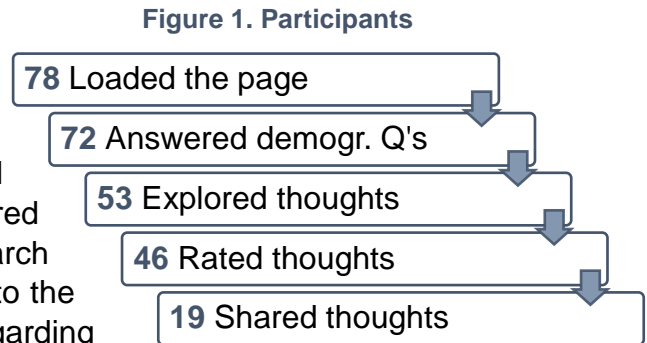


CONSULTATION REPORT

Raising awareness and working together among the top two strategies for creating mutually beneficial relationships

In March 2019, Thompson Rivers University started conducting consultations, through *Envision TRU*, in an effort to inform a new vision for the institution. This process—which aims to be as transparent, inclusive, and authentic as possible—is based on the idea of shared learning and will continue to operate until the end of March 2020. The following report is a summary of responses to the third consultation question, and presents information regarding participation, top thoughts, and key actions.

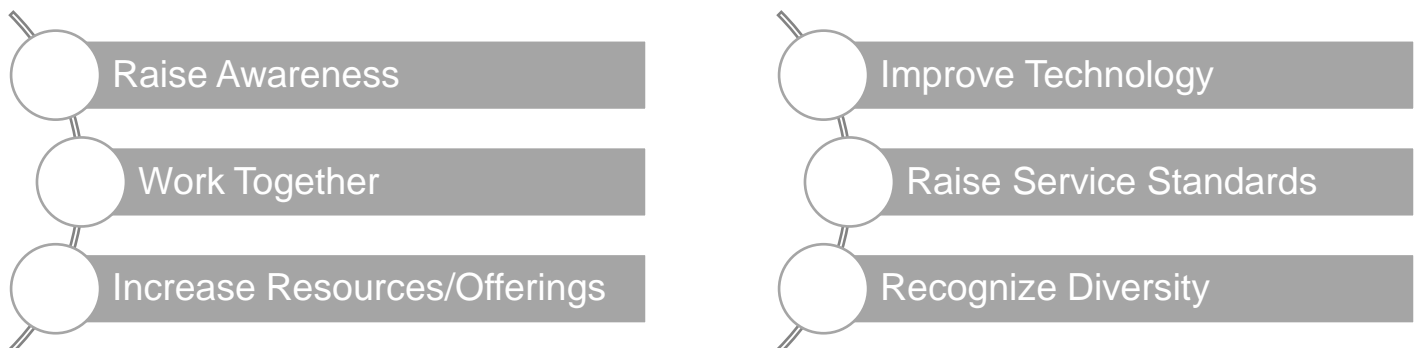


Thoughtexchange is an online platform that brings people together to anonymously share and communicate thoughts about a given subject and rank those that have already been submitted by others. This exchange (May 13 to May 24) asked participants:

What activities, initiatives, or strategies will create mutually beneficial relationships between Williams Lake staff/faculty and other TRU employees?

In total, 78 students, faculty, and staff participated in this event (Figure 1). Thirty thoughts were shared and contributed to the discussion, while 528 rankings provided insight into community agreement regarding those issues and ultimately formed the basis for the key actions (Figure 2). The largest group of participants was staff/admin (54), followed by on-campus faculty members (6).

Figure 2. Key Actions



Top Thoughts

The top two thoughts from this exchange were:

“Stronger/Lead administrator/leader on the WL Campus that can bridge [the gap] between faculty and staff at both campuses. Academic and Administration need to work closely together to make sure both sides of the house are in agreement and communicate better with Kamloops”

“It would be highly beneficial if a real effort is made to keep Williams Lake staff aware of all of the issues that arise on campus and vice versa. Often decisions seem to be made that do not take the concerns of WL staff into account, and this is because they are not well known.”

Collaboration- & Awareness-Driven

A frequency analysis (Figure 3) of terms, within the 30 thoughts that were shared, revealed that supporting employees to collaborate and raising awareness were a central focus of this discussion, which was also reflected in the top two thoughts.

Figure 3. Word Cloud



Diverse Perspectives

While participants generally seemed to agree that working together and raising awareness were the top priorities, what this looked like in practice varied by stakeholder groups. For example, top thoughts for faculty members also emphasized recognizing diversity and increasing resources/offerings, while students tended to be more general in their ratings ranking each of the six key actions equally.

To read all of the top thoughts and explore each of the key actions from this exchange, please visit the [online report](#), provided by Thoughtexchange.

Key Actions

Raise Awareness

Raising awareness about the daily goings-on of both campuses was recognized as being key to creating mutually beneficial relationships. Needing to take into account the concerns of Williams Lake staff was also emphasized, as well as continuing recruitment efforts for Indigenous students.

“More awareness of what is happening on WL campus at Kamloops campus, vice versa. (...)”

“(...) Often decisions seem to be made that do not take the concerns of WL staff into account, and this is because they are not well known.”

Increase Resources/Offerings

Increasing resources was strongly related to working together. Participants observed that, while there are a number of services that can support Williams Lake, a champion might be necessary to direct students to the supports and services available. Positive thoughts included increases in opportunities for joint training and professional development.

“WL requires an additional staff(s) that are dedicated to student services (...)”

“more joint training and professional development across locations” [sic]

Work Together

Participants generally agreed that a collaborative culture strengthens all ties between campuses, promotes close relationships, and enhances student learning. Working together was also recognized in helping to break down silos and bridge gaps.

“Research collaborations among WL and Kamloops faculty will strengthen relationships and enhance student opportunities for out-of-class learning. (...)”

“(...) Break down the silo between OL and Campus. If we can blend courses we can reach WL as well. We have too many tiers of faculty members”

Improve Technology

Improving technology was discussed primarily in relation to leveraging the opportunities that TRU can provide to facilitate collaborations and build dynamic learning environments. While a majority of participants agreed that most of TRU’s current systems were good, there were particular areas suggested for improvement.

“leverage open learning and moodle and build collaborative classes. WL needs flexibility and variety (...)” [sic]

“BlueJeans and the OL127 iTV system is good (when they work) but (...) The ability to connect to remote locations is not just needed btwn faculty + students in classroom. Admin/staff also must collaborate to organize.” [sic]

Key Actions (cont.)**Raise Service Standards**

Participants tended to agree that universities are inherently a teaching-focused, social enterprise. Raising service standards and improving teaching quality were identified as a challenge, while bringing unity to TRU's procedures was suggested as a way to decrease instances of misunderstanding and time wasted.

“make procedures universal for all campuses and regional centres (...)”

“Professors with higher ratings should be retained and those with negative ratings should be trained, (...)”

Recognize Diversity

Comments around diversity involved more than just continuing to recognize it, but also working to explore and deliver on TRU's commitment to serving the educational needs of various students. More help in integration and inclusion was also recommended.

“WL students needs are similar and different from kamloops and OL students (...)” [sic]

“More activities should be designed to showcase and help students to interact and integrate Canadian culture and attitudes in it's all facets.”