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the **Omega**

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Where the foxes dance and play

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

FAIZAL BUKHARI/THE OMEGA

In Kamloops, it's not wholly surprising to walk out into our front yards just to encounter some manner of wildlife that we share our province with. Recently, a family of four, very unique, extremely special foxes found their way onto campus, claiming TRU as their new home.

Four aluminum fox sculptures now surround the WolfPack flag in the west roundabout, positioned in sequence, showing them as if they were jumping and landing. Each figure was finished with small triangular cutouts throughout its body to provide an artistic touch and all four rest atop individual silver platforms that pop out of the grass. This, TRU's newest art installation, depicts the fox from a traditional Secwépemc story and trotted its way onto campus over the winter break.

"They wanted to bring some Indigenous storytelling to life," said Bill Frymire, the installation's artist.

"The fox was the chosen animal. There's a really cool local Secwépemc

story [about it]."

According to Frymire, the piece retells the final portion of a Secwépemc story in which a fox repeatedly jumps over a coyote to bring it back to life. To symbolize this, Frymire placed small orange acrylic inserts underneath the triangular openings in each sculpture.

Starting with the first statue, the amount of colour is limited, visible only in the fox's tail. The prominence of colour progressively increases with each art piece — culminating with the final fox in a landing position with orange layered underneath it from chin to tail and accented elsewhere.

"With the final one, all of the cutouts within the fox's body, including the

eyes, have this sort of orange colour. It represents Coyote coming back to life," Frymire said.

Frymire said he interprets the story as teaching people "to be grateful for what they have and not covet the life that other people have."

The fox, or xgwélemc, joins the statues of its cousins, the wolf (mélemstye), situated inside the east gate roundabout and the copper-coloured coyote (sk'élep) atop the Brown Family House of Learning

as one of the most recent animal-themed displays at the university.

Frymire, who was initially approached by TRU approximately two years ago for the project, said it took him a year to complete.

Using digital modelling

he started the painstaking process of turning his vision into reality.

Once the designs were finalized, the aluminum was cut using a computer numerical controlled (CNC) router machine. Afterward, the pieces were meticulously bent and welded to achieve the final product.

"Each fox took about a hundred hours of machine time cutting to get all of the angles — so when it folded up, it all matched up perfectly [and] could be welded," Frymire said.

The artist attributed much of the art piece's success to others who had helped him along the way. He referenced Janice E. Billy's knowledge about the Secwépemc story, his friend William McAusland's help in the early stages, and TRU instructor Clement Yeh's assistance in the final portion of the project. He also had support from various local welders and assistants.

A plaque explaining the fox's story is expected to be put up at the location soon.

"This was very complex with all of the angles fitting together, so it took a long time to [test it] and get it to where it [worked]. It actually kicked my butt for the first couple of months,"

Bill Frymire, artist

Honouring Chinese New Year in style

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

The Year of the Snake is set to begin with a spectacular showcase as the Spring Festival Gala is scheduled to ring in the Chinese New Year on Feb. 9.

Hosted by the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA), the event will take place downtown in the Sandman Centre's Kia Lounge beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Song and dance performances have been slated to entertain guests during the festivities.

"We have about 10 shows or more, but we are still selecting because we want only the best performances," said CSSA president Lian Zhou. "We just want people to feel one thing — happy."

Guests will be fed while watching the showcases by a locally prepared buffet featuring a wide range of options.

"They are going to provide us with very Chinese-styled foods. There are two Chinese-styled foods. One is Canadian-based Chinese food, the other is real Chinese food," Zhou said.

Students and community members are welcome to join the celebration. Zhou hopes it will bring people together.

"This [event] is public for everyone. It's hosted in English," he said. "This is a multicultural event. We don't want this to happen only in Chinese because that is really exclusive. We want more people to join."

Tickets are available for purchase until Feb. 9. and can be purchased by visiting the CSSA website at trucssa.ca. Entry is \$45 for regular tickets and \$60 for VIP tickets.

According to Zhou, VIPs will get the best spot in the house with central seating at the gala.

"[VIPs] have the biggest space, and they [get] extra gifts," Zhou said.

The CSSA has hosted this event in previous years, but Zhou believes that this year will be the best version of it yet.

Approximately 30 people, from performers to club members, have worked on organizing this year's gala. Last year, 150 guests attended the event.

Chinese New Year falls

annually within a range of dates between Jan. 21 and Feb. 20. Zhou said that growing up at his home in China, people would take weeks off work and school to celebrate the occasion with feasts of food and lots of fireworks.

In the past decade, China has placed restrictions on fireworks use, but Zhou said there is an annual television broadcast the whole country now watches.

"If you only watch the TVs, you may get happy — but those Chinese international students, they will feel lonely," Zhou said. "But if you have this banquet. Just people sitting together, you can feel the Chinese style, the Chinese mood."



Wellness centre offering naloxone training

OREOLUWA ALAKABA CONTRIBUTOR

In response to B.C.'s toxic drug crisis, TRU's Wellness Centre is ramping up efforts by offering naloxone training and creating awareness for students and staff to reduce overdose deaths on campus.

As of last October, Kamloops has reported over 83 unregulated drug deaths throughout 2024, making up five per cent of B.C.'s total, according to statistics released by the BC Coroners Service. With the province recording over 1,900 fatalities from toxic drug last year, the opioid crisis is hitting close to home for students at TRU.

"Anyone is at risk of an overdose if they're using substances, because of our toxic drug supply," said Chelsea Corsi, senior coordinator at the Wellness Centre. "Students need to have knowledge and

awareness around the toxic drug supply in B.C. if they are going to be using substances."

Corsi says it's not just students who use drugs recreationally who are at risk of an overdose.

"We know people can even overdose [on] prescription medication if they're using opioids. [There] are various ways to be impacted by this, and I think it's how [the Wellness Centre] can support students to gain knowledge, literacy, and understanding," Corsi said, stating she feels it's important people understand how the opioid crisis affects a variety of students.

In response to B.C.'s public health emergency declared in 2016, TRU adopted the *Take Home Naloxone* program to train its community.

The training session at the Wellness Centre takes 15 minutes and covers safety tips,

signs of an opioid overdose, and the SAVE ME steps needed before administering naloxone. After completing the training, students receive a kit. Corsi says individuals can also complete virtual training through the Toward the Heart website and receive a take-home kit at the Wellness Centre.

"This year, we also did training with the nursing department and got hands-on experience in a simulation, where the nurses pretended to overdose, and then we had to respond," said Monty Armstrong, a wellness centre ambassador.

"We've trained thousands of people on campus, including students, staff, and faculty, over the past seven years," Corsi said. Last year alone, she estimates more than 500 students have been trained on how to administer

naloxone. "Students want to learn. They want a kit. They want to have the information that can save a life."

Corsi said she hopes that most students who have been trained to administer naloxone would be able to put it to use in emergencies, explaining the training aims to lower emergency response barriers, as those without training often hesitate. Her goal is to boost confidence through initial and refresher training, ensuring students are prepared and equipped with a kit.

The Wellness Centre continues its mission to combat the opioid crisis on campus. Students seeking resources can walk into the Wellness Centre during its operating hours to access support and participate in the naloxone training program to receive a free take-home naloxone kit.

TRUSU NDP Club to hold elections at AGM

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

A new president will be elected, and a member of Parliament (MP) will speak at the TRUSU NDP Club's upcoming annual general meeting and Labour Rally on Feb. 15 in the Brown Family House of Learning.

Matthew Green, an Ontario-based MP, will attend via video call, while local labour leader and president of the Kamloops and District Labour Council, Lois Rugg, will be at the event in person.

Green will give a presentation and attendees will have the opportunity to pose questions about labour laws and worker's rights.

"Matthew Green is very passionate about the labour movement [and is] known for speaking truth to power," said TRUSU NDP club president Levi Escobar. "He's a very outspoken Member of Parliament and I think students will be very interested in what he has to say."

Escobar said he's excited for attendees to learn about wage disparities, unionization and other



Outgoing NDP Club President Levi Escobar poses in front of a club poster

areas related to the topic.

"A lot of students have a job out of economic necessity. Not many people, never mind students, are aware of their rights as a worker," Escobar said.

This event will also serve as the club's annual general meeting, where club members will vote on a range of executive positions.

"We're going to have all the positions open and it's going to be a democratic process," Escobar said.

All 11 positions, ranging

from secretary to podcast director and even club president will be open for election. Escobar will not be running for re-election as he recently became campus club liaison for British Columbia's Young New Democrats in late November.

"I oversee all of the campus clubs in B.C.," Escobar said.

According to Escobar, there are now six campus clubs in the province. In his new role, he plans to grow this number over the next year.

Currently, the TRU club

has approximately 400 registered members — some of whom pitched in during a recent election.

Although local NDP candidate Kamal Grewal lost her race in the Kamloops Centre riding during the provincial election in October 2024, Escobar was proud that she accrued over 40 per cent of the vote share. He and other club members were active in door-knocking and other campaign activities.

"This demonstrates that we have the power to impact elections in a very tangible way," Escobar said.

Escobar and the club hope the event on Feb. 15 will be an opportunity to grow the club's reach for future elections. Prize giveaways, free pizza and snacks will be provided at the rally.

Free registration for the event is required and can be found through the club's Linktree, which is posted on their Instagram account. Applications to run for executive positions can be found in the same location and close Feb. 8.



New details on TRU Wildfire programs released

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

TRU's partnership with the British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) is coming in hot, with six new wildfire-themed programs debuting over the next year.

The university is launching a total of five certificates and one diploma within the wildfire science and communication departments.

Certificates in wildfire science, wildfire communications and media and sociocultural dynamics

of wildfire are all slated for Fall 2025. For the winter semester of 2026, a diploma in wildfire studies and certificates in wildfire leadership and emergency communications are also scheduled.

"TRU is excited to offer these programs and be part of the solution in addressing wildfire challenges," said provost and vice-president academic Gillian Balfour in a release.

This marks an early development in what

is eventually expected to progress into full-fledged degrees and a potential training centre created on campus.

For BCWS, the motivation to collaborate was appealing for several reasons.

"It should assist with recruitment and retention," said project lead Aaron Pawlick. "Students who might've been going down a different path, not specifically tied to wildfire or that degree, could see this

as an opportunity to pivot."

In addition to recruitment, Pawlick is excited to see what progress can be made in wildfire research and innovation, noting how this could make lifelong wildfire career options more attainable for young people and those already working for BCWS.

The university now has a freshly branded dedicated TRU Wildfire webpage where students may obtain more information.

Power in unity, strength through community

How the Afro-Caribbean Student Association fosters connections and culture away from home

SAM WEIR CONTRIBUTOR

The Afro-Caribbean Student Association (ACSA) is a student-led and faculty-supported club at TRU that has experienced significant growth over the past year. The club provides a home away from home for students and a safe place where they can connect and find support on the shared experiences of students of African and Caribbean demographics. The club was established in 2023 by two former students from Ghana and the Bahamas and currently supports 160 registered members.

Data from a recent TRU integrated planning and effectiveness enrolment report published on the TRU website indicates that 2023 fall enrolment at the Kamloops campus included approximately 4,670 international students from over 120 countries. Students from Africa and the Caribbean represent a growing portion of this total.

Current ACSA co-president Bensley Pierre, a fourth-year international student from Turks and Caicos, has been with the club since its inception, originally serving as the community chair. Pierre describes the club as “a place where students can find other like-minded people, mentorship and support” in a setting that

also fosters connection to their culture while they are away from home.

“International students can feel lonely when they first arrive at TRU, and the ACSA helps by creating community away from home. Culture is a strong part of this community, with all of the events planned by the club incorporating some aspect of culture, aimed at preserving it while the student is away from home,” Pierre said.

While detailed club demographics are unavailable, Pierre said that, “most members are African, mainly from Nigeria and Ghana.” Membership in ACSA is open to anyone of all heritages. Current membership is dominated by students, however there are members and participants from the broader Kamloops community. Members are both connected by culture and a common care about experiences impacting Afro-Caribbean students.

Being isolated from their families far from home is a common struggle for students. Bringing everyone together for regularly scheduled club events helps to combat the feelings of isolation and loneliness. The club promotes action and awareness according to Pierre.

“There is power in unity,” Pierre said. “Simply being able to share experiences in the club’s safe environment

can often help alleviate some of the concerns facing members on campus.”

While Pierre does not indicate that there are any significant negative experiences had by Afro-Caribbean students at TRU, he highlights “the benefits of members being able to share their campus and broader Kamloops experiences within the safe ACSA environment.”

Late last year, the club hosted a networking event on campus for black students looking for jobs in the Kamloops area. The event had black TRU faculty and professors speak about their experiences working in Kamloops and advice they have for black people to better navigate Canada’s current working environment for people of colour. Around 20 students came to learn from the event speakers and ask questions.

Pierre describes the club as “not only providing a source of fun for members, but also providing education and empowerment opportunities.” The club organizes and hosts several events throughout the year, many of which are in partnership with local Kamloops businesses and organizations and designed to strengthen member’s connection to their community. Among these events, the ACSA partnered with local non-profit organization, Unique

Get Together Society (UGTS), to promote Black History Month in February last year. Events were held on campus to increase awareness and to connect members with the broader Kamloops community. A three-day art camp was also held in early November, with artist’s work to be displayed in the Kamloops Art Gallery during Black History Month in February.

In addition to working with UGTS, the club has organized and participated in other community networking events designed to inspire members to imagine their future roles in the community of Kamloops, connecting them with local businesses and potential employers. The ACSA partners with the Kamloops Caribbean Society, which is an organization dedicated to celebrating Afro-Caribbean culture and promoting the achievements and contributions of the Afro-Caribbean community in Kamloops and broader society. They organize events and festivals including the Kamloops Caribbean Festival, Kamloops Black Film Festival and regular family-oriented gatherings. The ACSA also has strong ties with The Big Jerkk, a local restaurant that specializes in Caribbean food, that often supplies food at ACSA events.

More information on the club and how to join can be found on the TRUSU website.



ACSA co-presidents Jessica Kesewah and Bensley Pierre.

The captivating art of *Original Stories*

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH NEWS EDITOR

Four visual arts students were featured in the TRU Art Gallery at Old Main in mid-January, focused on storytelling through their work.

The exhibit, called *Original Stories*, consisted of a diverse display of art styles, narratives and media.

Original Stories was organised by fourth-year fine arts student Charlayna Napoleon, who is also known by her pseudonym, Napcolors. With a focus on storytelling, the artists in this exhibit held a preference for comic-style art which, according to Napoleon, is not appreciated within the world of fine arts.

"It's kind of taboo," Napoleon said. "In the art world, comics aren't really seen as fine art."

For Napoleon, it was important to bring together these artists and spotlight their work as a way to combat certain prejudices and assumptions around the art form.

"These are all comic artists and they're working towards their degree in fine arts, but they're not really able to show that at school because of the standards. I wanted to give them the opportunity to showcase what they do in their everyday life," she said.

Napoleon was among the four artists whose work was on display. Her series of illustrations follow the adventures of a character named Nap, who is placed at the centre of various fantasy environments. In many cases, these environments are symbolic of real-world events or scenarios in the artist's life.

"This one is heatstroke," she said, gesturing to one of her illustrations. In it, a small figure — Nap — lays at the foot of a tidal wave of vibrant blues, purples and oranges.

"I painted it when there was a heatstroke in



An oil painting titled "Eternal Rest," by J. Paz Diaz hangs on a wall at the TRU Art Gallery.

Kamloops in 2021," she said.

Soaked in imagery of nature and intense weather, often with one small character facing the vastness of the landscape before them, Napoleon's pieces are altogether familiar and fantastical.

Augusta Nwuke, otherwise known as Tafn, is another final-year art student whose digital pieces found home in the exhibit. Her display consists of comic-style illustrations inspired by the stories of Mami-Wata, a traditional water goddess in folklore across West Africa and the African diaspora.

"I took a spin on the stories I heard from my grandma," Nwuke said. "I'm Ijaw, so I live around the water and that's where my people come from."

Nwuke's display, aptly named *The Mermaid*, follows a scene from her upcoming web comic. The art is bold and turbulent, filled with dark colours, cloudy weather and sharp flashes of light. Her protagonist, garbed in tribal

dress and markings, stands central in most pieces and is given the only line of dialogue.

"She's a siren," Nwuke explained. "And Sirens are known for having powerful voices. I felt like, in Nigeria, a lot of women don't have a loud enough voice. So this is a chance to take control, in a sense."

For Olivia Roberts, a fourth-year fine arts student, her development as a traditional comic/pop artist is non-negotiable.

"When it comes to comic work, I do the traditional process," she said. "It's very time-consuming, but I do it because I like working with raw materials. I've tried digital art, but I personally prefer the material of paper. I like the feeling of it."

Roberts' pieces were focused on her study of the ways that comic art embodies fine art disciplines — a study which granted her the Undergraduate Research Experience Award Program (UREAP) scholarship in 2022.

"Comic style is so broad and versatile," Roberts said. "It can range from the believable to the completely exaggerated."

Roberts' display, consisting of original works of mixed media, embodies this versatility. Her illustrations portray imposing figures, bold shadows and a keen sense of motion, combining all these with elements of humour and satire.

The fourth artist of the exhibit, Javiera Paz Diaz Acevedo, is a second-year fine arts student and concept artist. Their digital drawings and oil paintings present the futuristic tale of a cyber dystopia, where their protagonist must struggle with a dependency on virtual reality.

"It's kind of a depressing story," Acevedo said. "But it's ultimately about how, even if the reality you are living in is hard, you're still alive and you only have this one life to live."

Acevedo's love for sweeping narratives is evident in the care with which they handle every aspect of their collection. Their pieces are gothic and austere, often holding both aesthetic and social relevance.

"This one is called the perfect gender," they said, pointing out an oil painting of a ghostly white figure sitting regally before a dark backdrop. "Because it is a female body, but at the same time a male body. Society says you have to be perfect and beautiful, but at the same time, do everything a man does. You cannot be both at the same time, but you must be. So that's why it's the perfect gender — because it doesn't really exist."

If you missed the exhibit, you can still catch the final exhibition on April 12, where graduating students of the BFA program will be presenting their pieces in a feature showcase.

Explore consciousness with Jay Ingram

The former host of *Daily Planet* will speak at the 2025 Common Voices event

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

Consciousness and how humans see the world will be questioned in an interactive lecture with acclaimed Canadian science communicator Jay Ingram at this year's TRUSU Common Voices event on Feb. 26.

Ingram hosted *Daily Planet* on the Discovery Channel between 1995 and 2011. He has also hosted other CBC programming, written science columns for the *Toronto Star*, and even became a Member of the Order of Canada in 2009.

"Jay Ingram is a renowned science communicator [...] known for making complex ideas easy to comprehend," said TRUSU Entertainment Committee representative Simran Saigal.

"The Common Voices

lecture series is an annual event that brings the community together to hear from distinguished speakers on important topics. We try to offer a learning experience to students outside of their classrooms," Saigal said.

For this lecture, Ingram wants to make guests more conscious of consciousness.

"Consciousness is everything that goes on in your head while you're awake," Ingram said. "The difficult thing about consciousness is that it's very hard to explain."

Thankfully, the topic is in Ingram's wheelhouse. He also hosts a podcast called *Defy Dementia*, where he explores the brain and has written on the topic in various books and articles. As a science communicator, his job is to make complicated

subjects more digestible.

"This [event] is for people who may not know [much] about science but are curious. I don't know anybody that wouldn't be curious about how their brain works," Ingram said. "If you're curious about how your brain works, this is a talk you should come to."

"There's been an unhealthy tradition in science to try to talk down to people," Ingram said. "It's arrogant and it doesn't work."

All community members, including TRU students, are welcome at the event.

Although Ingram couldn't pinpoint why this topic interests him, he said his own curiosity has fueled his interest in the area for decades.

During the talk, Ingram said he hopes the evening is more of a conversation

than a lecture. He said he believes that is the best way to share ideas.

"I'm going to do what I can in my talk to sort of bring the audience along with me so that they're doing some of these things [related to] consciousness and they're thinking about consciousness," Ingram said.

Ingram's talk, *Theatre of the Mind: How Science Shapes Our Understanding of Consciousness*, will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 26, in the Campus Activity Centre's Mountain Room.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and the talk begins at 7 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer period.

No registration or payment is required to attend, although seating attendance will be limited to the first 250 guests.



Cultivating inner peace through mindfulness

How TRU's *Very Mindful* weekly meditation series supports mental wellness

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

Looking for a way to cultivate mindfulness, sharpen your focus, and reduce stress? Consider the *Very Mindful* weekly meditation sessions led by Kate Fagervik, manager of student research and community engagement at TRU.

The sessions, which launched late last year, resumed earlier this month. The 30-minute sessions are held for students, faculty and staff every Monday from 12:30 p.m. to 1 p.m. in OMI522.

"When I was a student [at TRU], there was no Wellness Centre or mindful programming and I could have really

used it," Fagervik said.

Reflecting on former struggles as a TRU student with stress, anxiety, depression and undiagnosed food allergies, Fagervik explained how the series allowed her to bridge the gap for others.

"I saw that students, staff and faculty could benefit from a dedicated time to recharge. These sessions also help me take care of myself," she said.

The sessions blend techniques like focused breathing, gentle movement and the use of crystal singing bowls and sound baths for a holistic experience. Fagervik also incorporates her extensive training in

Hatha Yoga, mindfulness education and sound healing into the sessions.

"These practices create space between your thoughts and reactions, helping you feel more grounded and in control," Fagervik said.

Payton Hiebert, a TRU wellness support specialist and current student, has been an organizer and attendee of the series. With limited prior experience in formal meditation, they found the sessions transformative.

"It's a great opportunity to simply have a break during the busy work days and school week," Hiebert said.

The practice of checking

in with each part of the body and observing how it feels without judgment is a central focus of Fagervik's series.

Fagervik said students typically feel refreshed and recharged after the 30-minute sessions, which can also be integrated into daily life.

Sessions are casual and welcoming, with no prior experience required. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences or simply observe.

For more information, students can follow the Wellness Centre on Instagram or drop by the office at OMI479.

Professor spotlight: Chris Montoya

Take a peek inside the mind of one of TRU's senior lecturers

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

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.

Often, in academia, there are various professors who stand out not only for their scholarly achievements but also for the profound impact that they have on students. Professor Chris Montoya is known by students as a thought-provoking educator who uses different methods, often challenging his students to examine sometimes difficult, different perspectives.

As a senior lecturer in the psychology department at TRU, Montoya teaches a wide range of courses, including experimental psychology, abnormal psychology, personality psychology and more.

"[Chris] has a very gentle demeanour and speaks with a lot of wisdom and knowledge. Listening to him explain complex subjects is always pleasant and fruitful because of that," said Omar Chinyanga, a former student of Montoya.

Reflecting on the influence of Montoya's teaching, Anzhelika Mostovshchikova stated, "Montoya's engaging teaching style and focus on modern treatment approaches for movement disorders made his new PSYC 3710 class incredibly impactful for my learning. His generosity in providing his textbook for free and his emphasis on holistic perspectives made this class both

accessible and interesting."

Montoya's interest in brain and behaviour research began in his early years when he witnessed his father battle Parkinson's disease, a brain-based condition.

"My dad had Parkinson's disease, which causes [physical] shaking. I wanted to understand the brain more deeply, which eventually led me to work in stem cell research," Montoya said. The aforementioned experience solidified his interest in the complexity of human behaviour and cognition, setting the stage for an academic career focused on the research of the brain and behavioural science.

While studying at the University of Calgary, Montoya worked as an experimental neurosurgeon. His experiences at UoC, particularly in electrophysiology and hippocampal research, played a key role in shaping his approach to the science of the brain.

"I was very fortunate to participate in hands-on surgeries, and we focused on studying the hippocampus, which is critical for memory," Montoya said.

The professor's intellectual interests extend beyond the confines of traditional psychology, which has helped him to build a transdisciplinary approach, integrating concepts from various fields in his research and teaching.

"If you look at it from an enlightened perspective, there is no psychology, no physics, no mathematics; they are all the same. They are all what we call metaphorical convergent validity. All these theories point to a grand

truth," Montoya explained. By blending ideas from biology, chemistry, physics, and even Indigenous thought, Montoya encourages students to see the unity underlying scientific and philosophical inquiry.

This mindset also shapes his teaching style, whereby students are regularly challenged to consider complex questions that stretch beyond the traditional boundaries of a single discipline. "I ask my students, 'Was it evolution or was it creation?' Evolution and creation are not mutually exclusive," Montoya said.

Terrence Ngari, a student at TRU, was quick to heap praise onto the professor. "Chris is the ultimate definition of a professor who challenges students to think out of the box. He triggers students to utilize their reasoning capability to the fullest. He is an all-rounded walking, talking encyclopedia not only in his career but also in most, if not all aspects of his life. On top of that, he is clear and articulate in his communication, and without forgetting, he's approachable."

Montoya integrates spirituality into academic learning, drawing inspiration from the concept of faith. In the classroom, Montoya has adopted prayer as a practice, which he believes aligns with TRU's commitment to indigenization, blending spiritual beliefs with his scientific and philosophical teachings. For him, faith and science can coexist and he encourages students to reflect on how concepts of creation and God intertwine with science.

Montoya's teaching philosophy is grounded

in the Socratic method, where dialogue and inquiry drive students' learning process. He often engages students in discussions that challenge perceptions of the world around them.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Montoya uses his personal experiences to help students navigate complex societal and political issues.

"I've seen politicians come and go, but the country is run by bureaucrats. Things don't really change whether it's conservative, NDP, or liberal," Montoya said.

Montoya's research has explored various topics, from the psychological effects of hyperbaric environments to the influence of electromagnetic fields on cortical cell functions. His goal is to encourage students to think beyond traditional psychological boundaries and consider the broader implications of their work.

Beyond the classroom, Montoya is a dual citizen of the United States of America and Canada and is a self-described undefeated champion in foosball. "I'm really good at foosball and ping pong. No one has beaten me—not even the kids," Montoya said, adding that foosball is another way for him to connect with his family.

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



Runnin' with the 'Pack

A conversation with WolfPack women's volleyball head coach Chad Grimm

FAIZAL BUKHARI/THE OMEGA

AIBIIKE ALYMOVA SPORTS EDITOR

At the beginning of the 2023-24 season, the Omega interviewed WolfPack coach Chad Grimm following his year-long absence. After almost a year, Grimm once again sat down with the Omega to discuss what had changed.

Omega: In last year's interview, you mentioned that one of the main aspects you wanted to focus on was building relationships with the girls. Was that goal realized?

CG: We always try to build those relationships through open communication. We try to do stuff in the summer; [for example] we have a book club [where we] talk about things we value. [We] try to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. We had a trip to Turkey as a team. I think those things help when you're travelling internationally and people [are in] their comfort zones. There are outside stressors [as well], and I think that helps bring a group together.

That's something we're always working on, but I think as you go through the years and you [have] an older and more mature team, those things start to improve.

Omega: Considering that, what aspect has improved the most over the past year?

CG: I think, generally, our level of maturity as a group has improved on and off the court. We can manage a game better as a team on the court. Off the court, we're able to start to have more open dialogue [and] communication. When issues arise, we're better at addressing those things. It's always a work in progress and things will always be up and down, but those areas we've improved upon.

Omega: What is the mentality for the next half of the season?

CG: Come and try to improve a little bit every day. Results will take care of themselves. You're going to have good games and get a result. You're going to have a good game [and] maybe

get a bad result. We don't focus on that, but controlling what we can, performing to the best of our abilities and then, at the end of the night, see what happens.

Omega: What drew you into coaching?

CG: I was a player for a long time [after which] I was a teacher. So, I think teaching was always part of what I enjoyed. It kind of became a natural fit. I was a system coach with the men's team for a long time. I've coached my kids a lot. I think sport is a great vehicle to help to teach life and this provides an opportunity for me to try to do that.

Omega: What do you think is the most rewarding part of our coaching?

CG: It's seeing the growth of the players as people. I met up with two alumni yesterday just to see where they're at and see how they are doing in their lives after they graduated. Now they can pick up some skills [...] that are positive when they get out into the real world.

So, I think, as a coach the nicest thing to see is how the players go through their journey when they leave here.

Omega: What do you think the team taught you?

CG: I think the teams teach you a lot of things, but what we value the most is not getting stuck on just results all the time. It is a performance-based industry where we're kind of judged on that as a coach, but not getting stuck on that and not making decisions based on that. I think that it's an easy thing to do as a coach: making decisions solely based on performance.

Omega: What do you think is the most memorable moment of the season so far?

CG: I think it's our trip to Turkey. It was an amazing experience. A lot of people have not traveled internationally before and to just see them experience those things and kind of open up your eyes and see the world is a little bit bigger place than in Canada.

ACROSS

- 1 "High" or "low"
ocean occurrence
- 5 Windy City paper,
with "The"
- 9 Specialty
- 14 "The Bard of ____"
(nickname of
Shakespeare)
- 15 Service organization
with a wheel logo
- 17 Fix up
- 18 "I've
looked everywhere
and still nothing!"
- 19 Insect studied by a
myrmecologist
- 20 Tennis star Naomi
- 21 Pirate's cry
- 22 Long features
of an ostrich
- 24 Wee fellow
- 25 Bad mood
- 26 Fido's doc
- 27 Highest grade
- 29 Super ____
(lobbying grp.)
- 30 Video game
test version
- 31 "The Lord of the
Rings" actor Billy
- 32 "Witnessed
that myself"
- 34 Creative pursuits
- 35 Unemotional
- 37 Gram
- 38 Texter's "Then
again ..."
- 39 Ballerina's skirt
- 40 Was in debt
- 41 Caviar
- 42 Intrinsically
- 43 Hesitant sounds
- 44 Singers' needs
- 45 Chihuahua's cry
- 46 Knots, or knotted
neckwear
- 48 Unagi, to a
sushi chef
- 49 Swimming birds in
a Christmas carol
- 52 Took a seat
- 53 Tangy and smoky
Filipino condiment
- 56 Online craft site
- 57 Former WNBA
star for the Los
Angeles Sparks
- 58 "Plant of
immortality," to
ancient Egyptians
- 59 Joust's mount
- 60 Common condition
at a VA hospital
- 61 Yellow Monopoly
bills, classically

DOWN

- 1 Mexican dish
steamed in a
corn husk
- 13 Film critic Roger
- 16 Boulevards
and such

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- 2 "That would be a
new experience
for me"
- 3 "Stay back"
- 4 Finish
- 5 Cypress Hill or
De La Soul, e.g.
- 6 Decays
- 7 "We aren't to
blame ... look in
the mirror!"
- 8 Reviews of
interest to many
financiers?
- 9 Connections'
publisher: Abbr.
- 10 "____ bin ein
Berliner" (JFK
quote)
- 11 Spotless
- 12 Time of year for
many tropical
cyclones
- 13 Film critic Roger
- 16 Boulevards
and such
- 23 Hides away
- 25 Lose traction,
in a way
- 27 Muscles worked
by dead bugs
- 28 Striped insect
that builds its
nest out of mud
- 30 Chinese
steamed bun
- 33 Mass of gum
- 36 Stage prompt
- 42 So last year
- 44 Lunch and dinner
- 47 Eyelid afflictions
- 50 CBS procedural
with a New
Orleans spinoff
- 51 March Madness
ranking
- 54 Romantic boo
- 55 Like Henry, a
Nile crocodile
born in 1900
- 56 Nosh on

SUDOKU

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