THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Institutional Mission Fulfilment Report
2017/18

Submitted by
Accreditation Steering Committee

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Executive Summary

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) is committed to the education and training needs of the region, and open learning needs of British Columbia. As stated in the *Thompson Rivers University Act*, the University must promote teaching excellence, engage in research and scholarly activities, and employ the use of open learning methods while offering baccalaureate and master's degree programs, and adult basic education and training.

The TRU mission statement upholds the University's values and priorities and serves to guide all initiatives at the university:

> *TRU is a comprehensive, learner-centred, environmentally responsible institution that serves its regional, national, and international learners and their communities through high quality and flexible education, training, research, and scholarship.*

A goal of TRU is to achieve Mission Fulfilment, which is defined in terms of the four (4) core themes which are derived from TRU's mission statement and strategic priorities:

- Intercultural Understanding
- Research
- Student Success
- Sustainability

TRU has defined Mission Fulfilment to be achieved when 70% of the indicators related to the outcomes for each Core Theme are "achieved" or "minimally achieved."

During the 2018 reporting cycle, 13 out of 19 indicators were minimally achieved or achieved.

Annual Assessment of Core Theme Mission Fulfilment Planning and Evaluation Process

Background

As part of TRU's candidacy for accreditation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges & Universities (NWCCU), we are required to report on Mission Fulfilment. The process involves defining Mission Fulfilment at TRU and articulating measurable institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold of Mission Fulfilment. NWCCU describes the designation of accreditation status as "recognition that an institution's own purpose is soundly conceived, that its educational programs have been intelligently devised, and that its structure, resources, and programs support and result in substantial accomplishment of the institution's stated purpose.[i]"

TRU's Mission Fulfilment is defined in terms of the four (4) Core Themes which represent TRU's values as stated in our mission. These core themes are derived from the *Strategic Priorities* and act as beacons for our journey towards Mission Fulfilment.

In spring 2018 the work of the Core Theme Teams transitioned to relevant Standing Committees of Senate. Details regarding the committees' core theme evaluation and planning responsibilities, as referenced in the revised terms of reference, were approved at the April 23, 2018 meeting of Senate.

Embedding the Core Themes into TRU's existing collegial governance structure was an important step to support integrated and strategic planning across the University. While accreditation served as the catalyst for the initial core theme planning, to see meaningful improvement and to have superior impact, greater pan-institutional consultation was necessary. In light of this, the 2018 reporting cycle incorporated varying degrees of collaboration between the original Core Theme Teams and Standing Committees of Senate. In the future, annual evaluation of the Core Themes in relation to Mission Fulfilment will be conducted by the designated Standing Committees of Senate.

Overview

A review of the Core Themes in relation to Mission Fulfilment is conducted annually. Core Theme Teams prepare a workbook which identifies, in light of the values of the indicators and the definition of Mission Fulfilment, how successful TRU was in fulfilling its mission for that core theme (see Appendices A through D for the completed 2018 Core Theme Workbooks).

The annual timeline for evaluation and planning is as follows:

- May 1 - June 30
  Core theme teams perform the annual assessment of Mission Fulfilment and planning process and submit a Core Theme Workbook to the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) on June 30.

- July 1 - July 31
  ALO compiles data from Core Theme Workbooks and produces an Annual Institutional Mission Fulfilment Report on August 1.
- August 1 – August 31
  ASC reviews Annual Institutional Mission Fulfilment Report by August 31.
- September 1 – September 31
  Broad distribution of Annual Institutional Mission Fulfilment Report to Academic Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate, Senate, Planning Council for Open Learning, Board of Governors, and posted publicly to TRU's website.

Definitions

The Mission Fulfilment Framework is based on setting objectives, outcomes, indicators, and mission fulfilment threshold ranges.

- Objective   A principal goal of the core theme which supports achievement of Mission Fulfilment.

- Outcome   What will occur when we achieve our objective.

- Indicator   Used to e

- valuate and measure progress towards the outcome.

- Mission Fulfilment Range   Shows the progress towards achieving the outcome.

- Mission Fulfilment   Achieved when 70% of the indicators (for each core theme) are "Achieved" or "Minimally Achieved".

Each indicator has three (3) Mission Fulfilment threshold ranges:

Achieved
The indicator has increased/decreased by a fixed percentage or value in line with the expectation of Mission Fulfilment.

Minimally Achieved
The percentage or value of the indicator is holding at, or close to the current level.

Not Achieved
The indicator value has decreased/increased by a fixed percentage or value.

Evaluation and Planning

The review involves three (3) components: 1) analysis of the data for each outcome; 2) assessment of each indicator in light of the Mission Fulfilment threshold; and 3) planning of services and programs related to the core theme for the following year.

Once the evidence has been gathered and the achievement of Mission Fulfilment assessed, planning for improvement occurs. Actions to guide continuous quality improvement, including identifying necessary resources and divisional oversight, are then prepared.

Summary of Achievement by Core Theme

Overview

TRU has defined Mission Fulfilment to be achieved when 70% of the indicators related to the outcomes for each Core Theme are "achieved" or "minimally achieved."

During the 2018 reporting cycle, 13 out of 19 indicators were minimally achieved or achieved. See Table 1 for a summary of institutional Mission Fulfilment.

Planning for improvement will include additional resources for data collection, increased involvement of key stakeholders, and refinement of the indicators, in addition to other strategies as detailed in each of the Core Theme Workbooks (see Appendices).

As 2018 marks the first year that TRU has undergone such a review, the impact of improvement initiatives will become more evident in the 2019 reporting cycle.

Table 1: Summary of Institutional Mission Fulfillment

Core Theme	Indicators Measured	Indicators Achieved or Minimally Achieved	% Achieved or Minimally Achieved
Intercultural Understanding	4	1	25%
Research	2(4)*	2	100%
Student Success	9(10)*	7	78%
Sustainability	4	3	75%
Institutional Mission Fulfilment	19(22)*	13	68.4%

*Refers to the number of indicators measured for the 2018 reporting cycle versus the total number of indicators articulated for the Core Theme.

Intercultural Understanding

Summary

For the 2018 reporting cycle, the core theme Intercultural Understanding achieved or minimally achieved 25% of the indicators measured.

Table 2: Mission Fulfilment Range – Intercultural Understanding

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value	Current Value
	Achieved	**Minimally Achieved**	**Not Achieved**		
1.1 Student perceptions of inclusion and opportunities for intercultural learning, as indicated by NSSE scores of 4th year students.	>2% improvement	≥2% improvement	decrease	64% (2014)	62.6%
2.1 Three year average number of enrolments in courses or programs with Indigenous, international, or intercultural content.	Increase in average	Maintain average	Decrease in average	2,732 (2014/15 – 2016/17)	2,630
2.2 Participation in workshops with an intercultural or Indigenous focus, such as Intercultural Development, Interculturalizing/Indigenizing the Curriculum.	Increase in average	Maintain average	Decrease in average	1,377 (2015/16)	2,921
2.3 Number of students, staff, and faculty accessing mobility programs (rolling average over 5 years).	Increase in average	Maintain average	Decrease in average	165.5	152.5

Discussion

One of the primary barriers to the success of this core theme is the lack of a consistent tracking system for measuring the indicators. With additional resources for data collection and improved collaborations with faculties and schools to identify courses, a more accurate measurement of the indicators will be possible.

To increase the success of this core theme into 2019, improvement plans call for the following:

- Increase consultation and collaboration with faculties and schools to encourage employee and student participation in intercultural activities and courses;
- Increase resources to hire trained facilitators and subject matter experts;
- Identify existing TRU courses which meet intercultural understanding learning outcomes; and,
- Develop more field schools and study abroad opportunities.

After reviewing the data collected to measure their indicators, the Intercultural Understanding core theme team revised their indicators to include more accessible and relevant data sources.

As shown in Table 2, the indicator value for 1.1 dropped from the prior year by 1.4%. Currently, the indicator is measured as the average score of five (5) NSSE questions. The decrease occurred in one question only, thereby affecting the total value. As such, a slight change is suggested for the threshold range for indicator 1.1 to allow for variation within individual questions without affecting overall achievement.

Indicator 2.1 was also updated to include the additional measurement of the number of students earning TRU's Global Competency Certificate (a 1-credit course with clearly articulated learning outcomes assessed by qualified faculty members). In 2018, the total number of students who earned the credential amounted to 22; however, this figure is not calculated into the total for indicator 2.1 shown in Table 1, but will begin to be included in the data in 2019.

In addition, an adjustment was made to the data measured for indicator 2.3. Specifically, faculty member participation in international conferences was removed as TRU does not have a consistent method for tracking this indicator. The numbers for the prior years were subsequently adjusted and a new average was used for analysis to reflect this new methodology.

Finally, the five (5) year targets were refined to reflect more realistic targets based on results from the 2018 reporting cycle.

While not noted in the Intercultural Understanding Workbook, the proposed model for general education curriculum at TRU, if approved, will positively impact the core theme Intercultural Understanding. Firstly, the proposed model, which is based on institutional learning outcomes (ILO), requires that all baccalaureate students complete a course for each of the following learning outcomes:

- *A TRU graduate should be able to recognize and respect the value of diverse cultural worldviews, including one's own.*
- *A TRU graduate should be able to recognize and respect the value of Indigenous knowledges and ways.*

Secondly, students will be required to complete one high impact practice (HIP) within their first two (2) years of study, which may include field schools and study abroad. By making the ILOs and HIPs mandatory requirements for degree completion, TRU should see a significant increase in indicators 1.1, 2.1, and 2.3. Thirdly, the General Education Taskforce (or a designated standing committee of Senate), in consultation with faculties and schools, will be tasked with identifying existing TRU courses which meet each of the ILOs. This will support the development of a consistent tracking system for measuring the indicators for this core theme.

Research

Summary
For the 2018 reporting cycle, the core theme Research achieved or minimally achieved 100% of the indicators measured.

Table 3: Mission Fulfilment Range - Research

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value	Current Value
	Achieved	**Minimally Achieved**	**Not Achieved**		
1.1 Percentage of active tri-partite faculty holding external funding (contract and grant)	≥3% increase	-1% to 3% change	-1% or more decrease	24%	28%
1.2 Total dollar amount of tri-agency grants and external contracts	≥$600,000 increase	$0 - $600,000 increase	decrease	$2.3M	$4.3M
2.1 Number of peer-reviewed publications, scholarly works, exhibitions and other creative works per faculty member as a percentage of total tri-partite faculty (3 year rolling average)	Not calculated			Not calculated	320 works/160 tri-partite faculty (2 per faculty member)

Indicator \# and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value	Current Value
	Achieved	Minimally Achieved	Not Achieved		
3.1 Number of Community Citations Score, as measured by the total of references in external media, annual reports, policy documents, newsletters and the number of community held forums reporting research results and activities to participants, stakeholders and knowledge users	Not calculated			Not calculated	A survey instrument is under development

Discussion

Similar to the core theme Intercultural Understanding, measuring Mission Fulfillment for Research is obstructed by the lack of a consistent tracking system for measuring all of the indicators. With additional resources for data collection and improved collaborations with faculties and schools to report on publications and knowledge mobilization, a more accurate measurement of the indicators will be possible in the future.

For the two (2) indicators TRU was able to report on, the improvements over the prior year were tremendous. This is due to the continuation of conferences and events, monthly newsletters, individual faculty meetings, celebrating Research Day, and student research training; as well as, innovative programs such as a research apprenticeship program, research orientation breakfast, and Research Week, to name a few. The total dollar amount of grants and contracts increased by an impressive $2 million, largely due to the addition of four (4) Canada Research Chairs and an Industrial Research Chair, as well as an increase in larger applications, community-based research projects, and the growth in Mitacs.

Following a review of their indicators, the Research core theme made several changes to their framework. One of the most profound of which, was in noting the indicator-bias towards faculty research. As a result, they introduced a fourth outcome, *4.0 Undergraduate students engage in research activities,* and identified four (4) potential emerging indicators to track during the 2018/19 academic year prior to selecting the most relevant.

To increase the success of this core theme into 2019, improvement plans call for the following:
- Improve data collection and reporting on publications and knowledge mobilization;
- Refine survey instruments to gather data on community citations as a measure of community impact; and,

- Increase funding and resource allocation at the institutional level to support the following initiatives:
  - Expansion of the Tri-University Research Coalition;
  - MOUs with the City of Kamloops, United Way, Social Innovation, and Kamloops ChangeLab;
  - Introduction of an academic writing retreat; and
  - Other projects and workshops to stimulate research activities.

Research also highlighted the potential for the proposed general education model to positively impact indicator results, specifically the emerging indicator for undergraduate student knowledge mobilization activities. The proposed model of general education prescribes that all baccalaureate students complete a course which meets the following ILO:

- *A TRU graduate should be able to construct meaning from information by applying creative and critical thinking through research.*

In addition, research and mentoring opportunities with faculty members often meet the criteria for a HIP.

Student Success

Summary
For the 2018 reporting cycle, the core theme Student Success achieved or minimally achieved 78% of the indicators measured.

Table 4: Mission Fulfilment Range – Student Success

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value*	Current Value
	Achieved	**Minimally Achieved**	**Not Achieved**		
1.1 NSSE module on advising	>2.7	2.5 – 2.7	<2.5	2.772 (2014)	2.733 (2017)
1.2 CUSC data for first year students regarding satisfaction with the registration process. CW: Satisfaction with getting into courses you wanted.	n/a	n/a	n/a	CW: 86% SAT: 79% (2016)	n/a (next survey in 2019)

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value*	Current Value
	Achieved	Minimally Achieved	Not Achieved		
SAT: Satisfaction with the process for registering for courses.					
1.3 Two to four year open program conversion rate.	>1% increase	0 – 1% increase	Decrease	39% (2015)	35% (2016)
1.4 Two to four year open program fall 1 to fall 2 retention rate.	>1% increase	0 – 1% increase	Decrease	54% (2015)	55% (2016)
1.5 Two to four year selective program conversion rate.	>0% increase	No change	Decrease	81% (2015)	83% (2016)
1.6 Two to four year selective program fall 1 to fall 2 retention rate.	>1% increase	0 – 1% increase	Decrease	88% (2015)	88% (2016)
2.1 NSSE data on student participation in HIPs.	n/a	n/a	n/a	First Year: 8% (2014) Fourth Year: 64% (2014)	First Year: 8% (2017) Fourth Year: 59% (2017)
2.2 Enrolments in undergraduate curricular offerings that include HIPs.	1300	1200 – 1300	<1200	1,243 (2015/16) 1,231 (2016/17)	1,410 (2017/18)
3.1 NSSE module on civic engagement.	≥5.0	4.5 – 4.9	<4.5	No data	First Year: 5.0 (2017) Fourth Year: 5.2 (2017)
3.2 Graduate employment outcomes.	n/a	n/a	n/a	89% (2015) 89% (2016)	91% (2017)

*Achievement values need reconsideration.

Discussion

The core theme Student Success was largely successful in achieving Mission Fulfilment, seeing slight improvements in retention, graduate employment outcomes, and enrolments in high impact practices (HIP). While positive advances were made, the core theme team recognizes a disparity between increased applications versus overall retention rates. Greater brand recognition due to recruitment efforts and the implementation of a provincial application portal (EduPlanner) likely contributed to the number of applications TRU received; however, more work needs to be done to improve retention and advising.

To increase the success of this core theme into 2019, improvement plans call for the following:

- Improve advising continuity with the implementation of web-based software;
- Acquire external consulting services to advance the development and management of the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan;
- Create a Centre for Career and Experiential Learning to increase faculty member and student awareness of co-curriculars and HIPs; and,
- Create a learning community of faculty members who teach first year courses.

After reviewing the Mission Fulfilment threshold ranges, and in consultation with Integrated Planning & Effectiveness (IPE), minor changes were made as data sources were refined and historical values adjusted. Five (5) year targets were also identified where none previously existed.

Finally, students will be required to complete one HIP within their first two (2) years of study should the proposed model of general education be implemented at TRU. As a result, TRU should see a significant increase in the results for indicators 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1 for the core theme Student Success.

Sustainability

Summary
For the 2018 reporting cycle, the core theme Sustainability achieved or minimally achieved 75% of the indicators measured.

Table 5: Mission Fulfilment Range – Sustainability

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value (2015)	Current Value
	Achieved	**Minimally Achieved**	**Not Achieved**		
1.1 STARS score (Operations category: air & climate, buildings, energy, food & dining, grounds, purchasing, transportation, waste, and water).	≥1 point increase	Increase up to 1 point	Decrease	31.23	50.8

Indicator # and descriptor	Mission Fulfilment Threshold Ranges			Prior Year Value (2015)	Current Value
	Achieved	Minimally Achieved	Not Achieved		
1.2 STARS score (Engagement category: campus engagement and public engagement).	≥2 point increase	Increase up to 2 points	Decrease	29.53	36
1.3 STARS score (Academic category: curriculum and research).	≥4 point increase	Increase up to 4 points	Decrease	31.23	37
1.4 STARS score (Planning & Administration category: coordination & planning, diversity & affordability, investment, and wellbeing & work).	≥1 point increase	Increase up to 1 point	decrease	24.33	22.09

Discussion

Overall, the core theme Sustainability was successful in achieving its threshold for Mission Fulfillment. The greatest achievements were due to improvements in operations; however, opportunities still exist, such as outsourcing local food products, and developing a water conservation plan.

To increase the success of this core theme into 2019, improvement plans call for the following:
- Develop sustainable food purchasing guidelines;
- Develop a water conservation plan;
- Develop a community volunteer program for students;
- Develop an open-access portal for faculty members to share their research;
- Require all students to complete a course which meets a sustainability learning outcome;
- Develop a policy to outline community stakeholder engagement; and
- Develop living wage guidelines for contractors.

There is potential for the proposed general education model to positively impact indicator results, specifically indicator 1.3. The proposed model of general education prescribes that all baccalaureate students complete a course which meets the following ILO:

- *A TRU graduate should be able to critically evaluate and apply socially responsible, sustainable, and ethical behaviours.*

In addition, students may choose to take a service learning or community-based course to meet the HIP requirement which has potential to improve the results for indicator 1.2.

Following a review of the indicators, Sustainability confirmed the relevance of the STARS reporting framework for this core theme; however, noted that, as we approach Platinum rating for some of the indicators, attaining each additional point will become more difficult.

[i] Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. *Accreditation Handbook, January 2017 Edition.* Retrieved from http://www.nwccu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Accreditation-Handbook-2017-edition.pdf