

# TRU STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN



# STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT

## COVID-19 context and short-term priorities

December 2020

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had unprecedented impacts on all aspects of society, including postsecondary education. Rapid shifts to new educational delivery models, access to enabling technology, family finances, travel bans, bureau closures and many other factors have created obstacles, and in many cases barriers, for students seeking to pursue their educational goals.

TRU's strategic enrolment management plan identifies our desired future state of enrolment with a ten-year horizon, along with key factors relating to recruitment, retention and student success that influence and shape our enrolment. However, it is necessary to acknowledge and account for the highly unusual current state we are in as we chart our path to 2030.

With 2019/20 as our pre-COVID baseline, we now know fall 2020 enrolment has seen a 10% to 15% decrease which is expected to prevail and possibly decrease further through winter 2021. It is reasonable to expect that restoring enrolment to pre-COVID levels or higher will be largely dependent on an effective and widely accessible vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. While this timeline remains unknown, we can anticipate related impacts on enrolment for the next 3 to 5 years.

Our immediate enrolment priorities need to focus on mitigating further loss to enrolment and recovering to pre-COVID levels. Strategies relating to SEM goals and objectives should continue to focus on connecting with and supporting students primarily in virtual learning and service environments.

Without pause, we must also consider SEM goals and objectives in the context of how we can best and safely support and serve students in a prolonged COVID-19 environment that may see increasing return to face-to-face engagement on campus, increased hybrid delivery models, etc., while we continue to adjust and learn how to live with COVID-19. Our new normal is fluid, and we cannot stand still.

Further, we will remain optimistic for an eventual post-COVID environment. It will be important for us to learn from this disruption and from the ways in which we've adapted and innovated during this time. Our best foot forward will most certainly not be to simply return to our pre-COVID practices.



Michael Bluhm

Associate Vice-President Strategic Enrolment & University Registrar

# TRU Strategic Enrolment Management Plan

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We acknowledge and give honour to the Secwépemc, the ancestral peoples who have lived here for thousands of years. We honour our First House, on whose unceded land our Kamloops campus is located: Tk'émłúps te Secwépemc, and respect our Second House: Tixelc, on whose unceded land our Williams Lake campus is located. In addition we recognize and respect neighbouring Indigenous nations whom we serve — the St'át'imc, Nlaka'pamux, Nuxalk, Tšilhqot'in, Dakelh, and Métis. Our understanding of TRU's obligations to our hosts is informed by the guidance of interior BC Indigenous leaders to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1910.



# Overview

## What is Strategic Enrolment Management?

Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a planning practice centred on expressing an institution's overarching strategic priorities in terms of the optimal number and mix of students enrolled, and seeks to align enrolment with the values of the organisation.

SEM prompts consideration of the many variables – both academic and administrative – across an institution that impact a student's experience and progress toward pursuing their educational goals, and ultimately their decision and/or ability to enrol and/or remain enrolled.

As such, enrolment goals are defined and pursued through collaborative planning and action, fostering alignment of curriculum, delivery, processes and services with institutional priorities and values.

## Purpose

With the above understanding of Strategic Enrolment Management, the purpose of TRU's SEM plan is to:

- a. Articulate a long-term vision of enrolment that is reflective of our mandate, mission, vision, values, strategic change goals, and resources
- b. Identify enrolment goals and measurable objectives aligned with our desired future state
- c. Enact an organisational framework for ongoing and collaborative enrolment planning, action and analysis

The SEM plan serves to orient the efforts of academic and administrative divisions toward common enrolment outcomes, and to foster collaborative approaches to achieving identified enrolment objectives.

## Scope

The SEM plan takes into consideration all domestic and international student enrolment in developmental, vocational, undergraduate and graduate academic courses and programs on all campuses/centres and through Open Learning as well as enrolment in continuing education courses and programs.

While this range of enrolment activity contributes to TRU's overall enrolment, the SEM plan is not intended to serve as a comprehensive strategic plan for each academic level, location and/or method of delivery, etc.

The SEM plan complements other institutional strategic planning efforts such as the Open Learning Strategic Plan, Strategic Research Plan, People Plan, etc., ultimately serving TRU's overall integrated strategic planning.

# Institutional background and mandate

## Institutional Background

Thompson Rivers University's history extends back to 1970 when the provincial government created Cariboo College to better serve the post-secondary needs of our region within the BC interior. Cariboo College enrolled almost 600 students that year.

In 1978, while not connected to Cariboo College at the time, the provincial government created the Open Learning Institute, later to become the Open Learning Agency, which operated out of BC's lower mainland and served students throughout the province with postsecondary options delivered at a distance.

In 1991, Cariboo College officially became University College of the Cariboo. UCC offered degree programs under the oversight of the province's three universities at that time. By 1995, UCC was given its own independent degree-granting authority, and by 2002 had begun offering graduate programs, too.

In 2005, the paths of UCC and the OLA merged. UCC and the BC Open University, a branch of OLA, became Thompson Rivers University. In 2018, TRU achieved accreditation with the Northwest Commission on College and Universities (NWCCU).

Today, Thompson Rivers University serves more than 30,000 students a year from over 100 countries around the world, operates across two campuses, five regional centres, and at a distance through Open Learning, and offers continuing and developmental education, trades, undergraduate, graduate and professional programs.

## TRU's Mandate – The Thompson Rivers University Act

In 2005, the province of British Columbia granted full university status to Thompson Rivers University and drafted the TRU Act, outlining specific purposes for TRU. The TRU Act reads as follows:

1. The purposes of the university are
  - i. to offer baccalaureate and masters degree programs,
  - ii. to offer post-secondary and adult basic education and training,
  - iii. to undertake and maintain research and scholarly activities for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b), and
  - iv. to provide an open learning educational credit bank for students.
2. The university must promote teaching excellence and the use of open learning methods.
3. In carrying out its purposes, the university must serve
  - i. the educational and training needs in the region specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and
  - ii. the open learning needs of British Columbia.

# Foundations for SEM planning

In the spring of 2020, Thompson Rivers University's new **Vision Statement** — including Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Change Goals — was endorsed and approved by the university's three governance bodies: the Planning Council of Open Learning, Senate and Board of Governors.

## Our mission

TRU is a comprehensive, learner-centred, sustainable university that serves its regional, national, and international learners and their communities through high quality and flexible education, training, research and scholarship.

## Our vision

Community-minded with a global conscience, we boldly redefine the university as a place of belonging — Kw'seltktnéws (we are all related and interconnected with nature, each other, and all things) — where all people are empowered to transform themselves, their communities, and the world.

## Our values

Respectful relations define our behaviour. We respect each other (Xyemstwécw), the land, knowledge, the peoples of our region and beyond.

- **Inclusion and Diversity.** Access is open: we welcome students, faculty, staff and communities from our region and around the world to learn from and with one another. We embrace diversity of thought and people. We commit to equity. We continually see the world and its inhabitants in new ways by re-examining our practices and their impacts.
- **Community-Mindedness.** We come together to help one another (Pelkwaílč-kt es knucwentwécw-kt). Mutual benefit guides us to connect meaningfully with people in the communities we serve, contributing to an interconnected world where we all share a common future and humanity.
- **Curiosity.** We seek out new ideas and embrace change, understanding they may involve risks. We break paths with creative, critical, yet thoughtful purpose. We push boundaries as a university and encourage students, faculty, staff, and the community to do the same.
- **Sustainability.** The natural world inspires us with wonder and reverence. We recognize how the health of our societies, cultures and ecosystems rests upon wellness of people, biodiversity, and wise stewardship of precious and finite resources. As a world leader in sustainability we know that the well-being of generations to come is shaped by what we do today.

## Our 10-year strategic change goals

- **Eliminate achievement gaps.** We will support students of all backgrounds to access and succeed in higher education. All groups in our region — including Indigenous learners and rural learners — will achieve in higher education on par with others. We will recruit and retain students to create a balanced community of learners and leaders reflective of Canada and the world.
- **Honour truth, reconciliation and rights.** We will nurture a flourishing relationship with the Secwépemc people on whose lands we reside. Members of our community will give exceptional consideration to Secwépemc world view and belief system. We will support thriving Secwépemc culture through respectful actions in research, teaching and service. Our campuses will honour our First House: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, respect our Second House: Tixelc, acknowledge the many Nations who live and work on and near these lands, and support provincial, national and global movements for the fulfillment and recognition of Indigenous rights.
- **Lead in community research and scholarship.** We will support all faculty members in knowledge-seeking, knowledge creation, and creative inquiry. We will earn recognition as the most committed and innovative university in Canada for research and scholarship based on community partnerships; for involving graduate students in community-centred research; and for undergraduate research training.
- **Design lifelong learning.** We will adapt and combine modes of learning, teaching, and practical experience to create a seamless and integrated set of educational encounters that meet the changing needs of learners from early childhood to elderly years. We will design the map on which individual learners can chart their personal journeys to develop relevant knowledge when they need it, in the forms they can best access, while starting, stopping and returning as often as they need.

We acknowledge and give honour to the Secwépemc, the ancestral peoples who have lived here for thousands of years. We honour our First House, on whose unceded land our Kamloops campus is located: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, and respect our Second House: Tixelc, on whose unceded land our Williams Lake campus is located. In addition we recognize and respect neighbouring Indigenous nations whom we serve — the St'át'imc, Nlaka'pamux, Nuxalk, Tsilhqot'in, Dakelh, and Métis. Our understanding of TRU's obligations to our hosts is informed by the guidance of interior BC Indigenous leaders to [Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1910](#).

# Principles for enrolment planning at TRU

TRU's mandate, mission, vision, values and strategic change goals encompass a set of principles to inform our strategic enrolment planning.

## **Learner-centred**

Students are able to access programs and courses that are relevant for them in a way that suits their needs and learning styles. Successful educational outcomes are paramount.

## **Inclusive and diverse**

Access is open with minimal barriers to entry, progression and attainment. Students enrol from our local region, from across the province, from across Canada, and from around the world in relative balance. All students are welcomed with a sense of belonging.

## **Community-minded**

Educational activity and outcomes serve the social, environmental and economic needs of our communities. Students living, working, and learning within our region add value.

## **Sustainable**

Enrolment levels ensure that available resources align with resources needed to support student success.

## **Responsive**

The postsecondary landscape, and our enrolment activity from prospective students to graduates, are actively monitored and inform our work. Risks are anticipated and understood.



# Enrolment composition

In light of our enrolment planning principles, during the next 10 years we aim to create an accessible academic community with a relative balance of students enrolling from regional, provincial, national and international origins:

- We aim to have domestic learners comprise 75% - 80%, and international learners comprise 20% - 25%, of our overall annual enrolment inclusive of all levels, locations and modes of delivery.
- Among our domestic enrolment, we aim to meet the educational needs within our immediate regions – Kamloops, Williams Lake, and surrounding communities – comprising 35% - 40% of our annual domestic enrolment.
- In addition, we aim to enrol learners from other regions within BC – an additional 45% - 50% of our annual domestic enrolment, and learners from across Canada – the remaining 15% - 20% of our annual domestic enrolment.
- Further, we aim to serve Indigenous learners from our First House: Tkémlúps te Secwépemc, our Second House: Tixelc, and other neighbouring Indigenous nations, such that Indigenous learners represent 15% or more of our annual domestic enrolment.
- Among our international enrolment, we aim to balance a diversity of learners from around the world and across all academic areas. While welcoming students from as many countries as possible, up to 35% of TRU's annual international enrolment may be from any one country, and up to 40% of annual enrolment in any one faculty at TRU may be international students.



# Enrolment Goals and Objectives

Guided by our principles, our desired enrolment composition, and a firm understanding of our current state of enrolment, five goals have been established that categorize where change is needed most.

Specific and measurable objectives relating to student recruitment, retention, progression and educational outcomes are then identified within each goal.

**GOAL # 1: STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC STUDENT ENROLMENT**

**GOAL # 2: IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS**

**GOAL # 3: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLMENT GROWTH**

**GOAL # 4: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED BY THE WILLIAMS LAKE CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING**

**GOAL # 5: IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS STUDYING THROUGH OPEN LEARNING**



## **GOAL # 1: STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC STUDENT ENROLMENT**

In order to achieve the goal of strengthening domestic student enrolment, we will pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase the direct-from-high school postsecondary participation rate in the Kamloops region while maintaining the rate at which regional high school graduates who directly transition to postsecondary enrol at TRU; achieve participation rate on par with provincial average; maintain 85% market share
- b. Proportionately increase new student enrolment from other regions in BC and Canada to maintain desired domestic composition while meeting 100% of BC government enrolment targets
- c. Improve the rate at which domestic students continue to enroll at TRU after their first year (i.e. retention); reach a retention rate of 60% or greater in open programs
- d. Increase the overall domestic student successful course completion rate in 1000-level courses to 80% or greater

## **GOAL # 2: IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS**

In order to achieve the goal of improving educational outcomes for Indigenous Students, we will pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase the proportion of incoming domestic students who self-identify as Indigenous; 15% or greater on Kamloops campus; 25% or greater on Williams Lake campus
- b. Improve the rate at which Indigenous students continue to enroll at TRU after their first year (i.e. retention); reach a retention rate of 60% or greater in open programs, on par with non-Indigenous students
- c. Increase the Indigenous student successful course completion rate in 1000-level courses to 80% or greater, on par with non-Indigenous students
- d. Increase the proportion of Indigenous students who are awarded TRU credentials at all academic levels; increase 6-year credential completion rate to 60% or greater, on par with non-Indigenous students

## **GOAL # 3: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLMENT GROWTH**

In order to achieve the goal of ensuring sustainable international student enrolment growth, we will pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase new international student enrolment to sustain overall fall and winter campus-based international enrolment at 4,000 students per semester, accounting for a 3- to 5-year impact on international student mobility due to COVID-19
- b. Once desired international enrolment levels are reached, diversify international student enrolment to reach and sustain no more than 35% by country of origin and no more than 40% of any faculty's total enrolment annually
- c. Increase the rate at which international students continue to enroll at TRU after their first year (i.e. retention); reach and maintain a retention rate of 60% in open programs
- d. Increase the international student successful course completion rate in 1000-level courses to 80% or greater

#### **GOAL # 4: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED BY THE WILLIAMS LAKE CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMING**

In order to achieve the goal increasing the number of students served by the Williams Lake campus and community-based programming, we will pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase direct-from-high school postsecondary participation rates in the Williams Lake and surrounding regions; achieve participation rates on par with provincial average
- b. Increase the rate at which regional high school graduates who directly transition to postsecondary enrol at TRU; reach and maintain rate of 75%
- c. Improve the rate at which students continue to enrol at TRU after their first year, or first registration, at the Williams Lake campus or in community-based programming; reach and maintain a re-enrolment rate of 35% or greater

#### **GOAL # 5: IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS STUDYING THROUGH OPEN LEARNING**

In order to achieve the goal of improving educational outcomes for students studying through Open Learning, we will pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase successful course completion rates in 1000-level courses to 80% or greater for domestic, international, and Indigenous learners accessing courses through Open Learning
- b. Reduce the length of time taken to complete courses and programs through Open Learning;
  - i. reach and maintain a course extension rate of 20% or less
  - ii. reach and maintain a 10-year credential completion rate of 30% or greater

# Outcomes for Students

During the process of identifying TRU's enrolment goals and objectives, the SEM team gathered hundreds of points of feedback from students, faculty and staff regarding the issues and challenges TRU faces with respect to enrolment and student success. This input from the TRU community was sorted and structured into five themes reflecting our desired SEM outcomes.

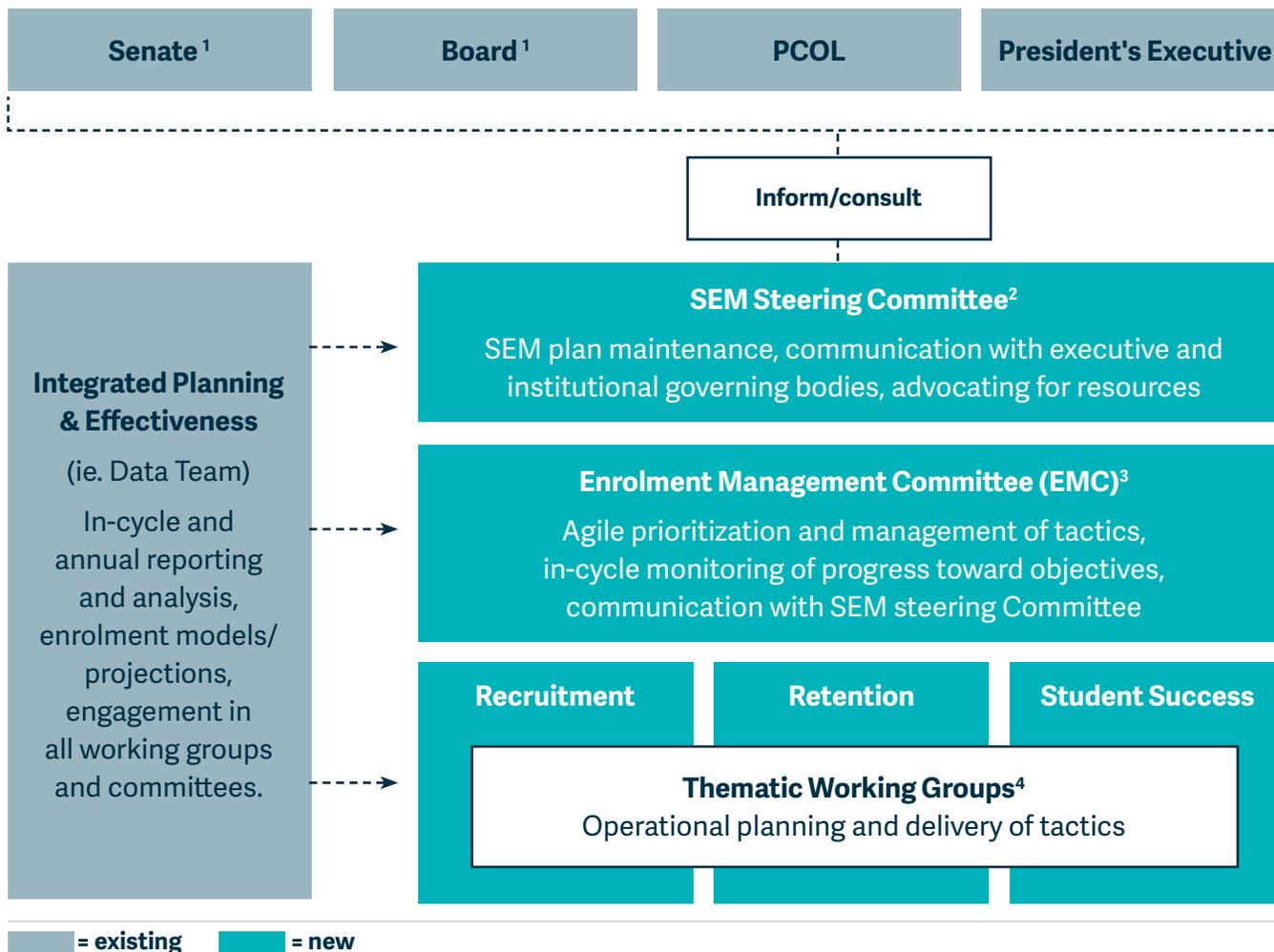
The outcome statements are indicative of the experience students should expect when engaging in their learning at TRU. These statements, as well as the rich repository of feedback gathered during the process, provide direction for tactics and initiatives aimed at achieving our enrolment goals and objectives.

## SEM OUTCOMES

- 1. Curriculum, Teaching, & Delivery**  
Programs and courses are accessible to the students we serve, delivered through high-quality teaching and learning practices, and lead to positive graduate outcomes
- 2. Academic Supports**  
Students are met with the services, resources and support they need for academic success respectful of their starting point and individual goals
- 3. Non-academic Supports**  
Non-academic support services integrate with the learning environment and foster diversity, inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students
- 4. Culture of Service**  
People, processes, and systems anticipate students' needs and are responsive through high-quality service relationships
- 5. Choosing TRU**  
TRU attracts and retains a diverse spectrum of learners, with a proven reputation for high-quality and accessible education

# Reaching our goals, objectives, and outcomes

## Organizational framework for ongoing and collaborative enrolment planning, action and analysis



### Notes:

1. Inaugural SEM plan and subsequent significant changes require approval by Board and Senate
2. SEM Steering Committee is small, with representation including but not limited to Provost, VP Finance, IPE, and each thematic goal area (domestic, Indigenous, international, Williams Lake + Regional Centres, Open Learning); meets quarterly
3. EMC is larger, with representation from all faculties/schools/divisions; meets monthly
4. Thematic working groups are sub-groups of EMC; meet as operationally needed

# Acknowledgements

In January 2019, TRU embarked on an initiative to develop a Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan. A SEM Planning Task Force was struck, and TRU acquired the services of AACRAO Consulting to assist us in the development of our plan. Together, the Task Force and consultants conducted more than 80 meetings, interviews, and outreach activities spanning many months of planning, research and reporting back to stakeholders. See appendix G for summary of SEM planning activity.

## TRU SEM PLANNING TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- **Michael Bluhm**, Associate Vice-President Strategic Enrolment and University Registrar (Chair)
- **Dr. Christine Bovis-Crossen**, Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research
- **Christine Adam**, Dean of Students
- **Sara Wolfe**, Acting Dean of Students (January 2020 – October 2020)
- **Lucille Gnanasihamany**, Associate Vice-President Marketing and Communications (former)
- **Darshan Lindsay**, Acting Associate Vice-President Marketing and Communications
- **Don Poirier**, Associate Vice-President Open Learning
- **Jan O'Brien**, Associate Director Integrated Planning and Effectiveness
- Administrative support provided by **Deborah Sproull**, Enrolment Services
- Project management support provided by **Andrea Hall**, IT Services

## AACRAO CONSULTANTS

- **Dr. Clayton Smith**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education  
University of Windsor, Windsor ON
- **Dr. Randy Weber**, Vice President of Student Success and Engagement  
Johnson County Community College, Overland Park KS

## Appendix A – SEM planning activity

DATE	ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE
January 2019	Introduction to SEM planning project	Provost's Council
	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	AACRAO SEM self-assessment survey	SEM Planning Task Force
February 2019	SEM planning communication and launch of website	TRU faculty, staff, and students
	AACRAO SEM consultants visit #1 – initial SEM assessment meetings	Registrar
		TRUSU Executive & Caucus
		SEM Planning Task Force
		President's Executive
		Faculty of Student Development
		Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
		TRU World
		Enrolment Services staff
		Enrolment Services management
		Open Learning management
		Marketing & Communications
	Dean's Council	
March 2019	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	SEM planning progress update	Dean's Council
	Launch of Thought Exchange online consultation tool	TRU faculty, staff and students
April 2019	SEM planning progress update	TRUSU Executive
	Planning update	AACRAO and SEM Planning Task Force
May 2019	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	AACRAO SEM consultants visit #2 – Stakeholder meetings and identifying issue statements	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
		President's Executive
		Williams Lake leadership
		Future Students team
		IT Services
		SEM Task Force
	Student Awards & Financial Aid	
	AACRAO SEM Core Concepts workshop	TRU faculty, staff and students
June 2019	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>
August 2019	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
September 2019	Interim report on SEM planning progress	President's Council
	SEM planning progress update	School of Education & Social Work
	AACRAO SEM consultants visit #3 – Strategies for goal development	Registrar
		Student Success Committee
		SEM Planning Task Force
		TRUSU Student Caucus
		Faculty Chairs group
		Focus on First Year working group
		Recruitment Working Group
		Campus community poster board sessions
		House of Learning
		Old Main
		International Building
October 2019	SEM planning progress update	Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
November 2019	SEM planning progress updates	Marketing & Communications
		Enrolment Services staff (x2)
		Leadership, Relationships, Alignment & Communications (LRAC)
		Faculty of Adventure, Culinary Arts & Tourism
		Faculty of Science
		TRU World
		Library Divisional Council
	Finance divisional managers	
December 2019	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	SEM planning progress updates	School of Nursing
		Faculty of Student Development
		Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
		School of Trades & Technology and Williams Lake
		Faculty of Arts
		IT Services

DATE	ACTIVITY	AUDIENCE
January 2020	SEM planning progress update	School of Business & Economics
	Indigenous SEM goal planning	Indigenous education campus leaders
February 2020	SEM planning goals and objectives workshop	Provost's Council and invited guests
	SEM project status update	Registrar, Project Manager, and AACRAO consultants
	SEM objectives data	Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	SEM planning progress update	Faculty of Law
March 2020	SEM planning progress update	TRUSU Student Caucus
May 2020	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
June 2020	SEM objectives data refinement	Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
July 2020	Indigenous SEM objectives	Indigenous education campus leaders
	International SEM objectives	TRU World leadership
	Open Learning SEM objectives	Open Learning leadership
	Williams Lake & Regional Centres SEM objectives	Williams Lake & Regional Centres leadership
August 2020	Task Force meeting	SEM Planning Task Force
	SEM planning progress update	TRU Indigenous Educators group
September 2020	Draft SEM plan consultation	Academic Planning & Priorities Committee
		Provost's Council
		President's Executive
October 2020	Finalizing SEM objectives and target data	Integrated Planning & Effectiveness
	Presentation of final draft SEM plan	Provost's Council
November 2020	Presentation of final draft SEM plan	President's Executive
		Academic Planning & Priorities Committee
		Senate (for approval)
		Planning Council for Open Learning
December 2020	Presentation of final draft SEM plan	Board of Governors (for approval)



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