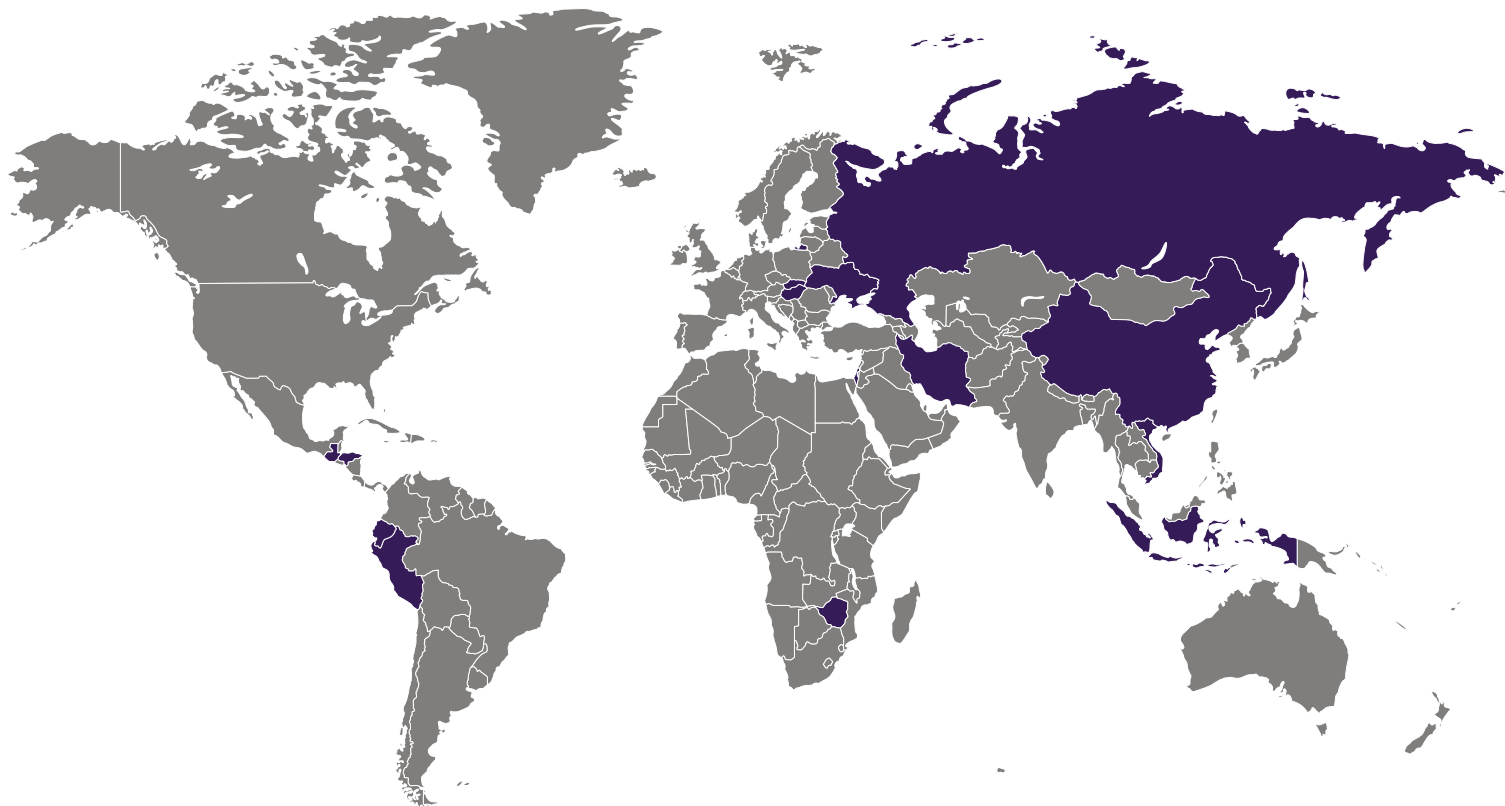
From November 30 – December 10, 2020, the Union hosted several digital events on Zoom to participate in Amnesty International’s “Write for Rights” campaign to call attention to human rights violations around the world by contacting government officials. “Write for Rights” is a long-standing initiative of Amnesty International and

has a proven track record of focusing public attention on government malfeasance and inaction to protect human rights. The letter writing campaign works very similarly to the Urgent Action Network described previously. Union volunteers assisted community members in writing dozens of letters to the governments of Algeria, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Malta, Myanmar, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey to request they intervene in cases of abuse against Indigenous, women’s, LGBTQ+ and other human rights activists.

## TRANSform TRU

TRANSform TRU is the Union’s long-standing project to improve campus respect and inclusion for the Trans community. In 2020, the Union focused on the completion of TRU’s *Gender Diversity Audit* that was started in 2019, and on implementing the recommendations contained therein. In 2019, the Union convinced the Faculty of Student Development to conduct an audit of gender diversity on campus that started in March and went to December 2019 with final publication of the audit report in March 2020. The audit highlighted the urgent need for

## Amnesty Urgent Action Letters Locations







strong measures to rectify barriers and challenges that Trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people face at TRU. The report contains 23 recommendations to address these challenges across 5 major themes: communications and interpersonal interactions, gender records, gender data, gendered facilities, and programs and services.

Since March, the Union has been in regular communication to discuss and assist with the rollout of these recommendations. Unfortunately, due to administrators focus on emergency COVID response, to date there hasn't been much progress in implementation of the audit's recommendations. The Union plans to continue advocating for the audit's implementation across campus in 2021. More information about the *Gender Diversity Audit* and its recommendations can be found on the TRU website.

## Kamloops Equity Forum

On March 2, 2020 the Union hosted its latest meeting of the Kamloops Equity Forum to connect with, share information among, and provide a space for partnership between community equity organizations. Participants shared about ongoing and upcoming equity projects in Kamloops, and informed other participants about projects that they need help with, support for, or participation in. The Union invited participation in its upcoming initiatives and heard about several upcoming projects that it could support.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the other planned forum meetings in the summer and fall had to be cancelled. The Union plans to restart the Kamloops

Equity Forum in February 2021 to continue building community capacity for better information sharing and better community equity work.

## TRU Anti-Racism Task Force

From July to December 2020, the Union has participated in TRU's Anti-Racism Task Force to develop recommendations to senior administration to address racism on campus. Recent and long-standing issues of racial discrimination have focused TRU's attention on the inequitable treatment of black, brown, Indigenous, Asian, and other racialized communities. Community institutions like TRU have a responsibility to examine our own role in this mistreatment and use our power and privilege to make progress on these issues.

In July and August the Union recruited two members to participate in the task force and since that time has supported their participation in regular meetings of the task force. This group of students, faculty, and staff is expected to deliver its recommendations about data collection, policies and procedures, hiring and HR practices, education and awareness training, and other racialized equity issues in March 2021.





# University Affairs

In 2020, the Union supported students through their challenging university experience in the pandemic. This was achieved through continued student representation in university governance through the transitional and alternate delivery periods, as well as proactive work to build a community-based university response based on mutual support, shared objectives, collaboration, and student input and feedback. Work also continued on key issues of affordable course materials, study space, and internationalization.

## Student Caucus and Student Representation

The Student Caucus persisted through the pandemic for a successful tenth year thanks to the dedication of its volunteers. The program adapted to the circumstances, leading to a number of innovations that will serve it well in the future, and created an increasingly engaging experience around its representative role.

### *Student Caucus Membership*

Student Caucus membership was maintained through the transitional and alternate delivery periods. Members from both the 2019/20 and 2020/21 terms provided exceptional service in difficult circumstances to ensure a student voice was maintained in critical decisions. The Union is grateful for their determination.

In the Winter semester, members from the 2019/20 term transitioned to carrying out their representative duties virtually at the same time as they transitioned their

studies. No member withdrew and they continued to be engaged while physically distanced in meetings, surveys, and other activities.

For the 2020/21 term, recruitment was adapted to the lack of in-person classes. A recruitment drive began in August with an invitation for previous members to reapply, and eighteen members – the greatest ever – opted to continue their service. This provided a strong foundation on which to invite new recruits. Since interest could not be built as usual through outreach at events, focus was put on targeted outreach to engaged students as well as digital promotions. Students who interacted with digital content were encouraged to apply, and eighty-five applications were received within four weeks. All applicants scheduled a mandatory interview, and sixty-four interviews were conducted. This process identified the best candidates for each position and created an initial connection, which was particularly important since members could not meet each other or be oriented in person.

Student Caucus membership in 2020 consisted of fifty-four representatives across seventy-one positions, and the Union filled ninety-one percent of student representative positions to which it nominates or appoints.

### *Orientation and Support*

Student representatives in 2020 were prepared and supported in new ways, and they engaged in more activity despite the limitations of being physically distanced.

## Student Caucus Recruitment



84

Student  
Applications



64

Candidate  
Interviews



54

Student  
Representatives





The Student Caucus orientation and support was significantly reorganized for the virtual circumstances of the 2020/21 term. At the end of September, the usual all-day orientation was replaced with a shorter, more interactive Team Welcome meeting. Prior to the meeting, a video and quiz introduced participants to the Union, the Student Caucus, and their role as a student representative to ensure a base knowledge. As a result, the meeting focused on building camaraderie, getting organized, and brainstorming issues. In the following weeks, further video tutorials and quizzes addressed meeting participation skills and understanding of university governance, management, and community. This asynchronous training has proven more flexible and effective while making better use of time together. Ongoing support was also provided through regular contact on Basecamp, an online team-working platform, and through staff assistance.

### Engagement

The Student Caucus continued to provide consistent engagement through monthly meetings, all of which were virtual after March. Presentations were organized to seek feedback on issues and projects such as:

- the implementation of the TRU General Education Model,
- action plans for the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan,
- pandemic impacts on university finances and budgeting, and
- a proposal for automatic student billing for universal access to course materials.

Discussions were held for issues brainstorming at the beginning of the term and on key topics such as automatic billing for course materials. University

committee updates were also further focused with the addition of written reports submitted prior to meetings. Overall, meetings have been successful, maintaining an average attendance of thirty-one members in 2020, which is comparable to previous years despite the move to virtual meetings.

Student Caucus members were also invited to participate in university activities. This included:

- the grand opening of the Information/Security Desk on Student Street on January 13, 2020,
- the TRU Budget Town Hall on January 14, 2020,
- the Union's Annual General Meeting on January 23, 2020,
- a campus space study consultation on January 27, 2020, and
- a survey regarding the General Education Model at TRU up to April 01, 2020

Student Caucus members further observed meetings of the TRU Senate and Board of Governors. Together there were one-hundred twelve instances of participation



**Representatives  
Receiving Recognition**



**Representatives  
Receiving Recognition  
with Distinction**

## Student Budget Consultation Priorities



Parking and Transportation



Food Services



Study Space



Course Materials



Course Offerings

across seven activities, which is the greatest ever participation in additional activities by Student Caucus members.

Finally, Certificates of Recognition were awarded to encourage and reward this engagement in the 2019/20 term. Nine members earned Recognition and another fourteen earned Recognition with Distinction. With the continued engagement of members in the 2020/21 term, the Union looks forward to awarding further Certificates at the end of the spring in 2021.

## Student Budget Consultation

The Student Budget Consultation, a partnership with TRU, has provided student input to university budgeting and planning since 2014. It also provides the Union direction in university affairs issues to address. The pandemic precluded hosting the next planned consultation, but in 2020, the Union took an alternative approach to these purposes, and the prior consultation continued to drive action on students' priorities.

### *Postponing the Formal Consultation*

The Student Budget Consultation was last held in the Winter semester of 2019. Due to planned changes and the later impact of the pandemic, the next consultation will not be held until Winter 2022.

After five years of experience, the Union and university administration confirmed changes to the program in Fall 2019. This included holding the consultation every two years rather than annually to relieve survey fatigue and provide greater opportunity for actions to be taken. As a result, a consultation was not held in Winter 2020, but was planned for Winter 2021.

However, when the pandemic arrived, the Union decided to postpone the consultation further due to two factors. First, the standard survey would not reflect the unique experience this year and the changing nature of that experience made the creation of a new comprehensive survey impractical. Second, students struggling to navigate the immediate situation would benefit from a more flexible approach. Instead, much of the Union's response the pandemic has focused on student consultation and collaboration. (See *University COVID-19 Response* below) Going forward, the Union has partnered with Student Services, Learning & Innovations, and TRU World, and Institutional Planning & Effectiveness to share all data from various student feedback opportunities to support informed responses to the pandemic across the university and limit survey demands on students.

The Union will continue to support student consultation in many forms throughout the next year, and looks forward to hosting a full Student Budget Consultation again in Winter 2022.

### Action on Students' Priorities

While a consultation was not held in 2020, the Union continued to collaborate and seek formal responses to recommendations from the Student Budget Consultation Report 2020/21. Securing action on student priorities is a critical aspect of making the process meaningful to participants and impactful for the student experience.

The Student Budget Consultation Report 2020/21 was submitted, distributed, and presented throughout the university community in Fall 2019. In 2020, the Union worked on areas of collaboration while seeking formal responses to all other priorities. The university provided responses to twenty-three of twenty-five recommendations from the Report by February 2020.

On parking and transportation, TRU has committed to make improvements driven by data. TRU is working with Parking Logix to provide real-time parking availability, and will improve parking communication and signage. An annual transportation study will determine the breakdown of how commuters get to campus and better understand barriers to alternate transportation. Finally, TRU will push government partners to increase bus service and build a pedestrian bridge over Summit Drive while designing more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly campus infrastructure.

On food services, TRU is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Food Service Review held in 2018 in response to the Union's *Hungry for Choice* campaign. TRU has begun to implement variety to accommodate dietary needs, monitor pricing against quality and competitiveness, adjust hours of operation to meet demand, renovate food service locations, and increase local food options and food truck offerings. These changes have already led to increases in student satisfaction, and more are expected.

On study space, the Union developed a partnership with the Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability Department (see *Study Space* below). In addition to working with the Union to consult on building renovations, TRU has committed to increase study space with a focus on quiet space. Signage, literature, and staff monitoring will encourage and enforce expected behaviours, and cleanliness will be stepped up from both janitorial and food service staff.

On course materials, TRU will support free, open education resources (OER) by continuing the OER Development Grants Program created in 2018 in response to the Union's Open Textbooks campaign. The

program funds eight OER projects by TRU faculty and saves students hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. The Union also partnered with the Library to support a comprehensive textbook reserve system. While course reserves have been improved through expanded capacity and collections as well as a more flexible self-service model, the textbook reserve system has been put on hold in light of another alternative (see *Affordable Course Materials* below).

On course offerings, TRU has committed to build on improvements made by Enrolment Services in recent years. This includes more efficient scheduling and reduced conflicts, assigning more appropriate classroom sizes, more user-friendly registration, and reducing waitlists. For curriculum itself, actions will be up to academic units. The Union encourages students to speak with their Department Chair or Dean to find out more about curriculum in their program.

## University Issues

In 2020, the Union diverted much of its attention in the university to responding to COVID-19 with coordination, collaboration, and compassion.

### University COVID-19 Response

By the end of the Winter 2020 semester, the Union had recognized that responding to COVID-19 was a critical responsibility that will shape TRU for many years. The Union has taken a collaborative response to this challenge to bring together diverse resources and perspectives from across the university.

In July, the Union distributed a proposal throughout the university community inviting a common response to provide relief, recovery, and reform. It suggested relief efforts should use a lens of empathy and leave no community member behind. Recovery efforts should imagine effective and equitable solutions to new challenges. Reforms should strengthen community relationships to be more resilient into the future. The proposal outlined the Union's initial actions (as described elsewhere in this report), welcomed feedback, and asked about further experiences, responses, and ideas.

Through July, August, and September, the Union met with over forty individuals to exchange information and ideas, facilitate student consultation on solutions, collaborate on common initiatives, and provide or receive support in areas of shared objectives.





## Summary of Meetings

- 42 individuals
- 34 meetings
- 18 divisions/offices

Key themes from the discussions included supporting student mental health and basic needs, maintaining clear and consistent communication, providing quality educational experiences, and making the best use of limited resources. Our discussions were also oriented to find opportunities to work together. For example, to ensure students helped shape the university's response to the pandemic, the Union:

- Worked with Learning Technology & Innovation on the "Learning without Walls" Moodle course, providing student volunteers for an early access review, survey, and focus group
- Worked with the Office of Safety & Emergency Management to collect student perspectives on hours of operation for campus study space

To work together on common initiatives, the Union:

- Participated in Orientation activities such as the "Drive-Thru Swag Giveaway" with the Faculty of Student Development and International Student Orientation with TRU World
- Worked with IT Services to promote the "Shaw COVID-19 Student Internet Initiative and Support Plan" to provide free smart devices and a free semester of service to fifty students

To provide support for other's work, and to get support for our work, the Union:

- Provided anti-oppression and sexual violence prevention and response training to student leadership groups and others across campus
- Received support from Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability and the Office of Safety and Emergency Management to develop opening plans for the Students' Union Building

The difficult reality is that this pandemic will be with us for a while. The Union is committed to continuing to work with the caring university community to leave no one behind, tackle inequities, find new ways to deliver the quality education, research, and student experience TRU is known for, and bring the best that has been demanded of us now into a brighter future.

## Affordable Course Materials

The Union continued to address the growing crisis in the affordability of textbooks in two ways. The first continues to promote open educational resources (OER), which are available free of charge. The second aims to make all current course materials more accessible at lower cost.

Students have prioritized course materials in the Student Budget Consultation over four years. From 2016 to 2018, the Union ran a successful *Open Textbooks* campaign that built campus understanding and support for OER and led to the creation of a TRU OER Development Grant Program. In the process of the campaign, the Union joined a network of open education champions across campus.



In 2020, the Union continued work within this network to advance affordable course materials. To build on a growing culture and practice of open education at TRU, the Union hosted the first-ever TRU Open Education Week on March 4-5, 2020. Open Education Week is recognized internationally as a way to celebrate and educate people about the benefits of open education. At TRU, a series of workshops were led by champions at TRU. These workshops reflected on successful OER projects at TRU, how faculty can use OER in their courses, how open education improves learning, and data privacy in education. Each day was concluded with a social and keynote. The first featured Amanda Coolidge, Director of Open Education at BCCampus, celebrating the growth of open education in BC and at TRU, and the second featured Professor Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law, discussing Canadian copyright and open education. The event, amongst the largest in the province, was widely appreciated by attendees and deepened partnerships on campus, although there were fewer student attendees than hoped.



To further engage students directly in this issue, the Union sponsored seven students to join hundreds of their peers, faculty, and advocates from around the world at the virtual Open Education Conference on November 09-13, 2020. Students attended sessions on topics including advocating for OER and removing barriers; Indigenous voices, inclusion, and anti-racism in educational materials; and students as (co-)creators of educational materials.

The Union has also been working to make unaffordable textbooks more accessible in the short-term. In 2019, the Union began a partnership with the University Librarian, with support from the Bookstore, to develop a funding request for a comprehensive textbook reserve system. This funding request was submitted in January 2020, but the pandemic both eliminated the funding and made implementation impossible. However, another proposal was brought forward through the Bookstore later in the year called "equitable access." This is a program offered by VitalSource, a company that negotiates with publishers to provide all students access to all course materials they may need for a flat fee charged by the university along with tuition. The Union has worked with TRU and VitalSource to raise concerns about access, cost, opt-out provisions, transparency, data privacy, and academic freedom. Promising answers have been provided so far, and the Union will participate in a working group for implementation starting in 2021.





## Study Space

The Union maintained a productive partnership with Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability that sought student and community input in study space improvements. While action was eventually put on hold due to the pandemic, the beginning of 2020 provided the opportunity to develop concrete plans to redesign the International Building to better meet user-identified needs and amenities.

Students have prioritized study space in the Student Budget Consultation in 2016, 2018, and 2019. In 2019, the Union established a partnership with the Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability Department to consult the campus community to create better study space designs and a sense of ownership.

In 2020, the Union continued to work with its partners to revise the IB plans based on the feedback collected from students in 2019. Plans were drafted that would make the first floor foyer a much more comfortable space to access food service and meet in small groups with a variety of seating. The amount of quiet study space on the second floor would significantly increase, and the quality of studying throughout would be improved through extensive sound dampening. The space would also be enhanced with new paint and plants. While work has been postponed during the pandemic, the plans are ready to go.



pandemic arrived in Canada, and its effects have and will undoubtedly create circumstances very different from those under which the conversation occurred so far. Nonetheless, the conversation illuminates community values to guide the university and valuable lessons to apply both presently and certainly when TRU can more fully welcome the world once again. This is evident in the reflection of these values and lessons in the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan approved by the university at the end of the year.

## International Students

The Union launched the *Welcoming the World* project in 2019 to address the increasing importance of international students as part of our university community. In order to address the related challenges and maximize the benefits, the project served to create community space to talk openly about this important topic. In 2020, the project reached a milestone with the publication of a final report on this conversation.

In 2020, the Union received an official submission from TRU World, and integrated this content, as well as additional community feedback, in a final *Welcoming the World* report. The Report was published just as the







# Services

Throughout 2020, The Union continued to offer a range of services and supports to assist its members. In March of 2020 the Union was required to make numerous changes to service delivery and operations in order to comply with BC provincial health orders related to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Union worked to ensure that members were able to maintain a continuity of service while services were transitioning to a digital delivery model wherever possible. While some services were required to close to remain in compliance with BC Provincial Health Orders, those that did not require campus space to operate continued to be offered with alterations to their application and delivery processes.

## Students Union Building

The Students' Union Building remains a vital service for the Union's membership and campus community. The building remained in operation with available booking and study spaces through January, February, and March. During this period one thousand four hundred and fifty-two bookings were made in the Students' Union building accounting for more than three thousand five hundred hours of bookings.

Unfortunately, due to the sudden closure of campus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union was required to close the Students Union Building and Members' Services Desk on March 16, 2020. The Union worked to secure access to Kamloops transit for students who had not yet activated their UPASS and transitioned all other services at the Members' Services Desk to a digital format until the building could reopen under new guidelines.

In June, the Union was able to reopen the Members' Services Desk for in-person service following guidelines of social distance and limited capacity of members in the space. Members were encouraged to take advantage of digital options wherever possible to limit risk and ensure convenience. Services such as summer UPASS activations continued to take place in-person at the Members' Services Desk.

In August, the Union was able to extend its operations to accommodate the increased demand for UPASS activation. Once the majority of students had activated



their UPASS cards the building hours were once again reduced. We have not yet been able to reopen the Students’ Union Building as a study space or for bookable rooms. The Union continues to monitor health orders and campus protocols to ensure that we are ready when that is an option.

Common Grounds

Common Grounds is a service that offers ethical products at reasonable prices, and a successful business operation in a campus environment as it has been able to cover all of its own expenses while continuing to be a self-sustaining enterprise. Common Grounds has been a staple coffee shop on campus for students, faculty, and staff for over a decade and we hope to continue the growth that this small student owned and operated service.

In March, along with other parts of the Students’ Union Building the Common Grounds Coffee Shop was required to close due to provincial Health Orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union’s priority was to ensure that the closure did not negatively impact student employees who counted on their employment to support their expenses. Despite the closure, student employees continued to be employed until the end of their contract date of April. Despite several obstacles Common Grounds was still able to break even for the year.

At this time, the Union is hopeful that the Coffee Shop will be able to resume operations in September 2021.

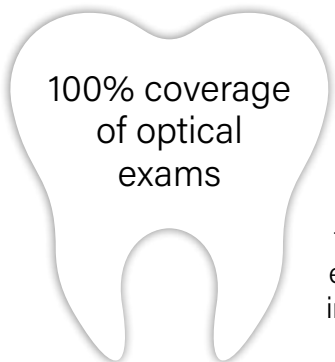
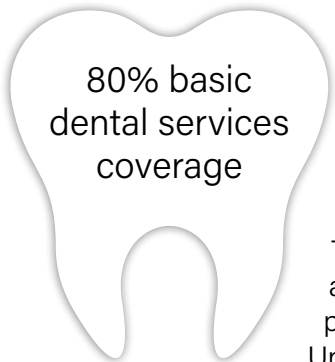
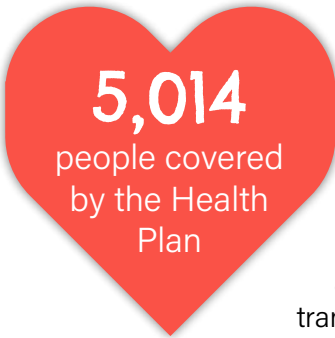
Extended Health and Dental Plan

The TRUSU Extended Health and Dental Plan is a service that provides members with access to affordable medical coverage for items not covered by the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia. In 2020, the plan featured 100% drug coverage; 80% coverage on professional services,

such as chiropractors or podiatrists; 100% coverage of optical exams and glasses; 80% coverage on basic dental services; accidental death and dismemberment insurance; and travel insurance.

The transition to a digital learning environment meant that many students were living outside of the Kamloops area and even outside of the country. This transition posed a number of challenges that the Union worked to overcome in the Summer Semester for implementation in Fall 2020. Students living outside of the country are not able to make claims on a health and dental plan based in Canada so we worked with TRU World to ensure that students living outside of Canada had the opportunity to opt-out of the plan. As a result, in 2020, the Union saw a decrease in health and dental enrollments with approximately 5,014 members enrolled on the plan, and an additional 158 student opt-ins, 68 single dependent opt-ins, and 145 family opt-ins. The Union also worked to transition the opt-in process to an online environment to ensure that every student was able to opt themselves and any dependents onto the plan without having to come to the Members Services Desk.

2020 also required that the Union re-evaluate how we communicate and educate members about the health and dental plan. This year the Union was required implement a strictly digital communication strategy for promotion of the health and dental plan. The Union continued to implement Health and Dental Newsletters to educate members on various aspects of the plan. The Committee also hosted their first ever Virtual Health and Dental Information Session, and will host another in January 2021. Based on the data from the first quarter of health and dental plan usage in the Fall 2020 plan year more members are accessing coverage than ever before, as a result the Union is encouraged by our efforts to communicate information digitally.





## UPASS

The UPASS is a service that provides students in Kamloops with unlimited access to the Kamloops transit system. This service works to both make transportation more affordable and reduce our collective impact on the environment by encouraging members to access public transit.

In 2020, the Union had fifteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-five students eligible for a UPASS after opting out one thousand four hundred and twenty-two students who fit the opt-out criteria. With four hundred and forty-four students opting into the UPASS, the Union had an activation rate of 69%, or an approximate annual total of ten thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight students, with an active UPASS.

In March, the Union was required to close in-person activations of the UPASS in response to the COVID-19 Provincial Health orders. The Union immediately contacted the City of Kamloops and BC Transit to ensure that the closure of in-person activations would not prevent any student from being able to access transit in Kamloops.

From April 1 – June 1 fares were eliminated from all transit across the province, this impacted students who were registered in summer classes and were charged a UPASS fee. As a result, the total UPASS fee was removed off of every student's My TRU Account for the summer semester. Through negotiations with the City of Kamloops, the Union was able to continue to allow any student who wanted access to a UPASS for the summer to opt-in once fare collection resumed. The Union opened up the Members Services Desk on June 1, 2020 with strict

health and safety guidelines for both students and staff and allowed students to opt in and activate their summer UPASS.

Over the summer semester the Union worked to implement an online UPASS opt out application form and communications strategy to allow any student who met the criteria for an option to submit an online form. This included students living outside the Kamloops Transit Area. This process of opting students out digitally proved to be successful, and the Union will continue with the digital process once in-person classes resume.

## Food Bank

The Food Bank is a service that provides students in need with food security. Students who find themselves unable to cover their basic expenses are able to request a food bank package to provide them with food and basic necessities.

In March 2020, the Union set up online form for folks to make a monetary donation to the food bank in lieu of a physical donation during the pandemic related closure of the Members' Services Desk. During closure, the TRUSU Food Bank operated on an appointment basis, so any students in need could still request a food bank package through booking a time. When we were able to reopen the Members' Services Desk, in-person requests were reintroduced.

The TRUSU food bank continues to operate on a need basis and support the campus community.





## Emergency Services

### Endowments and Bursaries

#### *TRUSU Endowment*

In 2020, the Union continued its annual contribution of \$15,000 to the Students' Union Endowment Fund. The fund is developing each year; its capacity to provide financial aid to students is growing. In 2020, the Endowment was over \$130,000 and supported approximately 40 students. The Union looks forward to continuing to invest in supporting our members through growth in the endowment.

#### *Emergency Bursaries*

The emergency bursary program is designed to provide a stop gap for students facing unforeseen financial emergencies. Students who identify an unforeseen need are able to request a bursary through financial aid and awards to help cover their immediate needs.

The Union traditionally commits \$10,000 to the emergency bursary fund each year. In March, when it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic was going to have a substantial impact on our members, the Union committed an additional \$100,000 to support students in need.

### TRU Career Works

In April, the Union partnered with TRU Career and Experiential Learning department to develop a temporary summer student employment program to encourage community employers to hire students throughout the Summer 2020 Semester by providing wage subsidies.

As a result, the Union sponsored positions with eligible local nonprofits and small businesses to assist students

with employment during COVID-19. The project has proven to be successful and assisted approximately twenty students in securing positions by distributing over \$50,000 of wage subsidies to community employers.

### Grants

The Grants program provides students with funding to access to extracurricular learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Students can receive funding to attend a conference or host an educational activity, and clubs can receive funding to host a campus life event.

In 2020, the Union continued to offer a range of grants throughout the months of January, February, and March. The Union temporarily paused all new grant applications in March in order to reassess the TRUSU Grants Program and its application in a virtual setting throughout COVID-19. In the meantime, the Union continued to process outstanding reimbursements and reassess all grant applications to account for a virtual fall semester.

The Union resumed the acceptance of applications in August to assist students in attending conferences, hosting events, and hosting educational activities for the Fall Semester with alterations to the digital grants' applications. These application forms were altered to

271

Students funded  
to attend a  
conference

42

Club events  
funded

14

Educational  
activities  
funded



encourage and allow virtual events, conferences, and educational activities. Fields were added to account for funding required for PPE and sanitization equipment and all information regarding the most up to date health orders was linked to in order to assist applicants in developing their application to suite the most current guidelines at the time of application and to account for any changes that could have occurred between approval and the intended event.

Despite the restrictions on in person conferences and events as well as travel after March, the Union funded \$110,908.75 through forty-eight conference grant applications sending two hundred seventy-one students to conferences, \$30,989.81 to forty-two club events attended by more than two thousand students, staff, faculty, and community members, \$30,787.59 to fourteen Educational Activities attended by more than one thousand students, faculty, staff, and community members, \$13,000 to four Community organizations through our Community Grants program, and \$129,982.25 to campus projects and programs throughout the year for the Awards of Excellence, Career Works project, and emergency bursaries in order to support members through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## Club Activities

In 2020, the Union resourced one hundred and twenty-two clubs with a wide variety of aims and purposes; including twenty-four newly formed clubs. The Union hosted individual meetings with individual club leaders over the summer semester to ensure support during the pandemic. Following these meetings feedback from clubs assisted the Union in digitizing club processes such as club banking, registrations, renewals, and more to support continued activity during virtual learning. As a result, clubs have continued to operate under COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines. This network of social, academic, common interest, and cultural clubs on campus allows members to build on and utilize their skills and to make new social connections within the Union.

The Union also hosted Virtual Club Leaders Orientations on October 03 and October 17. At these meetings, campus club leaders received information about the legal and financial responsibilities of the signing authorities, club insurance coverage, how to access club services, club funding, and everything else to run their clubs successfully. These meetings also served as a networking opportunity for Club Leaders.







# Entertainment Committee

2020 was unlike any other year for the Union's entertainment and campus life activities. More than any other aspect of the Union, campus life struggled to respond to the ever-changing conditions created by the COVID-19 global pandemic. This situation caused a number of initial cancellations of long-standing events and forced the Union to rethink what entertainment might look like in a digital environment. Events that were forced to be cancelled included:

- Last Class Bash
- Back-to-School BBQ
- Outdoor Movie Night and Food Truck Festival, and
- Move Nights at the Paramount Theatre

## Common Voices

The Union hosts the Annual Common Voices Lecture series each year to provide a high quality extra-curricular learning opportunity for students, faculty, staff and the broader community. This event has hosted fourteen world-renowned speakers and intellectuals and in 2020, the Union was pleased to be able to add BC Master Gardener Brian Minter to the list of distinguished Common Voices Speakers.

### Common Voices Lecture

On February 27, 2020, the Union hosted its annual Common Voices Lecture featuring keynote speaker

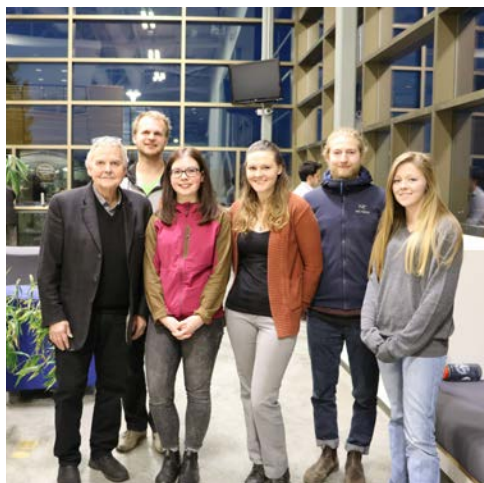
Brian Minter, award-winning horticulturalist, columnist, regular garden commentator on CBC Radio, and Master Gardener. The event was hosted in the TRU Grand Hall and included a lecture as well as an opportunity for question and answer from members of the audience. Minter's lecture was entitled "Embracing the Issues of Climate Change through the World of Plants". The lecture was attended by more than five hundred participants and was well received by the audience.

### Campus Leaders Meeting with the Keynote Speaker

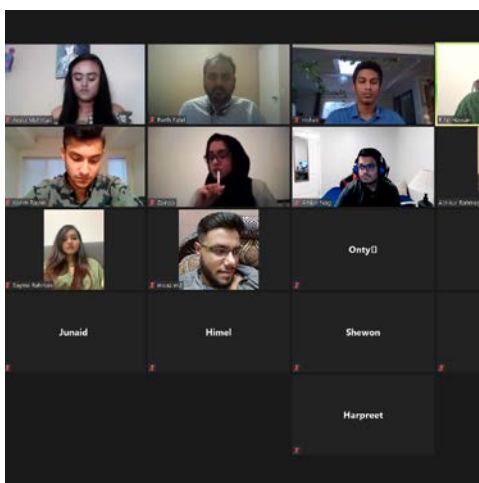
As part of the Common Voices Lecture Series, the Union worked to provide a unique and personal experience for several TRUSU Club Leaders, who share interests that were aligned with Brian Minter's expertise. The Union facilitated an intimate reception/discussion with Minter and the club leaders before the main lecture. Feedback from both Minter and the student leaders was positive.

## Student Discount App Launch

Traditionally, the Union has been able to provide students with access to local businesses and student discounts at its annual Back to School BBQ where local businesses and vendors offered student deals, discounts, and promotions to students individually at the event. As the Back-to-School BBQ was unable to take place due to







health restrictions related to COVID-19, the Union worked instead to launch the Deals Student Discount Program App.

This program is hosted by the British Columbia Federation of Students and currently serves one hundred seventy thousand student across British Columbia, including ten thousand students at the TRU campus. The program is designed to help students save money on the everyday items that drive up the cost of getting a post-secondary education, by soliciting student discounts in return for advertising those discounts to students.

Over the 2020 summer semester, the Union worked with various local retailers, service providers, grocery and food-related stores, wellness providers, and transportation companies to secure a range of valuable discounts for TRU Students. The app currently supports more than thirty local discounts solicited by either the local Union or the provincial organization. Since launching the app more than six hundred students have created an account to access discounts.

The Union is encouraged by the number of students accessing the discount app and will continue to explore opportunities to help students make their lives more affordable.

## Clubs Day

Clubs Day is an annual event hosted by the Entertainment Committee to create and foster opportunities for students to connect with each other around shared interests or perspectives.

Given the virtual learning environment, the Union changed the format for Clubs Day from the historically

in-person resource fair that has been to a series of Virtual Club Information Nights from September 16, 2020 to October 28, 2020. Each of these virtual sessions were co-hosted by the Union and provided students with a brief presentation about the hosting club's activities, a Q&A session, and information on how to join the club. More than one hundred and fifty students participated in the thirty-seven club information sessions.

Students and presenting clubs expressed positive feedback about the opportunity to connect and share interests and perspectives. Additionally, this event served as a positive social experience for students given the lack of opportunities to connect with campus community in the current virtual learning environment.

## Virtual Games Night

One of the campus life projects the Union has proposed as an alternative in this virtual environment is a series of Virtual Games Nights. This option allows members to connect with each other in a digital platform while abiding by all current health restrictions. The Union hosted a Virtual Games Night featuring Settlers of Catan as a pilot on November 25, 2020. The Virtual Games Night provided students an opportunity to come together for a fun, safe, and shared activity together while TRU campus is closed.

The event was hosted on a digital video meeting platform providing students an opportunity to talk and socialize with other participants during the event. Over forty students registered for the event, but only six students attended the pilot Virtual Games Night. The Union was encouraged by the initial expression of interest and will be looking for options to provide more reminders to

students who have registered for the event in the future to increase our final attendance. The Union will be looking to expand this series in the winter semester.

## Care Packages

With the lack of in-person interaction, many students at TRU have experienced a lack of sense of belonging to the TRU community. In fact, for many first year students, they have never set foot on campus or had the opportunity to interact with the Union in person. As a result, the Union looked for options to better provide that sense of connection and care at a distance. This developed into the program of Care Packages.

The Union organized a sign-up form for interested students to be able to provide their mailing addresses that was sent to every student in an email and shared through social media. Over one thousand three hundred students signed up through the online form from all across the country.

The Union developed the first package around the theme of wellness and self-care, including items such as calming teas, candles, stress balls, Zen colouring books and materials about accessing mental health services in addition to a number of swag items such as water bottles, coffee mugs and groceries bags. The first batch of care packages were delivered to fifty recipients in the month of December just before the beginning of the final exam period.

The Union was encouraged by the interest and response to the first batch of care packages and will be looking to increase the frequency and number of care packages in the upcoming semester.

