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the Omega

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The Coyote Project

Advancing reconciliation through education and community initiatives

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

As Canada continues its journey towards truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities, multiple institutions across the country are stepping up to answer the call. Such a step was taken by Thompson Rivers University (TRU) through the Coyote Project, which aims to continue to foster cultural understanding and Indigenous education.

The Coyote project was launched at TRU in 2017 by Airini, the former dean of education and social work at TRU. She launched the project in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

As a part of these efforts, TRU is engaging its nine faculty departments, the TRU Library and Open Learning to prioritize inclusivity for all, especially the Indigenous community on campus.

Tina Matthew, executive director at TRU's Office of Indigenous Education, said what excites her most is how so many on campus are committed to decolonization and Indigenous "in so many ways."

The project has driven the development of various courses, programs and initiatives at TRU. Ted Gottfriedson, Secwépemc cultural

advisor, said the project's framework focuses on creating a more inclusive environment that respects and honours Indigenous traditions.

"The Coyote Project was also formed to assist faculties with Indigenous and how it works is that they get a certain amount of funding per year that can be used to Indigenous their programming," Gottfriedson said.

Several departments at TRU have advanced Indigenous through various initiatives as part of the Coyote Project.

The Bob Gaglardi School of Business and Economics developed a First Nation Applied Economic Certificate in collaboration with the Tulo Centre of Indigenous Economics and the First Nations Tax Commission.

The TRU Library has been proactively expanding Indigenous resources such as grammar books, word lists and children's books in the Secwépemctsín language in collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Education.

As part of the Coyote Project, the faculty of science has focused on increasing Indigenous student participation in science programs. They have hosted day trips to under-served communities and a five-day summer camp for Indigenous students, blending traditional knowledge with subjects like genetics, wildlife

management and respiratory therapy.

These are just a few of the initiatives across different departments at TRU to support Indigenous.

TRU Students can explore the diverse Indigenous programs offered at TRU including, but not limited to, Indigenous nursing, Indigenous trades, First Nation Applied Economics Certificate and an Indigenous studies certificate.

"Everyone on campus benefits from the Coyote Project because senior administrators, faculty and students will all be learning about what they can do in their respective areas regarding Indigenous and decolonization," Matthew said.

By collaborating with the Indigenous community and participating in Indigenous events such as Orange Shirt Day at TRU, the TRU community is gaining valuable insights that are contributing to an educational experience that is more holistic.

Looking ahead, the Coyote Project aims to achieve key success indicators.

"I am looking forward to the Coyote Project 10-year anniversary in 2027 to see how far we have come, the changes in Indigenous student participation and persistence rates, as well as the increase in partnerships and collaborations with Indigenous communities," Matthew said.

FAIZAL BUKHARI/THE OMEGA

Mélemstye, the wolf in local Secwépemctsín dialect, stands atop its boulder overlooking University Drive.

How to survive a Kamloops winter

ANNA MONTANER NEWS EDITOR

As winter fast approaches, it's time to prepare for the season of cozy nights and frosty mornings. That can be a challenge for international students bracing for their first Canadian winter.

From the struggle to stay warm indoors to the daily grind of navigating icy roads, it's essential to brace yourself for the realities of the season ahead.

While last year saw a warmer-than-normal winter, due to El Niño, the temperature dropped as low as -29 C in January.

According to the National Weather Service, El Niño refers to the above-average sea-surface temperatures that periodically develop across the east-central equatorial Pacific. It represents the warm phase of the ENSO cycle.

This year, most parts of Canada, including BC, will need to prepare for La Niña, the periodic cooling of sea-surface temperatures across the east-central equatorial Pacific. This will result in a cooler-than-normal winter.

The 2024-2025 Almanac

released its predictions for this winter, dubbing it "Winter with a heart of cold." While snowfall might be lighter than in other years, the publication states, the temperature will drop compared to last year.

With this in mind, students and faculty of TRU should brace for cold days and potentially slippery conditions.

Henry Chan of the Risk and Safety Services Department at TRU has worked to put together tips that will make this winter comfortable and safe for everyone.

"In the colder winter months, it is important to dress right, plan, and slow down to ensure your safety," Chan said, speaking on behalf of the department. "Stay warm indoors when possible and know when to stay home if weather conditions are too severe to travel outside."

Having a weather app ready before leaving a warm place is an excellent way to know if the clothes on hand will be enough for the temperatures outside. Footwear should

be another priority. What works best for all apparel are items that are warm and waterproof, and in the case of footwear, they have good traction to prevent slips on snow and ice.

When sidewalks are icy, rushing is not an option. Being mindful of steps can be the difference between arriving safely at your destination and risking injury.

"Slips, trips, and falls are the most common incidents during the winter months at TRU," Chan said. "Wear the right footwear and walk slowly."

Concerns about the safety of fellow students or conditions at TRU can be sent to safety@tru.ca or by submitting a "Hazard ID" through the TRU Safe App to report any areas that need snow clearing, de-icing, or attention by the Facilities team.

If you have any concerns about being safe while driving in icy and snowy conditions, ICBC has tips on winter driving.

Dressing right, planning and slowing down is the key to making it through the cold months uninjured.



Fall semester sees decline in international enrolment

HARSHIKA GUPTA CONTRIBUTOR

Students at Thompson Rivers University may be seeing a change on campus related to the number of their international peers enrolled this semester.

The decline in international student enrolment and the extent to which these changes impact TRU was made public during the Sept. 23 meeting of the TRU Senate.

According to President Brett Fairbairn's report to the senate, TRU's drop in international enrolment for the 2024/25 year sits at 45 per cent, a trend that is common nationwide. The changes to international study and post-graduate work permits announced by the Canadian government on Sept. 18 have led to TRU enacting new policies that reduced the number of applications the university accepted for the fall 24 semester and beyond.

Fairbairn's report says that TRU has implemented changes to its "recruitment

practices to come as close" as possible to its initial recruitment goals. These changes include the "shifting of [recruitment] to new markets and strengthening high school outreach."

"We are seeing a change in the major source countries. We will proactively go to regions and countries where they are less sensitive to these changes," said Baihua Chadwick, vice president international at TRU, in a recent interview with CFJC.

Angela Kujur, an international student from India discussed with the Omega how the decrease in permits has affected her family.

"My cousin wanted to enrol for this semester, [but could not] due to the changes in the policy and TRU accepting limited [international] students. It was challenging for him to look into other universities in B.C., as the universities are not accepting [as many] post-graduate

degree students," Kujur said.

For students like Kujur, TRU's reputation among international students for providing flexibility in courses and opportunities led them to opt for this university.

The changes further complicate international students' time abroad, as those new to Canada and university life often seek support, guidance, and assistance from their community, of whom there may be fewer members.

To help alleviate concerns, TRU has said that new international students will be assisted in connecting with diverse communities to overcome the culture shock they may face.

The university has reiterated its desire to be transparent and informative about policy changes by proactively informing current and future students about changes that could impact their decision to enrol at TRU.

Judge Michelle Stanford visits TRU

Celebrating Women's History Month with Judge Michelle Stanford

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

As a celebration of Women's History Month, TRU's Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism hosted Judge Michelle Stanford for a Lunch and Learn event on Oct 18.

The Honourable Judge Stanford made history as the first Black woman to serve on the bench in Kamloops. During the event, Stanford shared the story of her career journey, which included transitioning from a nurse to an administrative and criminal defense lawyer before finally becoming a provincial court judge.

Recounting how she was raised by a single mother of Irish descent in an ethnically diverse neighbourhood in East Vancouver, Stanford emphasized the role that her mother played in shaping her values of resilience, perseverance,

and strong work ethic.

"She was ahead of her time," Stanford reflected about her mother's determination to purchase a house during a time when women could not obtain mortgages without a male co-signer.

While Stanford initially took career advice from her mother to become a nurse, her career path took an unexpected trajectory when she met a lawyer who inspired her to pursue law.

After going to law school, multiple individuals advised her to pursue family law due to her identity as a woman. Despite people's suggestions, Stanford instead decided to pursue a career in criminal law, a male-dominated area within the legal system at that time.

"I enjoyed being the only female criminal defense lawyer for a number of years,"



Judge Michelle Stanford laughs as she engages with the audience during her presentation at TRU.

Stanford said. As time passed and Stanford gained more experience, she ultimately gained a reputation for her work in defending clients with mental health conditions and substance-use-related matters.

"Now, as a judge, they have to take me seriously, even though I squeak," Stanford joked, describing how she modified her speech to project authority as a woman in law.

Stanford also touched on the significance of being a Black

woman within the legal field. Growing up within an ethnically diverse but predominantly white community, she did not initially connect with her black identity for most of her life.

When Stanford entered the legal profession, she became more aware of the importance of representation. "I am living proof that if you see it, you can be it," Stanford said, emphasizing the slow but meaningful progress in advancing diversity within the judicial system.



Popular swimming courses here to stay

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

After a successful pilot project last year, TRUSU's Learn to Swim program continues in 2024 on the heels of a summer where multiple drownings took place in and around Kamloops.

Beginner swimming lessons at the Canada Aquatic Games Centre take place every Tuesday and Thursday of the semester and are open to all TRU students upon registration.

"It is a learn-to-swim program for students [who] do not know how to swim. We try to [schedule sessions] every

month, depending on availability," TRUSU Services Coordinator Simranjit Aulakh said.

Aulakh and TRUSU oversee the logistical components of the program – such as handling admissions, while TCC instructors provide lessons at the aquatic centre.

Enthusiasm in the pilot project version of this program led to TRUSU deciding to keep it a permanent fixture offered on campus each semester.

"The response that we got [...] was quite overwhelming. It indicated that there was a need for

something like this," Aulakh said.

According to Aulakh, the majority of participating students have been international.

"Many international students may not come from areas [with] access to open waters or even a swimming pool. So they [may] never get the opportunity to learn how to swim," Aulakh, a former international student himself, said.

Throughout the summer, there were multiple drowning-related incidents in the city, including one instance in July where a local man

helped rescue two struggling international students from the Thompson River.

"There have been unfortunate incidents wherein students have drowned here in the city. We definitely want to make sure such incidents do not happen, and this program has hopefully benefited students in that way," Aulakh said.

Participants are required to pay a \$50 deposit to register, the deposit is returned in full once students attend all 10 scheduled lessons during the semester.

COVID and flu shots coming to campus soon

Two small jabs can lessen the chances of contracting a respiratory illness this season

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH STAFF WRITER

As fall progresses and winter approaches, students at TRU look forward to autumn leaves and the excitement of festive holidays. However, they must also prepare for dropping temperatures and an increased risk of respiratory illnesses. Maintaining good health is essential for success in academics, friendships and work, making it a top priority for everyone on campus.

To safeguard the health of the community, TRU has taken the important step of hosting vaccination clinics around campus

for both flu and COVID-19. These clinics will serve as a vital resource for students, faculty, and staff alike.

Vaccinations will be administered in two convenient locations on campus: the Inclusion and Wellness Activity Room (OM 1522) and the Chappell Nursing and Population Health Building, Room NPH 160.

The next clinics will be held Nov. 5-6 and Nov. 12-15 to accommodate various class schedules. This setup minimizes disruption to daily routines while ensuring everyone can access vaccinations.

The process for receiving

the vaccine has been effectively streamlined. No appointment is necessary—simply walk in with your BC Services or Care Card, and you will be attended to promptly. In anticipation of the vaccination and to facilitate a smooth experience, it is recommended that you wear a short-sleeved shirt.

According to the IRCC, respiratory infectious diseases increase in fall and winter. While no “COVID season” has been officially established, elevated activity is expected during the coming months. The presence of COVID-19 can also

have compounding effects on the health of individuals suffering from other respiratory illnesses, like the flu.

By participating in these vaccination clinics, members of the TRU community can take important steps to protect their health and the health of those around them. Vaccinations not only reduce the risk of severe illnesses but also contribute to a safer environment for all on campus.

So don't miss out on this opportunity! Mark your calendars and join your fellow students and faculty in prioritizing their health this fall.



Board told TRU finances ‘redder than red’

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

A recent TRU report reveals that the university contributed over \$2 billion to the provincial economy during the last fiscal year. According to officials at the Oct. 4 Board of Governors meeting, this was shared at a time when spending needs to decrease due to future deficits that are otherwise expected.

TRU's regional impact report showed that the institution employed over 1600 employees during 2023-24, contributing an estimated \$885.5 million annually to the regional interior economy and \$2.2 billion for the province. Lightcast, a third-party consulting firm, created the report.

These figures include construction, student spending, operations, alumni contributions and other avenues that TRU affects.

“Beyond direct and indirect

economic impacts, TRU also enhances the livability and desirability of Kamloops and every community where a graduate settles,” TRU President Brett Fairbairn said.

While the university highlighted these positive findings, separate financial concerns were highlighted at the most recent university board meeting. Although the university's first-quarter forecast sees TRU projecting a surplus of \$5.5 million, things change in quarter two.

“Everything we expected to be true in March, when the board approved the budget, shifted dramatically,” explained Matt Milovick, TRU's vice president of administration and finance. “As we look into 2025-26, we're looking at deficits if we do nothing. And, of course, we won't do nothing — we will do something.”

These financial concerns

are linked heavily to declining student enrollments according to the president.

“Fees that the university gets from students are our largest category of income,” Fairbairn said. “TRU is substantially a student-financed educational institution, and changes in student numbers directly affect our finances.”

It's unclear what specific actions the university will take to ensure a balanced budget; however, various options are on the table. Fairbairn said that TRU would consider repackaging and expanding programs to improve the financial outlook. Milovick pointed to other potential avenues to cut costs.

“We have a number of strategies we need to employ to bring us to balance,” Milovick said. “[TRU faculty] will have to decrease their expenditures in budgets... it will be

rapid and swift, I think, over the next three or four months.”

Milovick said the university is not just financially in the red; he explained it is “redder than red.”

“We've never been here before. This is new territory for us,” he said.

These statements come as the university has recently broken ground on multiple projects and plans further growth in the coming years.

Although changes are expected, TRU officials say they want to protect the educational opportunities currently offered.

“It's not a university's mission to cut costs. It's a university's mission to educate people, and we very much want to keep that idea in the forefront,” Fairbairn said. “It's not only about financial restraint. It's also about academic program innovation.”



JESS PAYETTE/SUBMITTED

On the back row, from left to right, stand Stir team members Saeideh Hejazi, Eden MacKay, Kent Fawcett, Mary Blando, James Maine and Faith Bellamy, with Fauve Smith and Jess Payette in the front.

The Stir: Local people growing local food

ANNA MONTANER NEWS EDITOR

Food security is a pressing issue in cities around BC, and Kamloops is no exception. Through its programs, the Kamloops Food Policy Council [KFPC] is working towards building grassroots community capacity around food.

Since 1995, the KFPC has been part of the community, fostering food projects, developing partnerships, and contributing to public policy. It is the longest-standing independent food policy council in Canada.

The Stir, previously called the Food Hub, is a program within the Kamloops Food Policy Council providing facility rentals, business mentorship and support to help local food entrepreneurs reach a wider market they would otherwise not be able to penetrate.

Kent Fawcett, The Stir manager, has a background in cancer and stem cell research. He began noticing the importance a good environment had

on people and their safety, which influenced his move toward food sovereignty.

"Food is something I've struggled with, but I've found focusing on it lets me connect with myself more," Fawcett said. "The choices you can make with food can affect the health of your community and of the people on the other side of the world."

Like Fawcett, Jess Payette, the coordinator of The Stir, saw the impact food production had on the environment and wanted to see a positive change in her community.

Payette has a background in communications and began volunteering with the KFPC. Soon after, the opportunity to work with The Stir came about.

"I thought it was a really good opportunity to do work that aligns with my values," Payette said. "The KFPC has a really unique organizational structure where its grassroots are anti-capitalist."

According to Fawcett,

locally produced food results in more nutritious products. Its impact on the environment is also evident.

"When you pick something out of a grocery store, often there's a lot more ... that goes into that decision that might not be obvious," Fawcett said. "The fossil fuels to get the products there, the chemicals used to grow it and so much more."

When companies prioritize outsourcing over local products, a community can be vulnerable to outside disruptions.

"When there's an upset like we see with fires or flooding, we lose the ability to feed ourselves because we don't have locally grown food," Fawcett said.

The KFPC wants to go beyond food security. Payette touched on the importance of differentiating between food security and food sovereignty. While food security focuses on everyone having access to food,

sovereignty goes beyond that and gives the people in the community control of the food being consumed.

While The Stir is closer to an economic development, KFPC has other programs open to all community members and focuses on teaching the community to grow and produce their own food.

"A lot of the time, people see these programs, and they think it is only for when they can't afford food," Payette said. "In reality, the more people who utilize these resources, the wider spread, and the mindset that we all have a right to food choices can be set in our community."

On Nov. 6, The Stir will hold a potluck and network meeting open to the public.

There are many ways to become involved in the KFPC and Kamloops's fight toward food sovereignty. Information related to volunteer and job opportunities can be found by visiting their website at thestir.kitchen.

Putting the 'creative' back in creative writing

Meet actor and author Thom Vernon, one of TRU's newest professors

AUGUSTUS HOLMAN ARTS EDITOR

Students can often be intimidated by their professors and may need help approaching them. Through this ongoing series, the Omega will introduce students to several professors at TRU, uncovering the humanity and personalities of our educators.

Taking a uniquely active approach to teaching creative writing, Thom Vernon explores ways of triggering students' minds to new ideas through exploring, moving and engaging with materials. Vernon is a new professor at TRU, having started this fall.

Coming from Fredericton, N.B., Vernon moved to Kamloops to start as a professor of creative writing and English subjects.

Reflecting on his journey, Vernon expressed how passionate he is about the topics he teaches, telling the Omega that this passion drives his unique and active teaching methods.

"Honestly, I've known since I came into the world that I was going to be a writer, actor and teacher," Vernon said. "I always knew that. It's never been a question. They're all very fulfilling, and I love doing them all. I'm very passionate about what I do and I love it"

Vernon uses a variety of methods from his teaching toolbox, understanding how certain topics in the classroom need to be explored beyond the desk.

"My goal is always to keep the spark in the eye of the students. If students' eyes are starting to gloss over, I know to mix it up," Vernon said. "I work in multiple modalities, up on your feet, writing, working online. There's a variety of ways [to do things], and

"It's all about getting people interested and excited and then [getting students to make] it their own. That's what I really hope for, not that they just repeat what I say but that they will take what I say and use it as a provocation for their own work. That's exciting and I see that in the students' work; I love that,"



TRU creative writing professor Thom Vernon

hopefully something will appeal to somebody."

When studying scenes in theatre plays, as an example, Vernon has had students throw a basketball around, asking them to closely watch the path the ball takes — the arcing pattern as it was thrown up and then its descent as it comes down, an allegory for the way every scene in a play should progress the storyline. This method of learning, he said, allows students to associate memories with certain topics, planting a seed in their minds so that they can further develop their ideas.

Being a self-proclaimed "theory geek," Vernon also

attempts to incorporate a variety of topics outside the creative writing discipline into his courses, including ideas in theory, philosophy, the sciences and beyond.

"I have a lot of interests, and I work in a cross-disciplinary way, so I'm always thinking about how I can take something from physics or natural sciences or philosophy or whatever and adapt those principles into a new teaching strategy and something practical," Vernon said.

In the future, Vernon will teach several more courses in creative writing and literature. Next fall, he plans to teach a course on queer

literature in Canada and on gender in graphic novels.

As Vernon works on his next project, he invites audiences to read his latest novel, *I Met Death & Sex Through My Friend*, Tom Meuley — described as a "dark, queer comedy," which is available online through major book retailers.

The Omega's Professor Spotlight is a monthly series where we introduce you to some of the universities most popular faculty members. If you would like to nominate a professor, lecturer, or sessional instructor for their own spotlight email the Omega's arts editor, Augustus Holman, by email at auggietaylor6284@gmail.com.



ROBERT MCALASTER/THE OMEGA

Runnin' with the 'Pack

Meet Raiya Rumo from the WolfPack women's soccer team

AIBIKE ALYMOVA SPORTS EDITOR

Earlier this week, the WolfPack announced that fourth-year defender Raiya Rumo (**RR**) had been selected to join the Canada West first-team All-Star lineup for the second year in a row. Following the announcement, the Omega got to chat with her about her four years in Kamloops and how they went.

Omega: Could you reflect on your last season with TRU? How did it go for you?

RR: I think the season went really good as a building perspective. We're starting to make a foundation with this program, and we're just doing better every year. Emotionally, it was quite a surreal feeling when that last whistle blew on the UVIC field as it was coming to an end, and time flew by. I'm so proud of the girls and how we did this year. We really had a lot of determination and grit. I think that was the most important.

Omega: How do you think you grew as a player in the last four years?

RR: I think I've grown a lot as a soccer player. I mean, getting an All-Rookie Canada West team and then two All-Star teams is a pretty good pat on the back for me. I'm proud of the player I've become. Leadership-wise, I'm also really proud of myself. I have connected with a lot of the girls no matter what year they've come in: rookie year, second year, third year. I think I've had a very positive effect on all the girls on my team, and I'm really happy leading the way I am.

Omega: What do you think makes the Wolf-Pack a unique team?

RR: I think...the heart that we have, no matter if we lose, tie or just don't get the result that we wanted. At the end of the day, we're still a super strong group of girls and facing challenges together. We've

been able to overcome it with the group. **Omega:** What were the major challenges of balancing school and soccer?

RR: I would definitely say it's very difficult, not only balancing school but also work as well. Working two jobs is difficult with soccer and school. Having to be on the road almost every other weekend or missing multiple classes on travelling days can be quite detrimental to the grades. It definitely means you have to put in more work to catch up, but at the end of the day, it's completely worth it being a part of an athletic team.

Omega: As you are preparing to graduate, what are your plans towards the future?

RR: I'll definitely stay in Kamloops this summer and join the Rivers FC program again. I've had a great experience with them, but I'm also talking to some scouts and hopefully being able to play in a higher league, either

pro in Canada or overseas. **Omega:** What advice would you give to the young athletes who are starting their journey here at TRU or are planning to do so?

RR: I would say to not give up and don't dwell on the hard moments. There are going to be a lot of difficulties to overcome being on the team, whether that's physical or mental. As long as you keep going and lean on the support of your peers and your older athletes on the team. I think you'll be able to get through just fine. You just have to have the confidence to keep going and know that the next day can be better, or even if the next day is worse, it only means you're building up to something greater in the end.

No playoffs for women's team

The 'Pack soccer will have to wait until next year to try again

ROBERT MCALASTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After a season of incredible action on the pitch, the women's Wolf-Pack soccer team will not appear in the playoffs.

The team's hopes of advancing were dashed by the result of the 'Pack's Oct. 18 game against the Mount Royal Cougars, which saw the women come up short in a hard-fought 2-1 loss. Heading into the game, the 'Pack needed three points to keep their playoff dreams alive. The first half of play saw the 'Packs rookie star, Juli La Rotta, score the first goal (and her fourth of the season) eight minutes into the game with an assist from team captain Ainsley Grether.

But the team's fury of offense could not hold back the Cougars. Despite the team's goalie, Cassandra De Amaral, showing off her skills by making four powerful saves, Mount Royal persisted.



With ten minutes left in the first half, Gabrielle Linford scored the game-tying goal.

But the nail was hammered into the proverbial coffin in the second half when a pass from Ruby Szautner found Taylor Young, who put the ball into the back of the net to secure the win for the Cougars, knocking the 'Pack out of

contention for the Canada West postseason playoffs.

With their playoff aspirations in the rearview mirror, the women redirected their attention to their final game of the season. On Oct. 23, the 'Pack travelled to Vancouver Island to face the UVIC Vikes on their home turf.

Although the 'Pack played a tough game, the team was

outmatched by the ferocity of the Vikes. After a first half that saw the Vikes take a late 1-0 lead, the women fought back hard in the second half but could not stop the home team from taking advantage, scoring three more times before the end of the game.

Sunday's contest was also notable because it was the final game for several of the WolfPack's most prominent players, including defender Raiya Rumo, midfielder Jessye Large, goalkeeper Cassandra De Amaral, and team captain Ainsley Grether, all of whom will graduate at the end of this semester. Midfielder Caylah Lemon will also be leaving the team, joining her peers as she graduates, but she could not attend the final game due to injury.

With their final game out of the way, the women's soccer team ends the season with a 4-8-2 record.

Women's 'Pack members all-star bound

La Rotta and Rumo receive all-star honours from Canada West Soccer

ANNA MONTANER NEWS EDITOR

Juli La Rotta and Raiya Rumo have achieved significant recognition in their recent seasons, marking a historic moment for the women's soccer program.

La Rotta earned a place on the conference All-Rookie team, while Rumo was named a Canada West First Team All-Star for the second consecutive year. This marks the first time in program history that two players have received All-Star honours from Canada West.

La Rotta, a promising winger from Calgary, made

an impressive debut, leading her team in scoring during her freshman year.

With four goals, she topped the Pacific Division's rookie scoring list and ranked among the top five scorers in the entire conference. Her selection to the All-Rookie team makes her the third player in the program's history to achieve this honour.

In a release, Head coach Mark Pennington expressed excitement about La Rotta's potential, highlighting her unique abilities and

contributions to the team.

Rumo, one of the program's most accomplished players, added another accolade to her impressive resume by being named a first-team all-star once again.

The centre back from Courtenay, BC, was the first player on the team to earn this distinction last year and continued to excel against some of the country's top attacking players.

Starting in 12 games this season, Rumo's defensive skills have garnered respect

across the conference.

This recognition marks Rumo's third from Canada West in her four seasons, having previously been named to the All-Rookie Team in 2021 and First Team in 2023 and 2024.

Together, La Rotta and Rumo helped TRU achieve a record of 4-8-2 this season, just missing out on the Canada West playoffs.

Pennington reflected on the importance of these individual honours, recognizing them as a testament to the team's overall progress and quality.

Men's basketball team back on the hunt

After disappointing 2023–24 season, WolfPack men look to current season for retribution

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

A gritty, hardworking group with a healthy combination of final-year players, new talent and rookies — the men's WolfPack basketball team is poised for a bounce-back season.

During the summer, the 'Pack brought in two standout American guards in Steve Stinson and Erin Chamble among others to complement the core of established TRU players like Asher Mayan, Cyrus Harrison and Denys Bachurin.

"It's a good mix of returning veterans and new faces," Head Coach Chad Jacobson said. "We want to be a team that is very hard-nosed, tough and competes defensively. A team that rebounds the basketball; that does a lot of the dirty work."

Jacobson added the team's competitive level and ability to work together will be crucial to its success this year.

Forward Asher Mayan echoed this sentiment, adding that he likes the offensive tempo that the 'Pack has been

showing in the pre-season.

"We have a lot more shot creation and we play with a lot more pace this year," Mayan, who's in his final year, said. "We're motivated to make an impact this year and people at TRU should be excited for it."

According to Jacobson, one factor will determine whether the team has success in Canada West this year.

"It all comes down to our execution on both ends of the floor," Jacobson said. "For us, that's really what it's about, our execution — obviously for the course of 40 minutes, a full basketball game, but also in the late game, in the fourth quarter when things are really on the line."

Although they likely won't see much in-game action this year, TRU also has some promising Kamloopsians on the team. South Kamloops Secondary graduates Thomas Nowicki and Charlie McKay cracked the roster as first-year students.

"It's really important for us to have local athletes on



FAIZAL BUKHARI/THE OMEGA

WolfPack newcomer Erin Chamble checks Mount Royal Cougar guard Ijah Nelson.

our roster. I think that's good for the program [and] the community," Jacobson said. "We certainly expect those guys to be able to develop into players that can win games down the road."

A playoff spot is the goal for the WolfPack this season, as last year's 6–14 record was not enough to qualify.

"I was happy with the group last year. I thought they competed really hard," Jacobson said. "We lost some close games throughout the year that had a major impact on us not making the playoffs."

According to Jacobson, several injuries impacted the season's performance last year. One of those injuries was the breaking of star forward Asher Mayan's dominant arm in the first home preseason game of the 2023–24 season. He returned for the final ten games of the season, but the 'Pack was unable to squeak into the playoffs.

"After last season ended, I took a couple months off of playing... to make sure when I came back it'd be fully healed. That's worked pretty well, I feel back to one-hundred per cent," Mayan said.



Women's volleyball scrimmages against top national talent

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH STAFF WRITER

The TRU WolfPack women's volleyball team participated in a series of exhibition scrimmages this past weekend. They faced off against Volleyball Canada's National Excellence Program (NEP), with the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) Heats present.

The NEP is Volleyball Canada's elite under-18 program, designed to identify and develop the country's top young athletes. These athletes, selected from high schools across Canada, are trained to compete in international programs and tournaments on the global stage. The TRU WolfPack have hosted the

NEP for scrimmages for the past couple of years, and this year it was held once again in the TRU gymnasium.

The teams played three games: the first on Friday at noon, the second on Friday at 5 pm, and the final scrimmage on Saturday at 9 am. With a focus on player development rather than competition, the matches were a great opportunity for players to gain and access their progress. Coaches present across all three teams could also evaluate individual and team performances. For the 'Pack, the sets were particularly important to help their younger athletes

adjust to the pace and intensity of playing against top-tier opponents.

These exhibition matches are also building momentum for upcoming games.

The WolfPack kicked off their regular volleyball season on the road on Oct. 25 – 26 against the University of Manitoba. Next, they will return for their first regular-season home games, facing off against the UBCO Heat on Nov. 1–2.

For more details about the WolfPack Women's Volleyball upcoming season, visit gowolfpack.ca/sports/womens-volleyball.



A photograph of the entrance to the TRU Finance department, located at OM1610 in Old Main.

New credit and debit fees cause concerns

Students shared how the new changes will affect them the next time they pay tuition

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

Beginning Dec. 1, students paying tuition with credit cards will be charged a new “convenience fee” of 2.5 per cent for Visa and Mastercard transactions and 3.75 per cent for American Express. In the email, TRU advised students to use Interac e-transfer, bank transfers or cheques as alternative payment methods as they do not accept cash, but it did not otherwise explain the fees at the time of the notice.

“The new fees ... are being introduced to help cover the rising costs associated with credit card processing,” TRU wrote in a statement in response to media inquiries. The university said although the processing fees have always existed, they simply absorbed them into their costs in the past.

“By transitioning the fees to credit card users directly, we are able to keep tuition costs stable and allocate more resources to student services and programs,” the statement read.

Loshima Shongo, a student representative for TRU’s Students’ Union (TRUSU) said they were not consulted prior to the email from the university.

“We were shocked when we received the news,” Shongo said. “We are not in support of it because we

believe that students don’t deserve to be charged to pay more because they’re using a different card.”

TRU said although they did not consult the union, they wanted to note this decision does not affect all students, just those who pay with credit cards.

Shongo explained she is worried about how increased costs will affect international students like herself, who typically already pay more than double the rate of domestic students’ tuition.

“We are already paying too much. We’re already going through a lot to be students here and them having to charge us is like them looking for another path to get more money from students.”

Loshima Shongo,
TRU Students’ Union

International student Rayhan Sharif, who worked full-time during the summer to pay his fall tuition off in increments, said he was often completely out of money while between bi-weekly pay cheques.

“Without a credit card’s help it would’ve been impossible for me to pay the tuition

fees before the deadline,” Sharif said.

While Sharif called the new fees “totally absurd,” Diego Machado, a domestic student, said “confusion” was his initial reaction upon opening the email. Machado is in his final year of study and said paying his tuition each semester with a credit card lets him collect reward points on his card.

“It helps me save a little bit of money because I can use my points to pay off my credit card balance. It is nice to be able to get a little bit of extra benefit out of something that is so innately required within the system,” Machado said.

Although Machado said he would likely “bite the bullet” and pay his final semester dues with his credit card and he’s not opposed to increased fees in general, but he wanted a clearer initial explanation from TRU.

“I wish the university did a better job of being transparent and communicate about why these sort of changes are being made and where the decisions are actually coming from for them,” Machado said.

The convenience fee on credit card tuition payments at TRU will come into effect on Dec. 1.

KamCon '24 delights attendees

AUGUSTUS HOLMAN ARTS EDITOR

Kamloops' own Dungeons and Dragons-themed convention was held in the Campus Activity Centre again from Oct. 4–6. The weekend was filled with more costumes, vendors, and gaming events than in previous years.

Every floor of the CAC was packed with tables decorated in gaming-themed merchandise and personal artworks from many of KamCon's special guests, including that of Call of Cthulhu's artist, Toren Atkinson.

Atkinson, a well-known figure in tabletop gaming circles, was quite busy at the event. In addition to interacting with guests at his booth, Atkinson hosted several gaming tables and designed artwork for one of KamCon's t-shirts, which became a hot commodity and were nearly sold out by the end of day two.

Atkinson told the Omega he doesn't usually attend conventions anymore but

made an exception for KamCon this year.

"The organizers approached me last year to come. I used to go to conventions fairly often, like 10–20 years ago, but I kind of stopped doing it," Atkinson said. "I'd got burned out, so [being at conventions] wasn't something I was interested in doing anymore."

Originally, Atkinson only agreed to do the artwork for KamCon. Still, after being asked by the event's coordinators, he decided to attend for the weekend to manage games for guests and interact with fans.

Aside from selling many of his Call of Cthulhu artworks, Atkinson brought CDs featuring music from his Cthulhu-themed band, The Darkest of the Hillside Thicket.

Vendors, however, were not the only attraction bringing fans to KamCon 24, with night two of the event featuring a cosplay contest with characters such as Sally from *The Nightmare Before*

Christmas, *Pokemon Flareon*, and *Astarion* from *Baldur's Gate 3* appearing alongside many cosplayer's original D&D characters.

Cosplayer Seren Crawford, a fan from Vernon who travelled for the contest, constructed their *Astarion* costume almost entirely from scratch. While many awards were given to the various cosplayers, Crawford's *Astarion* won Best in House for their dedication to the character, their craftsmanship and detailed costuming.

"I started [my *Astarion* cosplay] in July, and I finished it right at the end of August... so I did it in a bit of a crunch. I made my armour as well as my pants entirely by myself," Crawford said. "My dad sent me a link [about KamCon] because I've been getting into cosplay, and he saw that there was a cosplay contest at KamCon. The website looked really cool."

According to the event's website, KamCon '24 was a great success and will be held again next year.



LGBTQ2IA+ resource tables to appear monthly

AUGUSTUS HOLMAN ARTS EDITOR

Finding the right resources to fit your needs can be difficult, especially if you're in a brand new town and campus. TRU's Manager of Gender and Sexual Diversity Noah Fischer is working towards making resources more accessible to TRU's queer-identifying students.

Recently Fischer has been working to organize resource tables for LGBTQ2IA+ students in collaboration with TRU's Wellness Centre, reoccurring monthly, every month. October's table focused on LGBTQ2IA+ History Month, whereas next month's table will be held in the International Building on Nov. 19 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., featuring topics relating to the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

After becoming the Manager of Gender and Sexual Diversity on campus, Fischer took stock of the students' needs. During his research, he recognized that a lack of dedicated spaces for queer students meant that many of them were missing out

on accessing valuable resources.

"I think a very direct significance of having these [resource tables] and making these topics visible on campus has a lot to do with the fact that queer representation and safer spaces for queer students on campus have and continue to be limited," Fischer said. "I think I found myself in a very lucky position to be the one that gets to start a lot of this stuff."

Fischer explained that many of the event tables will include trivia, games and prizes for students, and numerous resources for queer-identifying students. November's table will be the only event excluding such activities due to its sensitive topics on grief and loss. The goal with these events is to create interactive spaces for students who are searching for their safe space on campus.

"Often, what these events involve is networking and disseminating information and creating space for people to express curiosity and ask

questions, share their own experiences, and I always bring a plethora of resources," Fischer said.

Fischer is working towards creating more spaces for queer-identifying students to meet new people, find role models and network with allies and other community members.

"I've come across a lot of people that are feeling that sense of being lost or not finding the community that they feel safe to be in or explore themselves with," he said. "I think in the context of students, we're coming together, we're building a network and we're making ourselves visible to say, 'this is a safe space for you to be in and there are other people here too.'"

Fischer encourages individuals to reach out to him and provide feedback on how to better create future events and resources for students. In order to advocate for more LGBTQ2IA+ spaces, Fischer asks students to go to events, ask questions and share feedback.

TRU alum launches new podcast

Loopszers, a new podcast by local media influencer Nevin Webster is now streaming

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

Kamloops' top meme page runner, Nevin Webster, is expanding his Loopszer brand following his first polarizing podcast episode, which featured an interview with Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson.

The first 46-minute episode, available on platforms such as Transistor and Spotify, attracted over 1300 listeners.

In addition to networking with interesting people and providing a platform to share under-reported stories, Webster says the goal is simple.

"I wanna get people from every different demographic on the show...to start to understand the tapestry that is Kamloops," Webster said.

His second episode, released on Oct. 29, saw him sit down with mental health professional Cecile Tucker.

He mentioned WolfPack alum and paralympic gold medalist Greg Stewart, as well as local Indigenous social media influencer and business owner Ashley Michel, as future guests he'd like to interview.

Although feedback from episode one was predominantly positive, Webster said he did receive some criticism from listeners who thought he didn't critique the mayor enough.

"I picked a rather challenging first interview," Webster said. "Having the mayor on...was like a make or break kind of thing. I don't think I blew it out of the park [but] I don't think I flubbed it. It was a challenge."

Before this Loopszer podcast, Webster used that moniker to post memes on Instagram and Facebook,

growing his base to over 5,000 users. Webster, a former TRU tourism management grad, said many of his followers are TRU students.

This year, Webster received two Best of Kamloops Awards for the best Facebook and Instagram page in the city. "People weren't doing it, and it seemed like there was a big gap [in Kamloops-themed content], so I started doing it," Webster said.

This gap has also been present in podcasting. Since the final episode of Kamloops Last Week aired eight months ago, residents have been without a wide selection of locally themed podcasts. With his new Loopszer show, Webster hopes to change this.

"Making as many memes as I have about Kamloops, you start running out of topics

you can talk about before you start making stupid jokes. The podcast was born out of a necessity to make content that is fresh and interesting... It was a response to [feeling] meme burnout," Webster said.

Despite the freshness of his current product, Loopszer is not Webster's first foray into the podcasting industry.

Between 2018 and 2020, he hosted *Kameo w/ Nevin Webster*, a program featuring a similar premise.

"I think Kamloops was pretty well used to my antics — I was a pretty big internet troll back when there were news articles and comments. I think people were familiar with me," Webster said.

Webster's Loopszer podcast is online now, with weekly episodes expected in the future.



Winter fundraising gala coming soon

ANNA MONTANER NEWS EDITOR

Dress to impress at TRU's first black-tie Winter's Ball on Nov. 16, being held to raise funds for TRU student scholarships and bursaries.

Last year, the gala successfully raised over \$250,000, all made possible by the generosity of supporters dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities.

Katrina Harding, advancement officer for annual giving at TRU, has continued her work in providing students support through fundraising events.

"We help to enhance the learning experience," Harding said. "With the Gala, we generate awareness and money for scholarships,

bursaries, equipment and space upgrades at the university."

With a rich history spanning over 30 years, the signature fundraising event has generated more than \$1 million for essential student scholarships, bursaries and specialized equipment.

This year marks the inaugural Winter's Ball, promising an enchanting evening filled with exquisite cuisine, lively dancing and captivating entertainment.

"We found that it's really important that we host the event during a time when there are students on campus," Harding said. "We like

to give students that practical experience of being part of an event like this."

A Vancouver band will provide music throughout the night and there will be a silent auction with over 30 items, along with a "fund in need" — a reverse silent auction that will give guests an opportunity to make donations.

The reverse silent auction will be focused on the support of fire science research chair Jill Harvey and TRU's new wildfire programs.

Three hundred guests have already saved their spots and the event has officially sold out.

But TRU Students, especially those in the Tourism

department are encouraged to volunteer.

"We are aiming to raise the amount of money we reached last year," Harding said. "We're really happy that we are sold out, it's nice that our reputation precedes us on that."

In order to maintain their efforts with sustainability the Gala will continue with the theme of Winter Ball for the next three years.

The TRU Foundation Gala is currently open to volunteers for event set up and clean up. If you are interested in participating, please contact the advancement office to learn more at advancementevents@tru.ca.

Across

- 1 Buzzing group of insects (5)
- 4 Recurring musical theme (9)
- 9 Baseball pitchers' warm-up area (7)
- 10 Imaginary line circling Earth's middle (7)
- 11 Bury or place in a grave (5)
- 13 Covered in fine particles (5)
- 15 Intense anger or wrath (3)
- 16 Invisible mixture we breathe (3)
- 17 Hard-shelled fruit used as a container (5)
- 19 Curved section of coastline (5)
- 21 Praise or elevate highly (5)
- 23 Intense fear or apprehension (5)
- 24 Small, round green vegetable (3)
- 25 Outer edge of a circular object (3)
- 26 Scatter or spread about loosely (5)
- 28 Multiplies in arithmetic (5)
- 29 Emotional issues or fixations (4-3)
- 31 Keepsake or souvenir (7)
- 33 Person of limited intelligence (9)
- 34 Ordinary written language (5)

Down

- 1 Transform directly from solid to gas (9)
- 2 Featuring top performers (3-4)
- 3 Long-handled floor cleaner (3)
- 4 Having parallel markings or creases (5)
- 5 Frozen water (3)
- 6 Timid or quiet in manner (5)
- 7 Delicate knotted lace-making technique (7)
- 8 Poetic composition or stanza (5)
- 12 Correct or proper (5)
- 14 Move sideways in a furtive manner (5)
- 18 Milk-producing organ on cows (5)
- 19 Bathroom fixture for personal hygiene (5)
- 20 Interchange or switch positions (9)

- 22 Charitable distributor in institutions (7)
- 24 Sweet red pepper often stuffed in olives (7)
- 25 Recovery program for addicts (5)
- 26 Young unfledged pigeon (5)
- 27 Adult female human (5)
- 30 Health resort with mineral springs (3)
- 32 Visual representation of an area (3)

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