

TRU WORLD: INTO THE NEXT DECADE

A GROWTH STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

Between 2006 and 2015 TRU faces the prospect of a 15% decline in domestic student enrolments, the result of a decrease in the size of the critical 18 to 24 year old cohort. As a consequence, unless means are found of maintaining or growing enrolments, the university will be faced with program and service reductions and staff and faculty lay-offs. Since all regions of Canada (with the exception of the Vancouver and Toronto regions) are faced with the same population dynamics we can expect competition for domestic students to be fierce. However, by expanding international student enrolments, increasing offshore activity levels and international contract activity the university will be able to generate sufficient funds to offset the decline in domestic student enrolments, increase the range of programs and services it offers to all students, and ensure that its domestic students are well equipped to compete in a global economy.

TRU World's Contribution to the University's Core Values and Goals

The current strategic plan for the university identifies a number of core values that drive the institution's activities. These core values also inform TRU World's work, providing a firm, guiding context for the unit's efforts. For example:

- TRU World's gold-plated student support and service focus is built on its commitment to the university's core value of 'Learner Centredness.'
- 'Accessibility' is the key value that drives TRU's international education efforts to reach out to adult learners around the world through traditional and distance delivery methods.
- Through its commitment to TRU's core value of 'Quality of Education and Service' TRU World has become recognized as one of the most effective international education support units in Canada.
- TRU World's focus on internationalization of the curriculum and the campus is driven by its commitment to the institution's core value of 'Responsiveness.'
- 'Comprehensiveness' provides the backdrop to TRU World's efforts to market and promote the full range of TRU offerings to prospective students across the world.
- TRU World's efforts to create a welcoming and integrative environment for international students is deeply informed by the university's dedication to creating and maintaining a 'Sense of Community.'
- The university's 'Accountability' value motivates TRU World to work hard to maximize the financial benefits flowing from international education for the betterment of students, staff and the institution as a whole.
- As part of TRU World's commitment to 'Environmental Responsibility' it strives to limit its environmental footprint as much as possible within the context of its world-

wide operations and to promote TRU programs that focus on the environment.

- The university's 'Quality of Work Place' informs TRU World's efforts to provide a first class physical work environment and a wide range of opportunities for the personal and professional growth of both its direct employees and of the faculty with which it works.

The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan focuses on establishing TRU as the "University of Choice" in the context of seven broad themes. TRU World is able to make contributions all seven of those themes:

- **Student Engagement** – through supporting the university's efforts to become world citizens; by providing study abroad opportunities; by supporting the involvement of international students in university decision-making; and by creating a welcoming and integrative campus environment for overseas students.
- **Integration of Research and Scholarship with Teaching and Learning** – by providing opportunities for faculty to conduct research overseas and by supporting professional development aimed at internationalization of the curriculum.
- **Aboriginal Students and First Nations** – by collaborating with local First Nations to build business and cultural links with overseas indigenous groups and by providing training and education services for overseas indigenous communities.
- **Open Learning** – by working with Open Learning to promote the delivery of courses overseas and to develop hybrid delivery systems for TRU programs overseas.
- **Environmental Sustainability** – by developing partnerships focusing on environmental stewardship and sustainability and through the promotion of TRU's environmental programs overseas.
- **International Opportunities** – by further expanding overseas operations, increasing international student enrolments on campus, and by continuing to develop student support services across campus and around the world.
- **Career Success** – through continued support for the internationalization of the curriculum TRU World is able to contribute to ensuring that TRU graduates are equipped to compete in a global economy.

TRU World: Thirty Years of Progress and Growth

TRU World has been able to build a first class brand image for the university across the world. As a result, TRU now has a strong reputation for providing first class education and training – from ESL and university preparatory courses, to vocational and technical training, to undergraduate and post-graduate education, to specialized contract training services. In addition, the university is recognized – again, world-wide – for having a gold-plated student service and support system for international students. So strong is this brand image and reputation that TRU World's staff are constantly being approached by other Canadian institutions to share with them the secrets of TRU's success!

Currently, TRU has one of the largest international education program in the province and, indeed, in Canada as a whole. Moreover, the university is recognized on a national level as being one of the leading innovators in the field of international education. This success has been the result of thirty years of progress, innovation and growth led by the staff of TRU World. From a handful of ESL students in 1989, TRU's international education efforts now comprise:

- 1200 FTE international students on-campus.
- 1000 students enrolled in accredited programs overseas.
- Up to 600 international students in campus based and offshore contract training courses.
- A network of agents and recruitment events providing TRU with a presence in over 180 cities around the world.
- Generation of \$17+ million of revenue in 2008/09 from tuition and contract fees.

Annually, some \$7.4 million of the total revenue from international education is transferred to academic divisions to fund approximately 70 academic faculty positions, positions that provide education and training services to both international and domestic students. While there is no question that TRU's international education activities creates additional spaces for domestic students that otherwise would not be available it is difficult to quantify the exact number of seats because of the shifting demand pattern for international student course enrollments. What is clear, however, is that the success of TRU World has enabled the university to self-fund the International Building, a structure that provides office space for the School of Business and Economics and computer labs and state of the art lecture theatres for the use of both domestic and international students.

In addition, over 300 spaces are available annually for domestic students to take part in semester-length study abroad opportunities through about 50 sister institutions across the world. A further 200 students take part in overseas field schools each year. These overseas study opportunities are matched by a strong emphasis on internationalization of the curriculum and campuses. In this latter context, TRU World, in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, has provided leadership through such activities as: the development of diversity and intercultural workshops for faculty and staff; the creation of resources for faculty involved in introducing international perspectives into their teaching; and the provision of a wide range of activities aimed at promoting international understanding among domestic students. Moreover, TRU faculty have been able to access numerous opportunities to teach and conduct research overseas. Collectively, these initiatives are aimed at increasing the ability of TRU's domestic students to compete effectively in today's global economy.

TRU World has also been instrumental in the field of regional economic development. For example, the local economic impact of TRU World is estimated to be over \$50 million (this includes the multiplier effect of TRU's local expenditures on international education, and student accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, and travel

expenditures). Also, the unit has assisted the City of Kamloops develop two missions to China and the (then) President and Cyndi McLeod, the associate vice president responsible for TRU World, accompanied the Premier on economic development missions to both China and India. In addition, TRU World has brought local companies together with international partners, worked with both Kamloops Indian Band and School District 73 on international projects, and is currently assisting Venture Kamloops with international market development.

Opportunities

1. Student Services, Student Retention, and Market Development

Despite the current economic conditions, all indicators suggest that there will continue to be a strong world-wide demand in the international education sector. This demand, coupled with the high level of brand recognition for TRU World, will mean that over the next five years we would target to increase on-campus international student enrolments from the current 1200 FTE to 2000 FTE per annum. This expansion would enable the university to counter the financial, programmatic, and staffing implications of the pending domestic demographic decline. Indeed, the expansion would permit TRU to maintain and potentially increase the variety and range of its offerings available to domestic students. It would also enable the number of faculty funded through TRU World's efforts to rise from 70 FTE to 120 FTE, thus offsetting the potential impact on staffing due to the projected decline in domestic enrollments. If this expansion is deemed warranted, a consultative process will be launched to determine how the university could best meet this goal. Since there are multiple potential paths for increasing international student enrolments, a consultative process would help determine what mix of approaches to expansion would be appropriate at TRU. Potential pathways to reaching the enrolment goal include:

- Building direct recruitment to the TRU campus.
- Increasing recruitment to affiliate institutions so that TRU receives more students on campus through 2+2 and 3+1 TRU degree programs.
- Development of innovative approaches to teaching international students at TRU that could help accommodate the increased number of international enrollments.
- Increasing the number of dual degree programs with partner institutions.
- Increasing retention by strengthening university preparatory activities and by expanding student services aimed at international students.
- Expanding on-campus contract training activities.

TRU World will continue to build the TRU brand in what will be an increasingly competitive international marketplace. However, in order to maintain TRU's competitive advantage and enhance its strong brand image it will be necessary to continue to support and expand the university's gold-plate student services system as overseas enrolments expand. It should be noted that because of TRU's existing national and international

reputation in the field of international education, and because of its strong brand recognition, unsolicited project, affiliation, and partnership proposals are regularly received by TRU World. Clearly, an opportunity exists to capitalize on such proposals, thereby generating more net income to support the academic enterprise's key function – the provision of service and support to domestic students.

2. Increasing Benefits to Domestic Students and Faculty

By substantially increasing international student enrolments, TRU will not only be able to protect the comprehensive range of programs and services it already provides for domestic students but it will also be able to bring those students additional benefits. At a time when other institutions will be reducing services and programs, TRU will be able to position itself as offering a comprehensive range of educational and training vehicles within the milieu of an 'international university' – one which can bring considerable benefits to its students in the context of a global economy. These expanded benefits would include:

- Significantly increasing study abroad arrangements and providing funding for these activities through TRU World revenues.
- Increasing opportunities to join overseas research projects mounted by TRU faculty in cooperation with overseas partner institutions.
- Expanded overseas faculty exchanges resulting in exposure of domestic students to different world views and discipline perspectives.
- Further developing dual degree programs similar to that, for example, with the University of Gävle in Sweden. These arrangements provide the graduate with degrees from both universities and involve a period studying abroad.

3. Contract Opportunities – Off-shore and in Canada

As suggested earlier, because of its stellar international reputation numerous contract and offshore delivery opportunities are now available to TRU, opportunities that are capable of providing significant additional net revenues. However, if TRU World is to maximize these opportunities it must do so in ways that protect the university's reputation and the quality of its programs. Any such expansion must also ensure that each new project is financially viable, supported by an independent business case, and in compliance with recently approved signing authority policy. The university is a diverse institution with multiple ways of delivering education and training. By maximizing the institution's delivery flexibility it will be possible to provide significant support for the institution's efforts to maintain and improve programming, service and support for domestic students.

Contract training activity, in particular, could be a strong generator of net revenue.

Overheads associated with this kind of delivery tend to be relatively low when compared with regular international student recruitment, support and education. TRU is well positioned to expand this arena of activity given its strong brand image and its exemplary delivery record. These types of contracts could take a variety of forms – for example, from teacher training, to tourism development, to skilled trades training, to health services development – and could be delivered on-campus, overseas, or elsewhere in Canada. Other options exist for the development of contracts that would see TRU operating a university campus overseas (for example, in the Middle East or in Africa). An overseas campus would act as a feeder for our home institution. In addition, it would provide a TRU venue for those students experiencing difficulties getting a visa for entrance into Canada. It should be noted, however, that an overseas campus may not necessarily concentrate on traditional university programs since there is a growing demand for trades and vocational programming in developing countries.

Clearly, there is an important role for Open Learning in flexible off-shore delivery. TRU World is already working closely with Open Learning but the potential for expansion under the TRU brand is significant. However, the focus would be not on promoting pure distance delivery in what is a highly competitive environment but on various hybrid delivery systems, often in concert with affiliate institutions. For example, programs could be offered with a mix of distance and face-to-face course delivery (with the distance courses supported by tutorials), with students receiving a guarantee of on-campus enrolment at TRU should they meet the appropriate standards.

Finally, as part of TRU's world-wide brand development, the university would continue its social and economic development initiatives. While generally revenue neutral, international development projects (for example, TRU's nurse training activities in Nepal and the Roma Project in the Slovak Republic) add significantly to TRU's international reputation and are an important promotional tool for both the domestic and international markets. Such projects, funded through grants from development agencies, are part of TRU's humanitarian and global responsibility. They also provide opportunities for faculty to engage with NGOs and for students to engage in service learning.