



# TRU Residence Feedback Summary Report

*A priority-based review of the  
student experience in  
TRU Residences*





## Background

This report summarizes the input received from four student resident feedback sessions occurring in February and March 2023 as a part of a broader review of the BC Leading Practices for Student Housing Rental Agreements. In Fall 2022, the TRU Residences, Facilities, Risk Management, Student Affairs, and TRU Students' Union participated in a review of the Leading Practices to identify if we were not-yet-meeting, meeting, or exceeding each of the recommendations as set out by the provincial guidelines.

This included an evaluation of the rules and regulations around evictions, housing appeals, and contract timelines. For sections 2-8 of the Leading Practices, we confirmed our alignment with the best practices and discussed potential opportunities for improvement. This included updates and reviews of the Student Residence Agreement, Community Living Standards Agreement, the Maintenance Request Portal, and the TRU Transition Guidelines. Additionally, this group decided there was a need to create and support a Housing Appeals Committee and develop an emergency Displaced Student Protocol.

To address the remaining section 1 of the Leading Practices, we designed the residence feedback sessions to engage students in conversations about their safety, privacy, support services, and residence environment. During the sessions we organized for students to provide written post-it-note comments and verbal reports on their experience. Students were also asked to use stickers on post-it-notes to identify comments they perceived as being high priority. We were excited to receive a variety of feedback from all four residences and have developed this report to both recognize excellence and guide potential improvements. We have paired priority concerns with recommendations for both general themes and individual residences.

We are thankful to the students who engaged in these conversations and who shared their ideas, opinions, and experiences with us. Additionally, we are deeply appreciative of our partners from TRU Residences, Facilities, Risk Management, and Student Affairs for collaborating to engage in these conversations and to support student voices in campus decision-making.

# Common Themes

Across all four of the residence feedback sessions, several common themes were apparent. While access to these amenities and services may be available at different degrees across residences, there were some common requests that we have shared here across **safety and privacy**, **maintenance and cleanliness**, and the **residence environment and support services**.

Students across all residences discussed concerns for access to laundry services, unit move-in cleanliness, noting that the units “were not clean... with hair all over the mattress” and that a “deep cleaning is needed in rooms before moving in.” Students also noted that central cleaning supplies access is important, particularly a dustbin/broom and vacuum. Concerns were shared around adequate notice before staff and maintenance unit access, one student sharing “Once [maintenance] entered without knocking on the door.” For maintenance information and response time, students shared comments like “I’ve had a request to fix our shower drain for 5 months” and “My toilet was clogged for a week.” Students in a variety of residence areas shared concerns with soundproofing between units. Lastly, students were excited about the much-appreciated coffee and latte machine that exists in the McGill Residence common area.

We have made 8 common recommendations for consideration across all on-campus residences:



1. Provide free or a reduced fee laundry access across residences.
2. Improve cleanliness standards in units before student move-in.
3. Provide central cleaning supplies for short-term rental including a vacuum and broom/dustbin.
4. Improve clarity for the unit check-in/check-out forms, particularly regarding any necessary maintenance.
5. Explore improvements to maintenance request response time across varying levels of concerns.
6. Provide 24-hour notice when non-emergency access is required to units.
7. Upgrade soundproofing in common area hallways and between units where possible.
8. Provide automatic coffee machines in each residence common area/kitchen area. Additionally, consider providing a cash exchange at the front desk for easier use.



## McGill Residence

On February 28, 2023, we hosted a feedback session for students with experience living in the McGill Residence in the McGill Residence Common Area. We had 26 student attendees.

### *Safety and Privacy*

Students expressed support for a positive experience of safety, but shared concerns around a variety of potential improvements. These included unit door locking mechanisms; being both inadequate in terms of safety and often breaking keys inside the door. Comments were recorded about outdoor lighting, with one student sharing “The roads are pretty dark [at night] and the residence is accessible to non-residents.” Many students also discussed the blinds coverage within the units, one student noting that “[People] can see into my room due to the blinds being in bad repair, and it makes me worry about my own privacy.” Additional comments were made about security access and first aid information. We have made 5 recommendations for consideration.

1. Install additional locking devices or upgrade current locking devices on unit doors.

2. Review lighting around central common area for at-night access.
3. Provide posted security access information within residence units / or common areas.
4. Upgrade unit blinds for complete window coverage.
5. Provide updated information on access to first aid equipment to front desk staff and students within residence.

### *Maintenance and Cleanliness*

A common theme around all student residences to varying degrees was the response time of maintenance and repairs. Particularly in relation to the McGill residence, students expressed concerns with heating and cooling, mold, and ventilation within the bathroom areas, sharing comments like “there was water leaking in the room basin tap. The complaint got resolved after 8 weeks” and “[poor] ventilation in bathrooms, and something should be done about [the] mold”. Students also noted that the common areas and shared units can sometimes be unclean. We have made 3 recommendations for consideration.

1. Investigate heating and cooling concerns for future renovation upgrades.

2. Investigate and respond to mold and ventilation concerns within shower and bathroom areas.
3. Promote and provide roommate agreement forms for follow-up and use.



## Residence Environment and Support Services

Students shared their excitement for the coffee machine and community aspects of McGill. Students felt like they knew their neighbours and enjoyed the use of the common area. Many folks highlighted their front desk experiences, noting that the “[some] staff are very understanding... go above and beyond to help” but that “some staff seem to make up rules as they go and can be rude.” Others shared the importance of accessing the common areas at all times and noted the value of common gym equipment. One student noted that the free Netflix nights were nice and “remove[d] loneliness especially while doing laundry.” An idea to implement a storage area for bags was a common theme, beyond McGill, but was highly prioritized by people at this residence. Lastly, students noted that while glass jars and other non-alcoholic glass bottles were allowed, alcoholic glass bottles were forbidden. We have made 6 recommendations for consideration.

1. Complete additional support service training with front desk staff.
2. Provide 24-hour kitchen, games room, study area, and central washroom access.
3. Investigate gym equipment provisions in the McGill Common Area.
4. Work with Resident Advisors to implement Netflix nights.
5. Investigate a storage area for bags, alongside bike storage.
6. Remove the glass bottle rule for alcoholic beverages.





## North Tower Residence

On March 2, 2023, we hosted a feedback session for students with experience living in the North Tower Residence in the North Tower Multi-Purpose Room. We had 9 student attendees.



### *Safety and Privacy*

Students expressed support for a positive experience of safety within the building but noted that the individual “rooms need door locks... because any guest of my roommate has access to my room.” Students also noted that there were some concerns around parking lot security. Additionally, students were interested in adjusting the guest policy, possibly so that students did not have to sign-in individuals in advance during weekends. We have made 3 recommendations for consideration.

1. Install door locks on individual rooms.
2. Investigate parking lot security.
3. Investigate a first come / first serve guest policy for weekends.



### *Maintenance and Cleanliness*

Students in North Tower were excited that the common areas were cleaned regularly, but noted concerns on the unit kitchen upkeep, saying that “cabinet doors are broken,” and agreed with other residents on the common theme of maintenance response time, saying that the “form was filled out about the [cabinet] door, but not worked on.” Additionally, many students were concerned about the heating in the winter. We have made 2 recommendations for consideration.

1. Investigate and install upgraded cabinet hinges as needed.
2. Investigate heating concerns for future renovation upgrades.

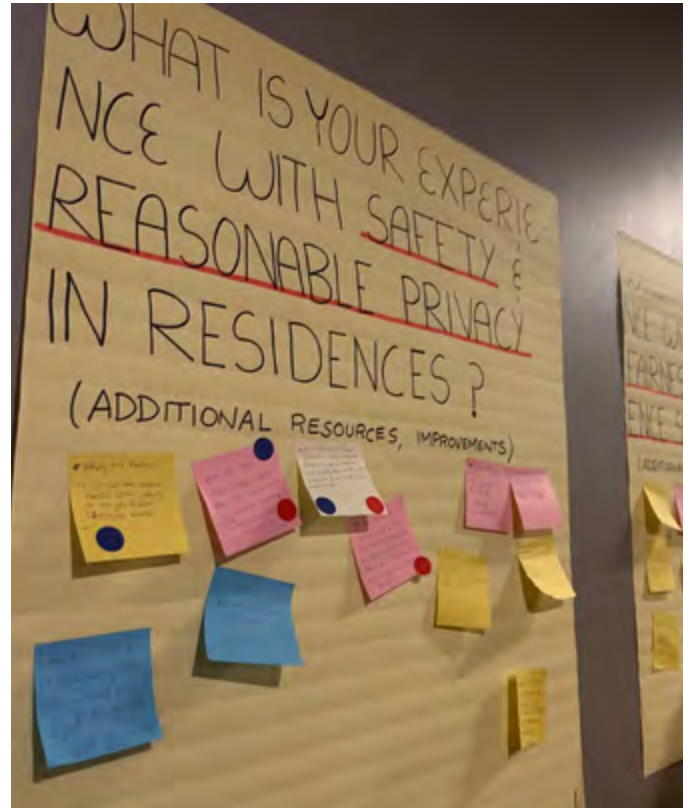


### *Residence Environment and Support Services*

Students shared their excitement for the residence environment, noting that the roommate situation was good. There was a high-priority concern about the front desk service, noting that some of the staff were “quite rude and arrogant.” A student noted that the roommate selection forms were not used in the summer, sometimes causing conflict. Lastly, students would like to see more upkeep

and gym equipment in the gym room, noting that the “gym and fitness room needs maintenance, [there are] some problems [with] the treadmill, and there are no dumbbells.” We have made 3 recommendations for consideration.

1. Complete additional support service training with front desk staff.
2. Investigate roommate selection for summer semesters.
3. Upgrade the gym with high-functioning equipment and consider additional equipment.



## NORTH TOWER RECOMMENDATIONS

1		Install door locks on individual rooms.
2		Investigate parking lot security.
3		Investigate a first come / first serve guest policy for weekends.
1		Investigate and install upgraded cabinet hinges as needed.
2		Investigate heating concerns for future renovation upgrades.
1		Complete additional support service training with front desk staff.
2		Investigate roommate selection for summer semesters.
3		Upgrade the gym with high-functioning equipment and consider additional equipment.





## East Village Residence

On March 6, 2023, we hosted a feedback session for students with experience living in the East Village Residence in the East Village Common Area. We had 21 student attendees.

### **Safety and Privacy**

Students in East Village face a unique roommate situation and noted the importance of bedroom locks for privacy and sharing that there are large cracks under the doors. Additionally, many students requested that there be “more blind and balcony coverage as people from the outside can see inside.” Several students also mentioned safety concerns for the areas around buildings (particularly B, C, and the laundry area) where there is often pooling water that results in winter ice. Some students noted that they felt uncomfortable talking with security about residence concerns, and when called, security was not always responsive. Lastly, students mentioned an accessibility concern for units not on the first floor, sharing ideas of lift-access for upper floors. We have made 6 recommendations for consideration.

1. Install door locks on individual rooms.
2. Upgrade unit blinds for complete window coverage and investigate coverage for balconies on lower units.
3. Investigate pooling water and salting of areas for winter ice response around building areas.
4. Connect with security to discuss access to and support of East Village residents.
5. Provide posted security access information within residence units / or common areas.
6. Investigate a wheelchair lift for a stairway within one of the buildings.

### **Maintenance and Cleanliness**

East Village residents discussed their unique roommate situation in relation to the maintenance and cleanliness of their shared space, noting that it can be difficult to work with the roommates to keep spaces clean. Fridge space in the units, and particularly the sharing of fridge space, was brought up multiple times. Students were concerned about the cleaning of common areas, including corridors and the laundry room, with a high priority comment noting that “the common areas need more



frequent cleaning.” Some residents shared comments about the ventilation within the units, particularly in the kitchen. Of highest priority, students were concerned about lack of air conditioning across all units. We have made 5 recommendations for consideration.

1. Promote and provide roommate agreement forms for follow-up and use.
2. Investigate fridge expansion for future renovation upgrades.
3. Investigate more frequent cleaning for common areas, including the laundry room and corridors.
4. Investigate and respond to ventilation concerns within the shared kitchen areas.
5. Upgrade units without air conditioning to a full heating and cooling furnace.

### **Residence Environment and Support Services**

Residents in East Village had positive comments about the front desk support, the common area space, and games room access. Folks noted that a study space in East Village would be particularly useful as it is farther away from campus and does not have the same access to campus resources. Students noted “we need a study room,” and a place where we can “do activities rather than events.” Some form of storage, for bikes and bags, was shared. Lastly, folks discussed the implementation of a vending machine for food and drinks. We have made 3 recommendations for consideration.

1. Explore renovations for the East Village common area space for a study room space, including an area for group activities.
2. Investigate a storage area for bags and bike storage.
3. Investigate a vending machine for the common area.

## EAST VILLAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

1 	Install door locks on individual rooms.
2 	Upgrade unit blinds for complete window coverage. Investigate coverage for balconies on lower units.
3 	Investigate pooling water and salting of areas for winter ice response around building areas.
4 	Connect with security to discuss access to and support of East Village residents.
5 	Provide posted security access information within residence units / or common areas.
6 	Investigate a wheelchair lift for a stairway within one of the buildings.
1 	Promote and provide roommate agreement forms for follow-up and use.
2 	Investigate fridge expansion for future renovation upgrades.
3 	Investigate more frequent cleaning for common areas, including the laundry room and corridors.
4 	Investigate and respond to ventilation concerns within the shared kitchen areas.
5 	Upgrade units without air conditioning to a full heating and cooling furnace.
1 	Explore renovations for the East Village common area space for a study room space, including an area for group activities.
2 	Investigate a storage area for bags and bike storage.
3 	Investigate a vending machine for the common area.



## West Gate Residence

On March 9, 2023, we hosted a feedback session for students with experience living in the West Gate Residence in the TRUSU (TRU Students Union) Lecture Hall. We had 19 student attendees.



### *Safety and Privacy*

Students in West Gate were excited about the privacy of their rooms, noting “the privacy is good. We have our own room, own washroom” and “I’m happy about the privacy here.” Students in West Gate shared their thoughts on security for the area, noting that particularly at night around the garbage areas there were several non-resident vehicles accessing the garbage unit to dump their own garbage and several unhoused individuals using it regularly. One student shared, “[for the] garbage, it would be nice to have a camera for security. The garbage is too public, and people drive through and dump trash there.” Student also identified the doors as being quite loud, and that there is a need for quieter, safer doors, with good

entry and exit door management. One student noted “Fire safety doors/exits should be secured so that there are no chances of breaking it,” and another suggested “[a] key card/code for the main door.” Additionally, students noted that a shorter walking trail to reach the main road would be helpful, as “it’s a longer walk to reach West Gate and people keep missing the bus.” We have made 3 recommendations for consideration.

1. Provide safer access to the garbage units and review unsafe dumping from non-residents.
2. Review external doors for quieter and safer entry/exit.
3. Consider a shorter walking trail for bus access between West Gate.



### *Maintenance and Cleanliness*

Students had mixed reviews with West Gate maintenance, with one student noting “[I’ve] never had any problems with maintenance.” Another student mentioned that “maintenance is just overwhelmed... and it took a month for them

to come into my room and fix the fan.” A concern external to the units was about snowplowing, and how sometimes snowdrifts can block parking and building access. Specific notes for unit maintenance included the small fridge size and a need for larger desk spaces. Lastly, folks asked for additional notices around the laundry facilities, asking individuals to not keep their clothes in the machines for too long. We have made 4 recommendations for consideration.

1. Investigate snow plowing for building and parking access.
2. Investigate installing fridge expansion for future renovation upgrades.
3. Investigate installing larger desk spaces for future renovation upgrades.
4. Install notices for proper use of laundry facilities.



## Residence Environment and Support Services

Residents in West Gate shared their appreciation for the excellent Resident Advisors and residence community. One area of need that students identified was that West Gate lacks a residence-specific front desk, as access and support from the McGill front desk is insufficient and “the front desk is too far.” One idea from a student for an interim solution was to have a “common phone to contact McGill.” Additionally, folks noted that it was difficult to access the McGill front desk for package and mail retrieval. We have made 2 recommendations for consideration.

1. Provide a common area with access to games, a front desk, and kitchen area.
2. Provide a space at West Gate for mail to be delivered.

