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## BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

### Questionnaire on Meeting Findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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#### Background

The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group was established in 2005 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by leaders from the Federal Government, the Provincial Government, public post-secondary institutions and First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, which committed to improving access and success for all Aboriginal post-secondary students in BC. For more information please see: <http://www.fnesc.ca/post-secondary/pse-partners/>

The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners are requesting information on the current status and future plans of public post-secondary institutions to meet the findings and recommendations (Calls to Action) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The TRC was established in 2008 under the terms of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The Summary of the TRC's Final Report was released June 2, 2015, and includes 94 "Calls to Action" or recommendations (see: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890> ).

#### Purpose

The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners wish to have a better understanding of actions that public post-secondary institutions have already taken, and what future actions institutions plan to take, to address the TRC post-secondary related Calls to Action. The information gathered will enable the partners to develop strategies to further the TRC Recommendations, as well as identifying leading practices that can be shared.

#### Instructions

There are thirteen questions in the questionnaire: two relate to overall initiatives of the institution, and eleven relate to specific recommendations of the TRC. There is also space for other comments at the end of the questionnaire.

It is understood that not all parts of the questionnaire will be applicable to all institutions.

If appropriate, please include hyperlinks to descriptions of activities, research, courses or programs that may already be available online.

Please return the questionnaire to Deborah Hull, Executive Director, Teaching Universities, Institutes and Aboriginal Programs, Ministry of Advanced Education ([Deborah.Hull@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Deborah.Hull@gov.bc.ca)) by **November 2, 2015**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Deborah Hull at [Deborah.Hull@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Deborah.Hull@gov.bc.ca) or (250) 387-1446. Thank you.

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## **TRC CALL TO ACTION: EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION (Overall)**

“Much of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught, or failed to teach, over many generations. Despite that history, or, perhaps more correctly, because of its potential, the Commission believes that education is also the key to reconciliation. Educating Canadians for reconciliation involves not only schools and post-secondary institutions, but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives. Education must remedy the gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism.” (p. 285)

### **Please describe any initiatives already undertaken to educate Canadians for reconciliation, including fostering public dialogue.**

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) supports Aboriginal Education initiatives that foster public dialogue and promote transformative change between the relationship between Aboriginal learners and Non-Aboriginal learners. TRU is committed in providing the best support systems, cultural events, public dialogue sessions, student services and strategic initiatives that enhance Aboriginal Education.

TRU has hosted many different events that have enhanced education for reconciliation. On February 3, 2015, over 400 TRU community members attended a session on Western and First Nations Philosophy towards Aboriginal Economic Development. Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal community leaders presented in a panel-format and then answered questioned from the audience. In March 2015, TRU hosted an International Conference that promoted Indigenous Peoples and Indigenization. At this conference, Aboriginal faculty presented on Indigenization to over 300 conference delegates. Also in March 2015, TRU Aboriginal Education, Aboriginal Mentors, Aboriginal students, and Cplul’kw’ten Gathering Place hosted Aboriginal Awareness and Pow-Wow Celebrations. These events were Campus-wide activities celebrating First Nations music, storytelling, practices, and traditional ceremonies.

Recently, in the fall 2015 semester, TRU partnered with Tk’emlups te Secwepemc to create a ceremony that welcomed new TRU Senior Administrator’s at our Secwepemc territorial marker. Most importantly TRU hosted Justice Murray Sinclair on October 26, 2015. Thompson Rivers University Truth and Reconciliation Events on October 26, 2015: “Circle and Square Philosophy”, “Broad-Based TRU update – Aboriginal Education, Community, Law, Education and Nursing”, Historical Blanket Experiential Workshop, and Justice Murray Sinclair Guest Speaker for President’s Lecture and TRUSU (Student Union) Storyteller’s Gala. At this historic event, there were 750 TRU community members in attendance.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

- November 16 & 17, 2015: TRU strategic planning with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations.
- November 16 & 17 2015: TRU strategic planning between First Nation Open learning Centers and TRU Open Learning/Aboriginal Education.
- Winter Semester 2016: Intellectual Cultural Property Symposium and Indigenous Law Forum during February 2016 TRU reading break.
- Winter Semester 2016: Strategic Planning with TRU Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal community surrounding Williams Lake campus.
- The Department of Sociology and Anthropology is formulating a proposal for a new position focussing on Aboriginal restorative justice in the 2016/17 faculty hiring rounds.
- As part of the broad program and degree review process underway in the Faculty of Arts, TRU will examine structural changes in all of our undergraduate degrees in the Faculty of Arts that assure that students have specialized courses relating to indigenous history and culture in the BC and Canadian context. It is expected that this initiative will have broader applicability across the University.
- TRU is currently hiring for a position in Aboriginal history, which will help support programs across the University as well as programs in the humanities and social sciences within the Faculty of Arts. Following the TRC Report, the Department of Journalism, Communications and New Media is also formulating a proposal for a position in Aboriginal journalism.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

Thompson Rivers University provides excellent student services within our Cplul'kw'ten Gathering Place center. Cplul'kw'ten provides a learning space that provides comprehensive student services for Aboriginal learners Thompson Rivers University.

Cplul'Kw'ten (Gathering Place) staff provides leadership among their industry peers. The team, including a Transition Planner, a Lifeskills Planner, a Mentorship Coordinator, and Aboriginal Recruitment, has established a welcoming atmosphere and forged an excellent reputation in the delivery and breadth of support services offered to Aboriginal students on and off campus. New students are welcomed through the First Friends Feast and by the Aboriginal mentors/Aboriginal Mentorship coordinator.

TRU continues to host outstanding events that include the community engagement with First Nations Educator's and also community engagement on specific issues such as the "Tsil'qotin Decision." In addition, TRU continues to enhance relevant Aboriginal

curricula development in First Nations Language and Indigenous leadership, which will enable TRU to further enhance Aboriginal course offerings.

## **Lessons Learned**

The six major lessons learned from our Academic Service Plans and our Aboriginal Service Plans are:

### **#1 Creation of relevant, dynamic and powerful Aboriginal Student Support Services**

TRU has learned that the Cplul'Kw'ten Gathering Place staff must be respectful, relevant, efficient and effective. The Aboriginal Mentor Program alone has a Coordinator and 13 Aboriginal mentors that work with over 200 Aboriginal students. Gathering Place staff, Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal mentors are the key to connecting Aboriginal students with needed and appropriate programs and services, which ensures student success.

Thompson Rivers University is committed to creating welcoming, inclusive and diverse learning environments that will increase Intercultural Understanding.

### **#2 Empowering Aboriginal Events**

TRU has learned that Aboriginal events like Orientation, Aboriginal Awareness, the First Friends Feast, the Elders Luncheon, Powwow and Graduation must include staff, instructors, senior administrators, students, community leaders and elders in the planning. Aboriginal events will be successful if all of the key stakeholders are involved in the planning, working collaboratively and respectfully. Aboriginal events increase the awareness of and access to TRU, promote partnerships, and address systemic barriers.

TRU Aboriginal Education and Cplul'kw'ten Gathering Place events welcome Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal learners and the events are respectful and dynamic.

### **#3 Partnerships and Engagement**

Initiatives such as the School District Transitions Day have strengthened our relationship with School District #73 and School District #74. Aboriginal high school students get fully involved in the Transitions Day and become more aware of the opportunities available at TRU. We have learned that community engagement with First Nations educators and Community leaders (Tsil'qotin symposium) helps increase these partnerships and the engagement with students.

Recent strategic plans involve the partnership with First Nations, Aboriginal organizations and First Nation Learning Centers. TRU has Aboriginal students from the BC Interior/Kootenay, Northern BC, and Lower Mainland and TRU works diligently to respect our partnerships.

#### #4 Curricula Development

TRU is currently in the process of institution wide Indigenization. An important aspect of Indigenization is the development of Aboriginal curricula and TRU has learned that the curricula need to be relevant, respectful and powerful. In that vein, curricula development has been increased in Leadership and First Nations Language.

Our Academic Deans, Trades, and Open Learning consistently and diligently work in partnership with Aboriginal Education & Aboriginal communities to ensure success with our TRU Aboriginal learners. TRU supports the foundational value of Indigenization and this is promoted through our TRU Academic Service Plans and Aboriginal Service Plans.

#### #5 Indigenization Awareness

TRU has learned that Indigenization needs to be a fundamental aspect of our strategy moving forward. Thus, it is part of our 5 Strategies in 5 Years initiative. Indigenization is conducive to increasing Intercultural Understanding at our University. Events related to our Indigenization efforts, are the Aboriginal Awareness Week, Elders Luncheon, Metis Cultural Celebrations, Orientation and First Friends Feast.

#### #6 Focus on Aboriginal Service Plan Goals

TRU has learned to align the three main Aboriginal Service Plan goals with our twenty Aboriginal Service Plan activities. TRU actively promotes the following goals and infuses them into all Aboriginal Service Plan initiatives and programs:

1. Increase access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners;
2. Strengthen partnerships and collaborations in Aboriginal Post-Secondary education; and
3. Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers.

Our 20 Aboriginal Service Plan activities enhance, honor and respect the 3 Aboriginal Service Plan goals and these goals help guide the strategic planning associated with these activities.

## **Major Impact**

TRU recognizes the following major impacts from the implementation of our twenty 14/15 ASP activities:

- Learned more about First Nations Worldviews;
- Increased interest in Aboriginal identity;
- Enhanced Aboriginal students' sense of belonging;
- Increased Aboriginal student relevance to their lives/future work;
- Exposed learners to Aboriginal role models/leaders/educators;
- Instilled autonomy in students through teachings about Aboriginal ways;
- Taught students about extremely important historical impacts of over-representation (Sixties Scoop, Residential Schools, and Poverty);
- Instilled students with a better understanding of the importance of community, traditions and identity;
- Facilitated students' development of inclusiveness and understanding of interconnectedness;
- Facilitated student's understanding of Aboriginal history (Decolonization);
- Helped strengthen Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal relationships;
- Highlighted the importance of culture and spirituality to students; and
- Linked strategic plans with Self Determination.

These major impacts are a direct result from our Aboriginal Service Plan activities and have helped improve our recruitment/retention/completion rates, strengthen our community partnerships, and address systemic barriers at TRU. TRU's Indigenization strategies within our Academic Service Plans have also increased our education for reconciliation.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION: CREATING RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (Overall)**

“The Commission believes that to be an effective force for reconciliation, curriculum about residential schools must be part of a broader history education that integrates First Nations, Inuit, and Métis voices, perspectives, and experiences; and builds common ground between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. The education system itself must be transformed into one that rejects the racism embedded in colonial systems of education and treats Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian knowledge systems with equal respect.” (p. 290)

**Please describe any initiatives already undertaken to create respectful learning environments and transform the education system to treat Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian knowledge systems with equal respect.**

Like most universities, the physical infrastructure of Thompson Rivers University contains mainly images related to colonialization and the exploitation of Canada’s resources to generate wealth (e.g., forestry, mining, agriculture, etc.). Signs of Aboriginal tradition and thinking are typically lacking from buildings, other than those serving special purposes (e.g., museums or departments of Anthropology).

At Thompson Rivers University, explicit attempts to include Aboriginal symbolism into traditional academic objects are being made. For example, the university mace is crafted with special attention to local materials and imagery; the House of Learning is overseen by a statue of an important Secwepemc teaching symbol: Seklep (Coyote) – the Trickster; the Law wing is anchored by a carved stone, marking the land as traditionally part of Secwepemc territory; and the Science & Health Science building boasts an original piece of Aboriginal art celebrating diversity and achievement through learning.

The Tourism Management Department offers the Aboriginal Tourism Certificate when requested by communities. The Certificate program was first piloted on the TRU campus about a decade ago. We quickly discovered that program delivery on campus was not compatible with cultural commitments and schedules for most students. Subsequently, the Department offers the program on site near communities (e.g. Lillooet, BC) with a schedule designed to work for students. The Certificate Program was delivered 2 times in Lillooet, BC for First Nations students in the region and was organized by a non-native Coordinator who lives in Lillooet.

The University Library will be participating in a regional project to evaluate the monograph collection in the coming year. This will provide hard data on the breadth and depth of the physical collection which will facilitate our evaluation of the collection in regards to Aboriginal relevant and appropriate material (among other categories).

The Institutional Repository which will launch in the next month will be a resource for making aboriginal resources more accessible and can be used to provide a measure of



preservation for aboriginal documents, artifacts, oral histories, languages and other resources.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

The Faculty of Adventure, Culinary and Tourism is preparing to announce a successful Canada Research Chair award where our nominee has a strong research portfolio that includes working with Canadian Aboriginal communities. We expect education will accompany our nominee's future research activities.

The University as of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 secured authorization from the BC Human Rights Tribunal to post our Aboriginal Recruitment position with a rider that the incumbent be of Aboriginal descent.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- TRU has created "5 Priorities for 5 Years" (2014-2019) and part of this strategy is to increase Intercultural Understanding.
- As part of the Intercultural Understanding priority is the commitment for "... The indigenization of our university through the inclusion of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal teaching, learning, knowledge, research and creative practice."
- TRU also recognizes that our traditional foundation includes the service to Aboriginal education, culture, traditions, opportunities and partnership.
- TRU has established a First Nations Aboriginal Affairs Committee that promotes the successful establishment of Aboriginal Education initiatives, programs and events. This is a committee that reports to the TRU Senate.
- Recently, TRU is establishing a Tier II Research Chair in Indigenizing Higher Education. This Research Chair will examine further enhancement of Indigenization and Aboriginal Education at TRU.
- For academic hiring in areas where First Nations Metis and Inuit are central, hiring practices have been adapted in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development. In particular, steps have been taken to fully incorporate individuals with strong connections to indigenous communities, as well as the usual disciplinary and interdisciplinary experts, in selection committees and to involve others such as aboriginal students and elders in the selection processes.
- As part of the hiring process for the new Provost and Vice-President, Academic all short-listed candidates met with the Executive Director of Aboriginal Education and the Elders who provided feedback to the selection committee on the candidates.

In addition, Thompson Rivers University has learned these Aboriginal statistics about our students.

### **Characteristics of TRU Aboriginal Students: August 2015**

- In the past five years, 10% of the Total Student Population are Self-Declared Aboriginal,  
10/11 = 2285,      11/12 = 2253,      12/13 = 2271,      13/14 = 2610,  
14/15 = 2412
- 1. Majority student take Continuing Education, General Studies, Unclassified (1230)
- 2. Bachelor Degree (784)
- 3. Certificate (343)
- 4. Developmental (201)
- 5. Diploma (161)
- 6. Apprenticeship (101)
- 6/10 Aboriginal students were female (53% General), 62% Aboriginal alumni are female
- Most popular credential awarded, “Certificate of Heavy Duty Mechanic”
- 88% alumni employed, Making \$20 per hour (median wage)
- Three major areas: Interior/Kootenays (695), Lower Mainland (519), Northern BC (582)

### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2014 TRU Aboriginal Student Engagement**

10% (65) Aboriginal from 673 respondents from TRU first and fourth year students responded to the following:

- 87% first year, 75% fourth year education experience “good” or “excellent”
- 82% first year, 84% fourth year to “probably yes” or “definitely yes” to return to TRU
- Fourth Year = TRU contributed to their growth, “thinking critically and analytically”, “writing clearly and effectively”, and “speaking clearly and effectively” This was significantly higher than the general student population responses.
- 76% of fourth year Aboriginal High Impact Practices compared to 62% Domestic – General
- Engagement indicators for Aboriginal first year similar to Domestic = Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions, Learning Strategies
- Engagement indicators for Aboriginal fourth year significantly higher than Domestic = Reflective and Integrated learning, Quantitative Reasoning

**What Programs are TRU Aboriginal Students taking in 2014/15?**

Overrepresentation in Faculty of Human, Social and Education Development:	25%
Overrepresentation in Faculty of Arts:	14%
Underrepresentation in Faculty of Adventure, Culinary Arts & Tourism	5%
Underrepresentation in Faculty of Law	4%
High overrepresentation in Developmental programs	38%
Underrepresentation in graduate programs	3%

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 1: SOCIAL WORK**

“We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:

- iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken to educate social work students about**

- a) **The history and impacts of residential schools; and**
- b) **The potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

- Integration of Aboriginal perspectives throughout Bachelor of Social Work courses.
- Required First Nations courses on decolonizing practice and culturally safe care: Social Work (2), Human Services (1)
- Research to inform indigenising and Social Work
- Staffing: recruitment of Aboriginal faculty as ongoing and sessional faculty
- advancement of First Nation delivery of Social Work, e.g. NVIT Bachelor of Social Work (Merritt, Burnaby)

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

- Increase Aboriginal student participation (currently 15%), retention (e.g. Masters of Social Work), research, and Aboriginal faculty.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- Social Work Academic Service Plan will continue to create relevant Aboriginal curricula
- Social Work instructors will continue to invite Aboriginal elders and Aboriginal knowledge holders to conduct guest lectures

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 12: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

“We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken to prepare students to provide early childhood education programs that are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal families. (Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

- At TRU: currently 16% of cohort, integration of Aboriginal perspectives and practices (orientation, curriculum), and Bursary
- In-community: Partnership with Tk'emlups te Secwepemc to deliver early years certificate curriculum

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

- Explore a regional centre Early Childhood Education for/with/by First Nations.
- Increase bursaries to support Aboriginal learners.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- Orientation: Changes made to the orientation planning to make it easier for Aboriginal students to travel and to attend. This has helped develop cohort study relationships and supported retention.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 16: ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES DEGREE AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMS**

“We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.”

**Please describe specific actions already taken to support the development of university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages. Please list any First Nations language programs you deliver.**

- Introductory courses have been offered since Winter 2015
- Free on-campus professional development in First Nation languages

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

To date, First Nations language courses at TRU have been delivered by the Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development and focussed on developing capacity to teach those languages. As there is a growing need to provide broader opportunities for acquiring First-Nations languages, the Faculty of Arts would welcome opportunities to collaborate with or support initiatives with other Faculties at TRU and with partners at other BC post-secondary institutions. The Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development will consult with Tk'emlups te Secwepemc on language education futures at TRU.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- Alongside the First Nation Language instructor TRU recruited a 'Language Apprentice'. This enabled the Elder teaching the course to mentor someone who would be able to one day take a lead with First Nation language education.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 24: MEDICAL AND NURSING SCHOOLS**

“We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken by medical and nursing programs to:**

- a) Teach students about Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices; and**
- b) Provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

TRU School of Nursing has a history of integrating Aboriginal Health and issues affecting Aboriginal peoples' health into their teaching across all four years of our BScN program. Further, TRU School of nursing has a history of working with Aboriginal communities and supporting an increase in the number of Aboriginal nursing graduates in our undergraduate program and ensuring that all graduates have the capacity to work to promote health and well-being of Aboriginal individuals, families and communities. Practice placements for student learning include building relations with Aboriginal communities for clinical practice and for research. Our students have placements with Aboriginal peoples through practice experiences in Interior Health and communities including the Conyat Friendship Center in Merritt.

Currently TRU School of Nursing holds 8 dedicated seats for Aboriginal applicants to the BScN program. Additional numbers of Aboriginal students occur when applicants meet or exceed the standards of acceptance for acceptance to the BScN program. Currently TRU School of nursing student ratio for Aboriginal students is at 13%.

TRU BScN undergraduate curriculum program was profiled by ARNBC for our work with Aboriginal health.

<http://www.arnbccommunitiesofpractice.ca/ahnn/?page id=246>.

The School of Nursing has formed an Indigenous Health Committee that will also include student representation.

Currently our Aboriginal Faculty member Sheila Blackstock and her committee are working on development of an undergraduate elective course on Indigenous Health. The course will be evaluated after one year to determine if it can be considered as a required course for our program. This course is an introduction of allied health, social work, and nursing students to Indigenous peoples in Canada ways of knowing and being in the context of holistic health. Indigenous ways of knowing and health are the foundation of knowledge pedagogy for future allied health, social workers and nurses learn to 'reflexively' (Bourque, 2014) relate social- cultural, historical and contextual determinants of health among Aboriginal Peoples (CASN, 2013). The Indigenous Holistic Health immerses students in Indigenous ways of knowing through a decolonization framework that engages local knowledge, methodologies and practices of Indigenous peoples and provides students with an environment to engage in experiential, reflexive learning (Bourque, 2014) informed by local Elders. The course embraces the pedagogy of Indigenous Knowledge on the one hand and on the other hand uses the premise of 'two- eyed seeing ' of coalescing of the student's respective western, allied health, social work or nursing, knowledge and methodologies while honoring traditional ways of knowing and being of Indigenous cultures. Students are guided through an inter-professional framework of practice to facilitate collaboration and planning of services to improve Indigenous health.

In addition the School of Nursing faculty council passed a motion to support in principal the recommendation of the IHNC to support Paul Michel and his committee in calling for a foundational required course for all students within the University to learn about Aboriginal histories.

Faculty members from the School of Nursing are playing important roles as Principal investigators or co-investigators on research grants and publications including: Dr. Duncan, Dr. Joyce O'Mahoney, Star Mahara, Steve Ross, and adjunct faculty member Dr. Rod Mac Cormac and principle Investigator Dr. Wendy Hulko. Examples of proposals and publications related to Aboriginal Peoples include: a) Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal peoples; b) comprehensive school health approaches for prevention of diabetes and obesity in first nations communities; c) a community consultation with Aboriginal peoples in Alberta to develop culturally appropriate access indicators in urgent care; d) culturally safe dementia care: building nursing capacity to work with First Nation Elders; e) a collaboration between TRU students and Conayt friendship society to enhance mental health and wellness among Aboriginal peoples; f) culturally safe dementia care: building nursing capacity to care for First Nations Elderly with memory loss; g) From research to practice: developing and evaluating a nursing education program on culturally safe dementia care for Secwepemc nation elders; h) increasing the capacity of nurses to care for elders with memory loss in North and South Secwepemc communities: geographic differences (symposium); and i) Conayt: BScN Student immersion in rural Aboriginal Nursing Practice .

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

The School of Nursing continues to recruit Aboriginal faculty to our campus and anticipate that by end of 2015 we will have 10% of our faculty of Aboriginal origin. Our



new faculty member, Dr. Darlene Sanderson's research addresses Indigenous people, water health and climate change. Sheila Blackstock's work looks at addressing quality of work-life: Examining Horizontal Bullying Behaviors in Nursing. We look forward to two additional Aboriginal faculty members joining our team in 2016.

Our Faculty are committed to working in partnership with other TRU faculty to develop an Aboriginal Health Research Center that addresses important research issues.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

The Aboriginal Pathways to Health Program is an excellent example of working to enhance Aboriginal students' success in accessing health related programs. This program continues to provide meaningful outcomes for students by providing strategic supports through tutors, while working with the Gathering Place and faculty.

Where we came from

- Program started in 2010
- Designed to improve outcomes for and reduce attrition in Aboriginal students in health related programs
- Contextually – building on success of Aboriginal initiatives within the school of nursing. SFU was closing programs in the community in 2010 and was looking at ways to continue a support in the Kamloops community

Where we are today

- Fall 2015 we have 15 students enrolled in the program
- What we currently offer:
  - Individual assessment and planning
  - Tutor support – individual and weekly group meetings
  - Books and supply funding
  - Bursary
  - Connection to campus resources – Cplul'kw'ten, financial aid, writing centre, etc.
- Student success
  - Fall 2015 - 3 students successfully applied and were accepted to the TRU BSN program
  - Fall 2015 - 1 student has started first year BSc studies with plans to transfer to UBC for the Dietician program
  - 1 student is applying to the January 2016 HCA program

Where we are going

- Continuing the program
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Partnerships on campus
- Connecting with the community

Thompson Rivers University also runs an annual Aboriginal Science and Health Science summer camp. As part of the camp, high school age students are given opportunities to learn first-hand about careers in health sciences (including medicine nursing, respiratory therapy, medical laboratory technology, etc.) and natural sciences (chemistry, ethnobotany, microbiology, etc.). In addition, students live on campus and learn about campus life and university activities.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 28: LAW SCHOOLS**

“We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken by law programs to:**

- a) Teach students about Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations; and**
- b) Provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

TRU Law adopted a position statement on July 9<sup>th</sup> welcoming the findings and Calls for Action, and particularly # 28 [see: <http://law.inside.tru.ca/2015/07/09/tru-law-statement-on-the-findings-of-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission/> ]

TRU Law has a survey underway of all of its courses to identify which courses include some elements of consideration of Canadian, comparative and international law aspects of Aboriginal legal issues and related material from other disciplines. Our preliminary conclusion is that over 2/3 of our compulsory 1<sup>st</sup> year JD courses and over 1/3 of our upper year courses encompass such material to varying degrees. We also have 3 upper year elective courses that focus solely on the matters identified in Call for Action # 28. We also participate each year in the Kawashimon Aboriginal Law Moot hosted by a Canadian law school for which our 5 student mooters receive academic credit.

We also have been conducting an annual one-day field trip for all 1<sup>st</sup> year students to the former Kamloops Indian Residential School each year in conjunction with the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation to focus on residential schools and the continuing effects of its racist legacy. This year our Orientation Week for new students included a ½ day field trip to Pipsell (Jacko) Lake with presentations from representatives of the 2 local First Nations who recently filed a claim of aboriginal title over the Lake.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

The Faculty is currently considering what additional steps to take to further implement our commitment and how to operationalize such intentions.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

We believe that one of the most important things we can do in addressing the key elements of TRC Call for Action # 28 is to interweave the issues, relevant reading materials, and in-class discussions in as many distinct courses as possible throughout the entire curriculum, especially those core courses that are required enrolment for all law students, and not merely in one compulsory course. While we will consider the benefits of adding such a required course, we also wish to focus energy on developing methods of providing experiential learning regarding “intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism” in various ways.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 57: EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS**

“We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken by public administration programs to:**

- a) Teach students of Public Policy/Administration about Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations; and**
- b) Provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

TRU’s certificate in Aboriginal Studies provides a potential opportunity for public servants to develop a much broader understanding of the history, culture and politics of the indigenous peoples of Canada.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

The proposed degree in Aboriginal Leadership under development at TRU is expected to be of interest to public servants at all levels of government as well as the First-Nations themselves.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

## **TRC CALLS TO ACTION 62 AND 63: TEACHER EDUCATION**

**Note: no response necessary if Teacher Education programs have already responded to the FNESC/IAHLA/ABCDE survey, unless there are additional items that the institution wishes to include.**

“We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to ... ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.”

“We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including ... ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history. iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken by teacher education programs to:**

- a) Educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms;**
- b) Share information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history; and**
- c) Build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

- Integration of First Nation content into all Bachelor of Education courses
- Required course: Teaching First Nations Children
- Practicum placements on reserves
- The Developmental Term Standard Certificate provides leadership development in First Nation language education
- Bachelor of Education in STEM includes a major focus on First Nations principles and practices.
- Faculty – Three indigenous full Professors

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

Enhance partnerships with First Nations, increase Aboriginal student participation and retention (including MEd, research, and Indigenous faculty recruitment)

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

## TRC CALL TO ACTION 65: RESEARCH ON RECONCILIATION (Overall)

“For reconciliation to thrive in the coming years, it will also be necessary for federal, provincial, and territorial governments, universities, and funding agencies to invest in and support new research on reconciliation. Over the course of the Commission’s work, a wide range of research projects across the country have examined the meaning, concepts, and practices of reconciliation. Yet, there remains much to learn about the circumstances and conditions in which reconciliation either fails or flourishes. Equally important, there are rich insights into healing and reconciliation that emerge from the research process itself.” (p. 292)

### **Please describe any specific actions already taken to support research on reconciliation.**

- Research: *All My Relations* – community-based First Nations approaches to mental health, well-being and healing. An indigenous research and development research project.
- CRC Chair (Tier II) in Indigenising Higher Education – application submitted and the outcome will be known in Spring 2016.
- The research of TRU anthropologist Dr. Lisa Cooke takes an ethnographic approach to historic and contemporary indigenous-settler relations with a focus on how these relations play out with respect to land, territoriality and place. By providing important insights and building greater understanding, research of this type is foundational for reconciliation.

### **Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

One of the five strategic research themes for TRU is **Aboriginal Understanding**.

#### **From TRU’s Strategic Research Plan:**

Woven throughout TRU’s strategic research themes is an awareness of the importance of place, relationships with community and, in particular, a mandate for awareness, appreciation, and cooperation with Aboriginal communities. Because of its size, structure, and evolution, TRU is uniquely situated to cultivate relationships that encourage community involvement and facilitate community-based and community-driven research. These strengths are already realized through strong reciprocal relationships that have been established between the institution and a preponderance of Aboriginal groups and bands, including the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, the Secwepemc Cultural and Education Society, the Secwepemc Health Caucus, the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council, Q’wemtsín Health Society, and the Aboriginal Friendship Society. While recognizing that research on and employing Aboriginal Understanding has implications for all areas of scholarship, TRU has made the strategic



decision to identify it as a priority area for capacity building and knowledge mobilization. The University has received national and provincial recognition and funding for its work on the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal language, culture, and history; on establishing protocols for the ownership of cultural knowledge; and on how traditional knowledge and practices have been found to enhance biodiversity and ensure environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically sustainable development. TRU's researchers are exploring questions of territorial authority, Aboriginal tourism, workforce mentoring, Aboriginal languages and literature, dementia care, and culturally safe health. In support of this area, TRU has created an endowed BC Innovation Chair, has committed to an annual Interior Research Forum on Aboriginal issues, and is working toward the establishment of a Centre for Aboriginal Research. In addition, the University recognizes the importance of increasing its complement of Indigenous scholars—to strengthen the credibility and capacity of this research theme.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- Thompson Rivers University is committed to research related to education for reconciliation and we have embedded this in our Aboriginal Service and Academic plans.

## TRC CALL TO ACTION 86: JOURNALISM/ MEDIA SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

“We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already taken by journalism and media programs to teach students about the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. (Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

Although more can and will be done, perspectives of First-Nations, Metis and Inuit communities and indigenous ways of thinking are already incorporated into many of the courses in Communications and New Media and Journalism and form a key part of the course in Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

As part of the broad program and degree review process underway in the Faculty of Arts, our programs in Journalism and Communications and New Media will examine structural changes that assure that students have specialized courses relating to indigenous history and culture in the BC and Canadian context. Following the TRC Report, the Department of Journalism, Communications and New Media is formulating a proposal for a position in Aboriginal journalism.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

- Thomson Rivers University will continue to have an Aboriginal Journalism student create an Aboriginal newsletter every year.
- Our Thompson Rivers University Aboriginal Education Newsletter helps educate our campus on education for reconciliation.

## TRC CALL TO ACTION 92: BUSINESS SCHOOLS

“We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

**Please describe specific actions (including courses or programs, services and initiatives) already undertaken by business programs to:**

- a) **Teach students about the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations; and**
- b) **Provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.**

**(Please be as specific as possible; for example, whether specific courses contain this content and whether those courses are elective or mandatory courses, or whether this content has been incorporated throughout the curriculum.)**

a.)The School of Business and Economics (SOBE) has introduced a number of original programs relating to First Nation self-governance and economic development. In partnership with the TULO Centre and the First Nations Taxation Commission, SOBE offers a Certificate in First Nations Taxation and a Certificate in First Nations Applied Economics. TULO and SOBE are also considering the introduction of a third certificate relating to First Nations land claims. These programs ladder directly into a proposed Diploma in First Nation Taxation and Development, which in turn ladders into SOBE’s Bachelor of Public Administration with no loss of credit. The BPA is delivered in association with the University of Victoria and will offer a new specialization in First Nation’s Governance and Administration beginning in Fall 2016 subject to funding.

SOBE has established laddering agreements with the Aboriginal Financial Officers (AFOA) of Canada and their Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager (CAFM) and new

Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator (CAPA) professional designations. Graduates of these programs can ladder into TRU's Bachelor of Business Administration if they are interested in becoming a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) or the Bachelor of Public Administration if they are interested in First Nations self-governance and administration. These programs are available both on campus and online.

SOBE is an active member of UBC's Ch'nook Scholars program. This year (2015/2016) we have three Ch'nook Scholars.

Finally, SOBE's Department of Economics offers two courses relating largely or in part to First Nations self-governance and development issues:

**ECON 2630 Issues in Aboriginal Economics**

Students investigate issues related to Aboriginal self-governance and economic development. Topics include the economic rationale for implementing aboriginal rights and titles; the economic explanation for income differences between First Nations and non-First Nations; the First Nations public sector; market failures and successes of First Nations; approaches to First Nations economic development; and government policy initiatives to improve First Nations economies, including a third order of government for aboriginal peoples.

**ECON 3690 Community Economic Development**

Students investigate methods for effectively using local community resources to enhance economic opportunities while improving social conditions in a sustainable way. Topics include the theoretical basis for community economic development (CED), analytical techniques used to assess communities, environmental sustainability objectives for community development, competing strategies of community development, financing development strategies, and CED activity in Canada and other nations.

- b) SOBE's Bachelor of Business Administration graduates over 200 students per year and is TRU's largest degree program. The degree has two core courses that emphasize many of the issues raised in Action 92: MNGT 3710-Business Ethics and Society and IBUS 3510-International Business.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to this recommendation.**

Rob: See earlier comment on our Canada Research Chair (CRC) nominee

In accordance with its Strategic Plan, SOBE is conducting a review of the curriculum in its Bachelor of Business Administration relating to aboriginal issues and attempting to implement new topics that better address many of the points raised in Action 92.

In addition, we are currently planning to host the Spring 2016 Ch'nook Scholars conference. TRU Aboriginal Education and the TRU School of Business & Economics

will strategically plan this event during this academic year. The curricula to this Ch'nook event will be relevant to education for reconciliation.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding this recommendation.**

SOBE puts considerable emphasis on Aboriginal issues in its strategic planning process. As part of its 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, SOBE has adopted two Value Statements that support the TRC Call to Action 92.

**Life-long Learning, Inclusivity**

The School is dedicated to serving the life-long educational needs of regional, national, international and Aboriginal learners through inclusive and accessible programs.

**Ethics, Social Responsibility and Sustainability**

The School recognizes the importance of students, faculty and administrators being ethically and socially responsible and committed to community service while valuing sustainability in their decision-making roles.

SOBE's Strategic Plan has also established a Strategic Goal relating to Aboriginal Education, which states:

**Aboriginal Education**

The School will provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for Aboriginal students to help them attain their education goals and career ambitions. To accomplish this goal, we will:

1. Establish partnership agreements with institutions focusing on Aboriginal education.
2. Assist Aboriginal communities and organizations in the academic preparation of students.
3. Incorporate Aboriginal related curriculum in courses where appropriate.
4. Expand programs related to Aboriginal economic development and self-governance.
5. Increase involvement in campus-based Aboriginal support services and activities.
6. Offer professional development activities for faculty relating to Aboriginal student issues.

## **TRC CALL TO ACTION 93: NEWCOMERS TO CANADA**

“We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.”

**Please describe specific actions or resources already developed to give international students a better understanding of First Nations people in British Columbia.**

There is at this point in time, there is nothing pan-institutional for international students; it is all program specific. TRU Aboriginal Education works in partnership with TRU World to make sure that International students learn about Aboriginal ways. Specific events include Aboriginal Awareness Week, Orientation and Pow-Wow.

**Please describe any future plans to respond to give international students a better understanding of First Nations people in British Columbia.**

As part of International Student Orientation, TRU World will work the Office of the Executive Director, Aboriginal Education and the Elders to develop a bespoke key component of orientation dedicated to offer international students insight into a better understanding of First Nations people in British Columbia.

**Please identify any leading practices or lessons learned that can be shared regarding providing international students with a better understanding of First Nations people in British Columbia.**

- Aboriginal Education and Cplul'kw'ten Gathering Place works in partnership with TRU World to host experiential events for International students. International students correspond, interact and learn about Aboriginal cultures, history and ceremonies.

## **OTHER**

**Please use this space to describe any other initiatives your institution has undertaken that advance the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**

**This space can also be used by other faculties and programs not already identified in the questionnaire to summarize changes that have been made to teach their students about the history of Aboriginal peoples or to provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.**

Since 2010 Thompson Rivers University has been offering a program to increase the success of Aboriginal students interested in pursuing post-secondary education. With the cooperation of School District 73, eligible high school students have been given the chance to take a customized suite of university courses for both high school and university credit. Students who complete all of their graduation requirements in the first term of their grade 12 year can register to take first-year TRU courses in English, Biology, and Mathematics. Each course has been designed explicitly to highlight Aboriginal Knowledge and Understanding, as well as Creative Writing and Thinking. Explicit attention was also given to providing Aboriginal mentors and support services for the students. Conscious effort was made by coordinating assignments to link the curriculum across the three courses. The program has experienced high rates of student academic success, attributable in part to the learning community that was intentionally developed.