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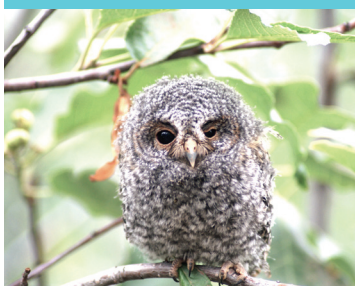


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A baby flammulated owl, one of the endangered species living in forests around Chum Creek, appears to look annoyed. Credit: Jose Abrego

the Omega

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OPINION

**With changes to Voice
of America radio history
is repeating itself**

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Mapping the future

TRU's updated master plan maintains a strong campus core

An artist rendering showing an updated vision for the area outside Old Main was featured during the February Board of Governors meeting.

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

For the first time in more than a decade, TRU has revamped its Campus Master Plan.

Walking paths, east village housing, green spaces and a “campus heart corridor” are some of the first items on the university’s agenda following the release of its updated seven-phase plan.

In collaboration with Stantec, an engineering firm, the university hosted a virtual town hall on Feb. 12 to present its new plan and hear feedback from the TRU community.

“We do have a nice campus. We did quite a lot of work since the last Campus Master Plan was done in 2013,” said Matt Milovick, VP of administration and finance at TRU, during the presentation.

Milovick said this new plan is similar to the former version but takes into account property acquisitions and changes that have occurred in the past 12 years.

The first of seven phases of this master plan prioritizes creating a strong campus heart corridor. One of the recommendations Stantec brought forward to achieve this goal was the removal

and relocation of parking lots near the Brown Family House of Learning and Old Main to the campus perimeter, a change that would allow for more green space.

Changes to parking, however, were not the only improvements to have a renewed focus in the master plan. Previously announced projects, such as connecting the east village to the university via an overhead pedestrian walkway and a walkable trail from the Summit Drive intersection to the campus heart, were also announced as priorities.

“The plan itself envisions a campus heart that has a unique mixed-use, walkable-type environment at the centre of the campus,” Stantec practice leader Brian Christianson said.

The Low Carbon District Energy System and Indigenous Education buildings are expected to be built during this phase.

“The following phases of the campus plan look to slowly and incrementally fill in aspects of the overall plan,” Christianson said.

Christianson said it will likely take decades for the rest of these phases to

be completed and Stantec will provide guidelines for TRU going forward.

“We can’t allocate a timeframe to any of these developments and we do need to allow for some flexibility because of the variability in government funding in the marketplace and forces in the community around the development side of things,” he said.

With each phase, the university plans to incorporate parking into each building while improving walkability and green space.

Phase two will see additional academic buildings built near Old Main, the bus exchange relocated to Eastgate and more research buildings.

The third phase will look at adding new athletic facilities near the TCC, new academic buildings and market housing at Westgate. In contrast, phase four focuses on developing a “self-sustaining community” of market housing created north of campus.

Phase five will see the market housing created along McGill Road in the current location of the McGill residences.

The sixth phase will

see low-density housing north of campus across on the downhill slopes from North Tower.

“This is a lower density, kind of townhouse quality development that would occur in those slopes over time,” Christianson explained.

“The final phase would see a build-out of the north-western parking lots for mid-rise apartment-style housing that would be self-sufficient in terms of parking.”

According to the presentation, the plan was developed with stakeholder engagement in mind. Stantec met with the TRU Community Trust, executive leaders and facilities members. They also sent out a survey to students and staff in 2024.

Priorities identified from the engagement were varied but included integrating research, balancing private market development with academic expansion, densifying the campus without losing open space and addressing the parking lot concerns at TRU.

Stantec and Christianson were involved in TRU’s 2003 and 2013 masterplans as well.

International students facing economic crisis



Many international students say they are struggling just to make ends meet

SANTIAGO ROJAS CONTRIBUTOR

For many domestic Canadian students, finding time to work, study and have a social life can be difficult. Between juggling work and school schedules, it can be challenging, though not impossible, to find stable footing. However, when it comes to being an international student studying in Canada, the problem of having too much work can be as great as having too little.

Jane and John Doe are two international students who, since the new international work restrictions came into place, have found themselves in a precarious position of being forced to work within the hourly limits or accept illegal, under-the-table employment just to survive. Both agreed to speak with the Omega on the condition they be given anonymity due to their vulnerable positions as international students.

"I [used to] work 28 hours per week. My boss understands that you need the money and he also needs a good worker. They are willing to give me a couple extra hours on top of what I am allowed to work. I want to say that they treat me as a family," Jane said.

Jane is a fourth-year International student from Central Asia in her final semester of study. During her time at TRU, the federal

government has changed the rules for international student employment twice. According to Jane, she has endured tremendous stress because her basic expenses are higher than what she is entitled to work. This situation forced Jane to accept more hours under the table, an action the government would deem illegal and grounds to revoke her permit.

"I was able to help my parents [financially] by paying my rent when I [had the ability] to work [up to] 40 hours. [My parents] only had to pay for my tuition, which is already a lot. I had the opportunity to have a second job in a professional field; however, they would only have 4 hours available. So, I had to choose my barista job, which was instant money, over a job that would benefit my career in the future," Jane said. "Now I can't afford to [get] sick."

John is an international student from South America who has been in Kamloops for more than a year. When he arrived in Canada, there wasn't a limit on the number of hours he could work. Currently, he works 36 hours per week, 12 more than what he is allowed by the law. Like many of his peers, John understands he's breaking the law but sees it as a necessary decision, saying that he wants to contribute to the economy

of Canada by working. Like Jane, John is jeopardizing his stay in Canada when he does this, but there is no other choice for him.

"I noticed that it was impossible to survive with only 24 hours [of work]," John said. "In Canada, groceries, gas, university tuition fees and housing are extremely expensive. I don't have [better] options other than to keep working. I just want to live a normal life."

The most recent change to working regulations for international students was announced on April 29, 2024, by the federal government and went into effect on Nov. 8, 2024. Under the new rules, international students are restricted from working more than 24 hours per week during school terms without a work permit. The previous policy— which went into effect Nov. 15, 2022— allowed international students to work more than 20 hours per week during school terms with no upper restrictions.

A news release from the federal government in April justified the changes, stating, "As such, allowing students to work up to 24 hours per week will ensure they focus primarily on their studies, while having the option to work, if necessary."

According to Jane and John, however, the new rules had the opposite effect, telling the Omega

that instead of helping them focus on their studies, international students are more concerned about getting the money for the required textbooks and being able to pay for the rent.

To both of the international students, the changes seemed arbitrary. Despite working multiple jobs with hours totalling more than 36 per week, Jane has maintained a 3.7 grade point average (GPA) throughout her studies and has been on the dean's list each semester, while John has worked similar hours while earning a 3.2 GPA.

"If the regulation of the government [was] more flexible, we [could] improve our grades [and our lives] because [of less stress]. Thinking that you are doing something illegal affects you a lot," John said.

Like so many of their peers, John and Jane are risking their futures in Canada. If caught, they could lose their international student status, be denied study permits in the future or even be forced to leave the country. Both agreed that overthinking how they manage their finances distracts them from their studies.

"The Canadian Government is treating us as kids. We are all grown-up people who need the money to live," Jane said.



A western painted turtle, one of the many endangered species living in B.C. wetlands, is pictured sunbathing on a log.

The fight for the Chum Creek watershed

Environmental group speaks out on its battle with provincial government

JAKOB SCHMIETENKNOP STAFF WRITER

British Columbia has faced floods and landslides for the past decade, which communities are still trying to recover from. With disasters at this scale occurring frequently, such as the landslide that wiped out parts of the Coquihalla, the Bush Creek wildfire and the tragic flooding of Merritt and Princeton, many of these communities have begun searching for a solution.

Residents of Turtle Valley, near Chase, created the Watershed Protectors after concerns arose about the Chum Creek watershed. They noticed BC Timber Sales (BCTS) starting to take truckloads of trees out of their backyards, threatening their ecosystem and their clean drinking water.

According to the Province of British Columbia, watersheds have many important characteristics that help shape local ecosystems. For example, they collect water downstream that is filtered through trees where the proposed cut blocks sit. The slow distribution of water combined with an old forest creates a diverse, beautiful and natural fire-resistant forest.

The forests around the Turtle Valley watershed include a diverse habitat of standard wildlife found in B.C., including several endangered species such as the flammulated owl, western painted turtle, pine grosbeak and American badger.

"Endangered species don't have traction in our legal system, but water and natural disasters do," President and Treasurer of Watershed Protectors Alisoun Payne said.

On Feb. 25, the TRUSU Wildlife Club hosted an event on protecting watersheds in B.C. with Payne as the guest speaker. Describing the process as an uphill battle with BCTS due to inconveniently scheduled meetings, Payne told the audience during her presentation that BCTS allegedly stated "that the community is not allowed to discuss the topic amongst themselves."

"In order for us to speak out as citizens, we need to learn," Payne said.

Framing the conflict as a "David versus Goliath battle," Payne said she desires to help protect her neighbours and the forest by educating people. While acknowledging that the forest's monetary value is substantial, she reminded the audience that their biome is priceless.

"The first step BCTS needs to take is to change their policies when assessing land they are planning to cut and the process of how they cut," Payne said. "Aside from floods and landslides, BC is also rampant with forest fires which leave tonnes of burnt trees, which are all still salvageable for two years after a fire."

On Jan. 6, Watershed Protectors filed a judicial review petition and

notice of civil claim in the B.C. Supreme Court, demanding the halting of the planned BC Timber Sales auction of four cut blocks in the Skimikin and Ptarmigan regions and protecting their drinking water supply.

"BCTS put the cut blocks up for bid in December over the Christmas break and subsequently awarded the contract to Richwood Fencing Ltd. They then rushed the permitting through, presumably to get the trees out before any action [could] be taken on our part," Payne alleged in an email. "But thanks to the hard work of our lawyer, Ben Isitt and neighbour Chris Adderson, we managed to stay ahead of them."

"We are calling on the Province of B.C. to halt the planned timber sale," said Ben Isitt, the lawyer for the Upper Chum Creek Water Users Association and impacted farmers Christine Adderson, Scott Adderson, Hillary McNolty and John McNolty.

"BC Timber Sales is recklessly proposing large-scale clearcut logging 450 metres uphill from the Adderson and McNolty farms and drinking-water sources. The Minister of Forests and the court need to step in, do the right thing and protect these licensed water sources," Isitt said in a January press release.

Visit watershedprotectors.ca to learn more information about how you can donate and help spread the word.

'Buy Canadian' is more than a catchphrase



ROBERT MCALASTER/THE OMEGA

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH NEWS EDITOR

On March 4, U.S. President Donald Trump made good on his promise to impose 10 to 25 per cent tariffs on specific Canadian imports. In response, then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hit back with 25 per cent tariffs against \$155 billion worth of American goods.

During his address to the Canadian people on Feb. 1, Trudeau acknowledged the inconvenience citizens will face in the event of a trade war with the U.S., imploring Canadians everywhere to "choose Canada."

Though there are several ways to show support for the country, an understandable emphasis has been on consumer goods. Wherever possible, Canadians were asked to support Canada with their dollars.

The news of the American tariffs and Trudeau's response has spurred many Canadians to action, reigniting a sense of patriotism and national pride.

Much has been the same for TRU students, many of whom have kept up with the current political discourse and dedicated themselves to the buy Canadian mantra.

"Made in Canada means using Canadian resources and Canadian labour," said Cole Etherington, a second-year student of the policing and justice program. "Assembled in Canada does not necessarily mean made in Canada, so you have to be careful.

Buying Canadian means everything is manufactured and sourced here and it never crosses the border."

Victoria Warner, a second-year communication student, said she and her family have been actively buying Canadian long before any talk of tariffs. As a result, she has developed an eye for picking out locally sourced and locally produced goods.

"We've always been a big believer of knowing where our food comes from," Warner said. "I feel like I'm lucky because I was taught at a really young age [how] to identify Canadian and B.C. products."

Not everyone boasts a similar consumer consciousness, though. In fact, many students admit to not having thought twice about buying Canadian before this year.

"I didn't really focus on Canadian stuff growing up," said Ty Jarman, a second-year policing and justice student. "I just looked at things I thought were cool and asked my mum to buy it. I didn't really think about if it was Canadian or not."

Despite this, there is a general enthusiasm for the idea of supporting Canadian products.

"Research is definitely something I'm willing to do," Etherington said. "There are so many websites now that have all this information, so it's not like I'm going to dig into the specifics. But I am willing to find those

resources, look at a list of products and make changes to what I buy."

Beyond a sentiment for the love of country, many attest to feeling slighted by Trump's comments since winning the U.S. presidential election and see this movement as a way to rebuff the president and his rhetoric.

Journalism and communication student Sam Weir felt very strongly about this.

"He's been undermining Canada as a whole," Weir said. "Like the thing about 'making Canada a 51st state' it's just so frustrating."

For Warner, supporting the buy Canadian movement goes beyond making a statement about tariffs; it's also a protest against Trump's history of demeaning "nasty" women.

"I feel like something as simple as shopping Canadian is almost protesting that. At least we're not helping his cause," Warner said.

For others, the struggle is an extremely personal one.

"My dad works in Alberta," Jarman said. "If the tariffs happen, that will be a big hit on him. He might even lose his job, which isn't good for anyone."

Regardless of their reasons, many TRU students are ready to prove their dedication to the country and its people.

"As Canadians, we need to show that we're proud to be Canadian and we don't need to rely on the U.S.," Jarman added. "We

can support our own."

For many people, buying Canadian goes beyond economics and has become a matter of defending Canadian identity.

"I definitely think it's a matter of pride," Weir said. "Pride in being Canadian."

Though each student had unique perspectives of what constituted the Canadian identity, they all agreed it was something to protect and be proud of.

"I feel like Canadian values of being open, being who you are whenever you want to be that and not being scared of being ourselves, really needs to be preserved," Etherington said.

"If you can't pay for your coffee or you can't find your wallet fast enough," Warner said, "The person behind you pays for it."

"We've got the reputation of being a nice country, right?" Jarman said. "I think that politeness is worth protecting."

Still, Warner distinguishes between unfettered national pride and a love of the people.

"I think it's less about patriotism and more about support," she said. "Because I feel like patriotism can lead into the uglier parts of our history, with colonialism and such. What we're doing right now is supporting the people that support us."

"I may not love the government," Warner added. "But I do love our dairy farmers."

A Canadian flag flaps in the wind outside of Old Main.

How tragic loss can lead to saving lives

More than 450 lives were saved in 2024 thanks to generous organ donations

EAGLE ANDERSEN STAFF WRITER

Ahead of Organ Donation Awareness month in April, BC Transplant is thanking donors after 481 lives were saved in the province throughout 2024 due to the generosity of 90 living and 118 deceased donors.

"Living donors who choose to undergo surgery to save someone's life and the deceased donors and their families who make this selfless decision during their grief are profoundly inspiring," said Josie Osborne, B.C.'s minister of health.

One of those living donors is the mother of Mei Lin Chenug, a TRU advancement officer.

"In 2010, my dad was diagnosed with a kidney disease," Cheung said. "My mom, without hesitation, agreed to give my dad a kidney. I don't even remember [her] considering it."

"At that time, they didn't have a ton of resources for people who were looking for organ donations. So, it was put on you as [the transplant

recipient] to find your own donor," Cheung said. "The majority of that outreach was done by my mom."

Her mother made email lists, contacting almost everyone the family knew. When all options were exhausted, her mother found out she was a donation match.

"My dad has been living with my mom's kidney ever since," Cheung said.

"With [the donation], her life didn't really change — but on the flip side, it was everything for my dad."

Without a donation, her father would have needed frequent dialysis treatment to function. Dialysis is a medical process in which blood is filtered through a medical device that acts as an artificial kidney.

Instead, the couple has been living happily for over a decade.

Although nearly 500 lives were saved through donations last year, Cheung believes the province should be able to raise that number in the future.

"I think that [the number of donations] is great, but it can always be bigger. We can do better," said Cheung, a registered organ donor. The province hopes to fix this by making the donor registration process more straightforward.

Starting this year, British Columbians can register as donors by simply checking a box when filing their tax returns.

According to Canadian Blood Services, only one to two per cent of people who die in hospital are eligible to donate organs due to strict criteria in place.

To register as a donor in B.C., you must provide basic personal information and your personal health number and be 19 years old or have a guardian's approval.

B.C. residents can register at the Transplant BC website or wait for the new tax forms this spring to check the new organ donation box.



Tk'emlúps ceremonial mace to debut at spring convocation

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH NEWS EDITOR

In anticipation of TRU's spring convocation, slated for June 3 to 5, Tk'emlúps artist Ed Jensen has completed another project for the university. This one, a ceremonial mace featuring a jade coyote mounted on a juniper staff, tells a story of the resilience and enduring legacy of the Secwépemc people.

The staff will debut at this year's convocation and will become an important part of future TRU convocations.

Jensen is a self-taught artisan from Kamloops who grew up immersed in the traditional knowledge and histories of the Secwépemc people. With the legacy of residential schools ever-present, Jensen and his generation of artists emerged as seminal voices in the cultural resurgence of the Secwépemc people.

Jensen creates his art pieces with

tools and implements used for centuries by people in the Kamloops area, ranging from hunting weapons to drums and clothing. These instruments are not only important historical and cultural artifacts but also testaments to survival and perseverance.

Jensen took four months to complete the coyote mace using materials sourced from around British Columbia. The polished jade for the coyote came from Cassiar and the juniper wood came from Tk'emlúps.

Coyotes are important characters in traditional Secwépemc stories, playing the role of the trickster in many tales. Their presence has been felt in the storytelling traditions over generations. So, it was only natural that Jensen incorporated the canine into the piece.

Aside from the cultural significance the staff represents, its individual components hold their own relevance.

For example, juniper wood has been an essential component of tools and medicine in many Indigenous cultures for hundreds of years. The staff also features carved depictions of Secwépemc stories that, as knowledge-keeper, Jensen sees as legacies designed to live on long after him.

"Long after I'm gone, people are going to be able to look at this piece and know that it was a homegrown, grassroots Secwépemc person that did this project," Jensen said. "Somebody who knew the stories, somebody that was aware of the culture."

Becoming a part of future TRU convocations means that these stories and artworks will become embedded in the university's history and each student leaving TRU will do so with an awareness and acknowledgement of the Secwépemc people whose lands they stand on.

B.C. business advocating for change

An Armstrong businessman gives his perspective on what buying local means

JAKOB SCHMIETENKNOP STAFF WRITER

For any Canadian who routinely follows the news, the month of February may have felt like something of a political and economic rollercoaster. Since well before President Donald Trump began his second term in office, the former reality-television-personality-turned-politician has threatened to upend the North American economy by imposing tariffs on many products from the United States' closest trading partners, Canada and Mexico.

Shortly after taking office in January, Trump announced that the initial round of tariffs on Canadian goods would go into effect on Feb. 4. However, following a conversation with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Trump paused the tariffs for a 30-day period ending on March 4.

True to his word, tariffs on many consumer Canadian goods came into effect on March 4, only for the Republican president to yet again reverse course two days later, announcing a pause to the tariffs on some Canadian imports for a further 30 days, ending on April 2.

Amidst the confusion and uncertainty, many Canadians are experiencing some level of anxiety about a potential trade war and how it will affect their day-to-day lives. This has sparked some to take a stance in protest for the pride of their country.

"We should be educating ourselves to be more conscious and, where possible, switching to Canadian products," Cole Etherington, a second-year student of the policing and justice program said in a previous conversation with the Omega.

Etherington isn't alone in this opinion. According to a poll conducted by the Angus Reid Institute in February, 78 per cent of Canadians "...are committing to buying more Canadian products overall," while 59 per cent say "...they'll boycott U.S. products."

Keith Hamer, owner of Valley Direct Foods in Armstrong, located 108 kilometres south-east of Kamloops, advocates buying Canadian and is helping

provide ways for others to do the same. Hamer has taken the initiative to make Canadian grown food more accessible to consumers by applying pressure to importers, advocating to fix the inter-provincial trade barriers and simply supporting locally sourced food suppliers. He believes that supporting local businesses benefits not just communities but also the national economy.

Valley Direct Foods is a food distributor for restaurants, pubs, hotels and residents of the Okanagan. From the restaurants to your dinner table, Hamer has been supplying B.C. consumers with fresh food for 15 years and says there has been a drop in American products

“Why buy from Starbucks when you can buy from Blenz? Every cup from Starbucks is a dollar to the States,”

Keith Hamer, Valley Direct Foods

purchased for the last month and a half. Now, the trend is a growing consumer preference for locally sourced goods, highlighting the increasing demand for Canadian products.

Supporting local producers is now a priority for Valley Direct Foods. By ensuring his company provides customers with transparency about where their food comes from, Hamer believes that his customers will be better equipped to make informed choices that benefit local farmers and the economy.

"We focus as much on local products as we can," Hamer said. "Everything on our website is labelled where it is from."

With a transparent model, Hamer's customers can easily identify Canadian-made goods, further benefiting Canadian producers.

However, the local business owner said it's not just retailers and distributors who need to do their part; it's also up to suppliers to contribute.

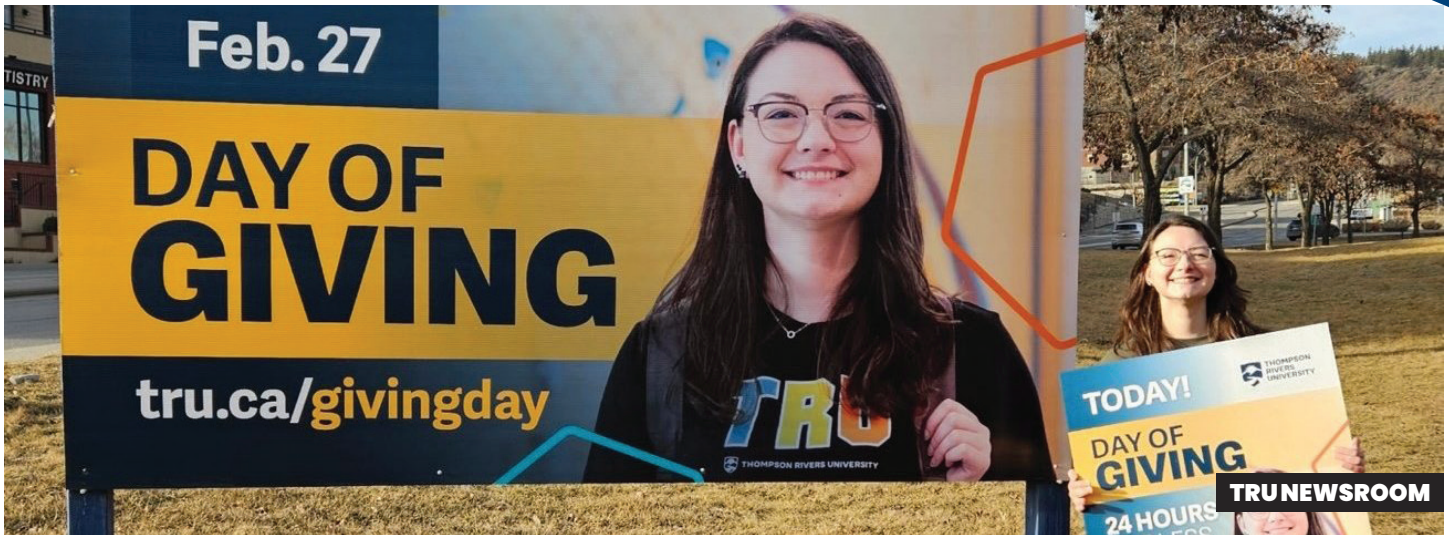
"If there's pressure from the customers to have more Canadian products, then I won't back down and I'll pressure my suppliers and my importers to bring in more Canadian products. This is what I'm all about," Hamer said. "Our importers, with pressure from companies like us, they'll notice an uptick of suppliers buying foreign products over American, leading them to stay away from the U.S."

Unfortunately, the process still isn't so simple. With taxes and interprovincial trade barriers, buying Canadian does not come without sacrifices. Hamer believes these issues could be relieved with a change in the current Canadian government.

"It is good that both the left and right have united against a common enemy, but to be frank, we should have been doing this before the tariffs. There are so many restrictions on buying products from different provinces, where buying products from California might be easier. If it's easier to import truckloads of goods from California, then people will," he said.

Only time will tell if the "Buy Canadian" movement will have a lasting impact. Unfortunately, it remains to be seen if President Donald Trump can be reasoned with before the situation erupts into a fully-fledged trade war. Thankfully to concerned Canadians like Keith Hamer, buying Canadian-made products has never been clearer. As the tension boils, the push for supporting locally sourced may become more than just a trend.

"Canadians want to buy Canadian, but [we're] so heavily taxed [we] put that aside. If there was more disposable income, everybody would get on board with buying locally. We have our own food chain in the Okanagan and we don't need U.S. products. I am seeing that a lot more than I have in the last 15 years."



TRU student and award recipient Mackenzie Warner helps promote Day of Giving 2025.

New record set during Day of Giving

ADESIRE AJAYI-SMITH NEWS EDITOR

Each year, TRU hosts the Day of Giving, a fundraising event dedicated to improving students' lives and providing necessary support. From investing in laboratories and research to championing the TRU WolfPack, donations received at the annual Day of Giving go a long way in reinforcing TRU's goal of academic achievement.

This year's Day of Giving was held on Feb. 27. For the first time since it began, the fundraising campaign was condensed to 24 hours instead of the regular period of two business days. Last year's event set a record, raising more than \$48,000 in 48 hours; this year's goal was a similar amount, but with a time frame of 24 hours instead of 48. Despite the condensed time frame, the Kamloops community came together, raising more than \$100,000 in just 24 hours, a significant increase from previous years.

According to Jessica Petruk, a senior communications consultant at TRU Advancement, the annual goals could continue to increase depending on whether

the community continues to show up for students during these campaigns.

Donors at the event were invited to choose their cause and presented with options from funding scholarships, supporting the school's sports teams, donating to wildfire research and finally, a cause dubbed "Areas of greatest need," which is directed at student support, research, special initiatives and more.

Since its inception, the Day of Giving has been an important event in supporting and advancing TRU students. Of all causes, most donations went to scholarships, bursaries and awards. Last year, these financial supports totalled about \$2.2 million in donor funds awarded to students. The TRU Foundation distributes donations from events like this to support at least a thousand students annually, per Petruk.

Samantha Jo Haire, a fourth-year biology major, received a bursary in 2022. The support it offered her, she said, completely transformed her university experience.

Before the bursary, Haire had been struggling with

the financial burden of school, juggling high work hours with her classes. As a result of the added stress of work, Haire said she had not been doing as well in her first year as she had hoped. Her decision to apply for financial aid came after some personal incidents in 2022 that threatened not just her grades but her ability to attend classes altogether.

The bursary application process, according to Haire, had been fairly simple. Applying through the myTRU portal, she was mainly asked questions concerning her GPA and financial struggles.

"I explained everything that was going on with me," Haire said. "Both financially and mentally. I was like, 'I kind of can't handle this, and I may have to drop out.' They reached out and said, 'We'll fund you [a certain] amount over the course of your degree.' So most of my tuition is paid for and most of that money does come from the Day of Giving."

Today, Haire is not only on top of her classes but is also active in the Williams Lake TRU community. In addition to serving as a member-at-large in the TRU Students

Union, she is an intercultural ambassador, works in the university's Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism and is a member of the Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Strategist Committee. She believes that all of her achievements would have been significantly more difficult to obtain without the financial aid she received from the university.

"We hear often that the impact is not only monetary," Petruk said. "It can be motivation to keep going, to keep following a dream or passion. It can inspire them to give back to their community [and] strive to give back in the future. Sometimes, it means making up the difference so they can complete their education. The impact is undoubtedly far-reaching."

Beyond financial aid, donations from the Day of Giving have invested in important laboratories like those in the School of Nursing, the School of Trades and Technology and the Faculty of Science. According to Petruk, the university's donors can be credited with some of the state-of-the-art equipment present in these laboratories.

Where experience, entertainment and education meet

While some travel for leisure and relaxation, others travel to feed their intellect

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

Like rushing through a busy train station in a foreign country—checking departure boards, adjusting to new time zones and fumbling with unfamiliar currency—stepping into global education can be thrilling and transformative.

TRU students have various opportunities to broaden their academic and cultural perspectives beyond borders. Additionally, the inbound exchange program engages students from various countries, enhancing discussions, perspectives and experiences across campus.

"We actually have five different options and over these five different [study abroad] options, you can go to [more than] 50 different countries," Manager of Study Abroad Norah van der Haas said.

The bilateral exchange program allows students to study at one of TRU's partner institutions in 40 countries while paying TRU tuition. Another option is the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), a non-profit network with more than 300 partner institutions worldwide. Students can study abroad for one or two semesters, depending on the host country's academic calendar.

To qualify for the bilateral exchange, students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and one year of completed university studies. "This is to ensure that you can survive university in the domestic context before we send you abroad," Van der Haas said.

The cost of studying abroad varies based on location. "If you want to go to

a country where there is high tourism, it is going to cost more in your living expenses. That's where your main expenses will be—either your flights or living expenses or rent," Van der Haas said.

To help cover some costs, financial aid from TRU may be available, including the TRU World International Mobility Award, which provides \$500 for short-term field school trips and \$1,000 for semester-long exchanges.

Additionally, according to Van der Haas, some destinations offer more affordable options than others. For example, in the host country of Vietnam, students can expect rent below \$500, whereas in Colombia, a partner university offers scholarships to cover living expenses.

Brooke Enders, a study abroad ambassador who has studied in Japan, England and Australia, said she found the experience "transformative."

Each destination provided unique insights and learning opportunities, showing Enders the importance of cultural exchange and environmental responsibility.

"In Japan, we had buddies who introduced us to local traditions. In Australia, I worked on a turtle conservation project," Enders said.

Beyond the classroom, students face real-world

challenges that push them out of their comfort zones. Adapting to a new environment, making friends from different backgrounds and experiencing daily life in another country all contribute to self-discovery and resilience.

"It was my first time travelling internationally. I met amazing people, explored and really grew as a person," Study Abroad Ambassador Brennen Lockwood said. Like Enders, Lockwood has experience in the program, first travelling to study in New

Zealand before attending a field school in China.

For students who may be apprehensive about travelling to another country to study, TRU provides extensive pre-departure support,

including risk management and intercultural communication sessions. "We cover things like pre-departure vaccinations, travelling with medication and accessibility needs," Van der Haas said.

"For Nursing, we have exchanges in Denmark and Norway and field schools in Nepal where students help with things like wound care," said Van der Haas.

These experiences allow students to apply their skills in real-world settings while making a meaningful impact on local communities.

"Our electrical program

students install solar panels, lighting and wiring while engaging with the local community through food and shared experiences," Van der Haas said. "The gratitude and impact are incredible—it gives me goosebumps."

For trades students, TRU offers hands-on experience in Indigenous communities in Mexico.

While TRU offers ample opportunities for students to study abroad, the TRU inbound exchange program allows students from other countries to visit our campus.

Saki Niioka, an inbound exchange student from Japan said, "Overall my experience has been great. Sometimes I face challenges such as academic difficulties or language barriers. However, spending time with friends helps me relax and recharge, which encourages me to keep going."

With the inbound program, TRU hosts inbound exchange students from countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Spain, Denmark, Vietnam and Japan.

"Diversity is important for creativity and innovation," Van der Haas said. "It gives our domestic students the chance to learn from international students and share perspectives."

Whether studying, researching, or working abroad, TRU students gain invaluable global experience. As Van der Haas said, "The impact that students make is absolutely incredible."

"Don't be afraid of the unknown," Lockwood said. "Take advantage of the resources at TRU and go for it."

"You are immersed in the culture.. You have to learn to navigate. It's a time for personal growth,"

Norah van der Haas, Manager, Study Abroad

Sate your appetite and your mind

Finding relaxing study spaces may be difficult. Luckily, we've got suggestions

DOMENICA RANDICH CONTRIBUTOR

Same desk, same view, different assignments. Routine is good, but when it starts affecting the quality of a student's work, something is needed to break the monotony. So, where do students go when a change of scenery is required to get the creative juices flowing? Recently, the Omega traversed the halls on campus to speak with students. Below are the top five cafes, bakeries, coffee shops and eateries you recommended. Coincidentally, our top five are all in downtown Kamloops, so if you are one to coffee-hop or are in desperate need of having a productive study session, this list may be for you.

The Art We Are

246 Victoria Street, Kamloops
Tuesday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you're an art student or fanatic, The Art We Are is the place for you. Guests say that as soon as you open the doors, you will realize this café highly values the existing art in the world; its walls, as well as a part of its sitting area, are adorned with beautiful pieces of art and crafts made by local artists that are up for sale.

"Working here while also seeing local artists' progress is inspiring," said Faith, a barista at the cafe. As an artist, Faith values being surrounded by inspiring pieces and hopes to one day see her own on the walls where she works.

The Art We Are has an extensive menu, so if you and your friends decide to have a group study



ROBERT MCALASTER/THE OMEGA

session, your options will be covered. For a snack and drink, Faith recommends their Chai Latte and Peanut Butter Oat Bars, but if you're up for something heavier, their soups accompanied by sandwiches are also an option!

Caffè Motivo

229 Victoria Street, Kamloops
Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Most of us, at least once in our academic lives, put off homework until the last minute. Caffè Motivo, with its bright, spacious and slightly minimalist vibe, seems to be the cafe of choice of the professional procrastinator.

Their menu ranges from small, sweet treats to much larger options such as wraps and salads, which is a variety you might want to have depending on how near your deadline is.

The London Creative

260 Third Ave, Kamloops
Sunday and Monday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Though not exactly a

café, patrons say this two-sister-owned apothecary lounge has a cozy, relaxing ambience that may remind you of grandma's living room. A unique establishment, The London Creative is committed to taking care of its customers' health; aside from your regular coffee, its exclusive menu lists sophisticated medicinal beverages and lighter meals that will keep you feeling happy, loved and full throughout your entire study session. Who could ask for more?

He Brew's Ahava Coffee

210 Victoria Street, Kamloops
Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you enjoy people-watching in between study sessions, this coffee shop has the perfect windows to do so. With its refreshing and earthy design, He Brew's is the type of place where everyone gets so comfortable focusing is no longer a problem. According to Lani, one of the establishments' very enthusiastic and friendly baristas, He Brew's vibe is

"very welcoming because the owners understand people's backgrounds and how their minds work."

When asked about what to order, Lani suggested her favourite: an iced matcha with vanilla and lavender.

While you're there, remember to ask for your TRU student discount.

Brynn's Bakery

424 Victoria Street, Kamloops
Tuesday to Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Have you ever opened a bakery's door and been welcomed by the most mouth-watering and irresistible smells? This is what Brynn's Bakery is all about. Though not the largest establishment on our list, its well-positioned sets of tables and chairs ensure you have enough room to have your laptop and books and, if you are up for it, one of Brynn's excellent blueberry scones.

The Den

Upstairs in the Campus Activity Centre
Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Of course, this list wouldn't feel complete without the addition of The Den.

Nestled upstairs in the CAC on campus, the Den offers students a pub-style, relaxed dining experience right in the heart of the campus.

Featuring such comfort foods as poutine, burgers and chicken wings, the Den is an ideal place for students to study after late nights and early mornings.

For the love of medicine, law and television drama

Joyce Adjei enjoys tea, hates coffee and knows *How to get Away with Murder*

ELLEN KAZEMBE STAFF WRITER

In academia, some teachers leave a lasting mark—not just through their expertise but through their passion for teaching and student mentorship. According to many of her students, Joyce Adjei is one of them.

"I wanted to do medicine, and my dad suggested nursing... I am so grateful to him for mentioning that," Adjei said. After completing nursing school, her interest in law emerged. "I came across a lot of lawyers after I finished nursing... I wanted to know more."

She soon realized that law and healthcare were deeply intertwined, particularly in areas such as policy-making, ethics and patient advocacy.

"Policies are used to support laws, and laws can be used to support policies... so my interest became bigger," Adjei said.

"The goal when I went to do my master's was to become a teacher. I felt that if I studied law as well I could teach about healthcare policies in a broader way," Adjei said.

Her lectures often have lively discussions, pushing students to think critically. Each class feels like an open forum where ideas are exchanged freely.

"In high school, I would help my classmates, and I realized I enjoyed doing that," Adjei said. Now, as a professor, she describes teaching as a "co-creation of knowing"—a dynamic exchange where she learns from her students just as much as they learn from her.

In the evenings, she trades the classroom for the dance studio, swapping academic rigour

"You know, as a woman of colour, I am very much aware of my social standing as a minority... So for me, social justice is important."

for the rhythm of Zumba beats. For her, dancing is not about perfection but joy, movement and letting go of the day's stress.

"I go for walks. I do Zumba—that is my favourite. Any outdoor activity, I love it," Adjei said.

When she's not dancing, she enjoys spending time with family and visiting her home country.

"Ghana is home... I go and eat comfort food and see friends," Adjei said.

When she does take time to unwind, Adjei enjoys immersing herself in gripping TV dramas. Her choices reflect her professional interests and her love for compelling storytelling.

"I used to watch *Grey's Anatomy* because it is very medical. I also like *How to Get Away with Murder*. Viola Davis is the lead actor. It is an amazing show. *Scandal* with Kerry Washington is another one I love," Adjei said.

The challenges faced by underrepresented groups



FAIZAL BUKHARI/THE OMEGA

in academia are not lost on her. She actively ensures that classrooms are spaces where everyone feels seen and supported.

Her commitment to social justice extends beyond theory—it is a guiding principle in her work. She strives to create an inclusive environment where students feel supported and valued regardless of their backgrounds.

"Equity is not about giving everyone the same thing, but giving people what they need to succeed. Some students may need extra resources, while others need a different approach to learning. I try to make sure everyone feels seen and supported," Adjei said.

Students who have taken her courses attest to her impact on their academic journeys.

"Professor Joyce took the time to explain course concepts in a way that was easy to understand, as well as using easy-to-follow examples," said Ethan Spencer, a

first-year student at TRU.

Her career path is not one of limitations but of expansion—proof that an individual can wear different hats and excel in each.

"People find it difficult to reconcile that I am both a nurse and a lawyer because society sees only one path. But this is your journey. If something interests you and an opportunity presents itself—go for it," Adjei said. "I always tell my students that life is full of surprises, and sometimes, the best decisions come from unexpected moments."

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, you're encouraged to email the Omega's arts editor, Augustus Holman, by email at auggietaylor6284@gmail.com.

A place for the nerd in all of us

LUIS VENTOZA CONTRIBUTOR

As we enter a new digital world, paper media is becoming more rare as content moves to digital spaces.

In Kamloops, High Octane Comics is the last comic book store standing and the destination of choice for superhero, sci-fi and fantasy lovers in the community. For more than 20 years, the store has operated in Kamloops, growing, adapting and changing as quickly as the comic book industry itself.

For consummate fans of all things pop culture, walking into High Octane may feel like finding a second home. The store is filled to the brim with neatly displayed comic books, collectibles, toys and paints. Its knowledgeable, enthusiastic staff are just as invested in pop culture as their customers.

Store manager and local comic book artist Nick Klie says forging positive relationships with his clientele has contributed to High Octane's longevity and success.

"I know it sounds cheesy," Klie said. "But you gotta be the best store you can be."

In his eyes, Klie sees Kamloops as a transitional community where customers come and go, but he credits his staff for creating a friendly and, to some extent, familial environment that keeps patrons coming back. High Octane offers a safe place for comic book "geeks" who want to resume an old hobby or jump into a new one.

Since the first recognized comic printing in the late 19th century, comic books have steadily risen in popularity and prominence,

especially in Western culture. For years, comic books could be found in many retail establishments, from traditional book and toy stores, to convenience and corner stores. Those days, however, are largely behind us.

Recently, large entertainment companies like Marvel and DC have sought to offer a simpler, cheaper alternative to distribute their products: digitally. With High Octane Comics being an independent store specializing in niche, physical products in a small city, this does prove a challenge as both legitimate, purchased digital comic books and pirated "free" copies can adversely affect business.

"You don't focus on the people who want e-readers," Klie said. "[And] you definitely don't focus on the people who steal the products and pirate." Instead, he and the High Octane staff choose to be optimistic, focusing on the value and experience of shopping for comics and collectibles in person.

"You know, focus on what you do, right? Don't focus on what somebody else does. You know, focus on making your business," he said.

In an ever-changing digital world, High Octane stands resolute, serving a most passionate and enthusiastic customer base, an opportunity of which Klie is grateful.

"When I come to work, I get to sell people comic books, action figures, board games [and] trading cards. I get to sell people fun stuff. So it's really one of the best jobs around because you sell what you love and you're selling people's identity," Klie said.

CFBX Top 30 Charts

— March 20, 2025 —

Artist – Album (Label)

- 1) The Hausplants* – Into Equilibrium (Independent)
- 2) Nathalie King* – PTSD EP (Independent)
- 3) Digits* – Stay Alive (Independent)
- 4) The Weather Station* – Humanhood (Next Door)
- 5) JG Folsky* – Flying (Independent)
- 6) Marlaena Moore* – Because You Love Everything (Independent)
- 7) Peter Dreams/MOONRIIVR* – Peter Dreams (Six Shooter)
- 8) Movieland* – Then and Now (604)
- 9) Maddie Jay* – I Can Change Your Mind (Independent)
- 10) Marcus Trummer Band* – From the Start (Gypsy Soul)
- 11) Heavydive* – Foreign Patterns (Independent)
- 12) Maclayne* – Off the Deep End (Independent)
- 13) Laura Rae* – Sad Songs (Independent)
- 14) Brad Sucks* – Naturally (Independent)
- 15) Kelly Jamieson* – Too Close to the Sun (Independent)
- 16) Nia Nadurata* – Still Living with My Parents (Arts and Crafts)
- 17) Kumubu* – Double Dutch Duality EP (Independent)
- 18) Autunomous Apes* – Blame Me (Independent)
- 19) Various Artists – King Size Dub 24 (Echo Beach)
- 20) Hildegard* – Jour 1596 (Chivi Chivi)
- 21) Hollie Kenniff* – For Forever (Netzwerk)
- 22) Iron Tusk* – Disowned (Moments Fest)
- 23) Jacob Chung* – The Sage (Cellar)
- 24) Michael Slumber* – Nightmare Coloured Clouds (Independent)
- 25) Ollee Owens* – Nowhere to Hide (Independent)
- 26) Andrew Corbin* – Through the Veil (FiloFX)
- 27) Dun-Dun Band* – Pita Parks Pt. 1: Xam Egdub (Ansible Editions)
- 28) Sunny Bleau and the Moons – Passion and Regret (Endless Blues)
- 29) The Discarded* – The Green Door (Independent)
- 30) Avi C. Engel* – Nocturne (Soundtrack for an Invisible Film) (Independent)

* indicates Canadian Content ** indicates a local artist

Marlow: When fascists control the airwaves

A discussion about radio, freedom, fascism and the Trump administration

STEVE MARLOW CONTRIBUTOR

On March 15, the international radio signal of the Voice of America (VoA) stopped broadcasting news, for the most part. As part of President Trump's cuts to spending, funding was stopped to the VoA, along with their associated broadcasters Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Free Asia (RFA), and newscasts stopped for most of the foreign language broadcasts and was replaced by music.

While international broadcasters in many countries have been either shut down or cut back in recent years, mostly in response to our ample access to information via the internet, the shutdown of the VoA is a huge loss to the world and to the United States international standing.

Founded in 1942 in the middle of World War II, the VoA was started as a way to combat the propaganda sent out by the fascist Axis powers. It also served as a slice of home for U.S. soldiers serving in the war, who could hear news and music from their home country. As the Cold War rose, VoA and RFE began broadcasting into communist countries in Eastern Europe, serving listeners in those countries with a more objective view of the world.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford signed in the VoA Charter, stating that their reporting would be "accurate, objective and comprehensive". In 1994, the US International Broadcast Act prevented editorial interference by the government. In 2022, the worldwide listenership of the VoA was 326 million people.

In the first world, we take



ALAN LEVINE

for granted our easy access to information. We can bring out our phones and find any bit of information we like and also double check it against other sources. In less free countries, like Russia, China or North Korea, where access to information is severely restricted or, in some cases, illegal, and the news media of the country is controlled by the government, accurate information is almost impossible to find. Radio doesn't care about political borders and can broadcast over them with impunity. The technology is also cheap, making radio an easy way to bring true and unbiased reporting to these countries.

This isn't the first attack on the VoA by Trump. In the summer of 2020, Trump fired the board of directors of the VoA, RFE/Radio Liberty and RFA and ceased many broadcasts into the Middle East. Work visas of many foreign language broadcasters were not renewed. Trump installed his own head to the VoA network and began broadcasting pro-Trump content, including unfounded claims about former president Barack Obama, CIA director John Brennan

and then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. At least six whistleblower reports from the VoA said that the Trump allies were investigating VoA employees about their political affiliations. While the boards were reinstated as part of a summary judgment in October 2020, the plans were laid for 2025.

These tactics are straight out of the fascist playbook. Media control is one of the hallmarks of fascism. Pro-fascist broadcasts and spreading of misinformation against perceived enemies are standard in nationalist movements. For example, The Voice of Korea, the international voice of North Korea, is full of material that venerates Kim Jong Un. Dissenting voices within Korea are silenced with imprisonment or death.

In 2025, Trump ally Kari Lake was put in charge of the VoA. Lake has stated that journalists and her political opponents should be jailed, making her a disturbing choice to oversee a media network. On March 14, under her watch, funding was cut to the VoA and many broadcasts went silent the next day.

As recently shown, the Trump government has little regard for the rule of law, having already defied judicial orders to stop deporting U.S. citizens and immigrants without warrant. It has also removed important aspects of its own history from its documents, such as the contributions of the Navajo codetalkers in defeating Hitler. The loss of the VoA is another way for Trump to control what is being said and understood about the United States.

Trump's attacks on allied nations, like trade wars with Canada and Mexico, defunding the defence of Ukraine and his cozying up to dictators like Vladimir Putin, have damaged America's reputation in the world, probably irreparably. The VoA's loss is another stain on the reputation of the U.S., but it's much more of a loss for those not in the United States who depend on the VoA and RFE for accurate news, untampered by their own repressive governments.

It's ironic that one of the most important tools used by the free world during the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1940s has been silenced by modern fascists. More importantly, with Trump giving aid to Russia, sacking the VoA is giving Putin exactly what he wanted, since Putin had called the VoA a "foreign agent" in Russia.

It's ironic that a voice which once took down fascists has itself been taken down by fascists.

Steve Marlow is the programming coordinator for CFBX "The X" radio, a campus and community radio station broadcasting from Thompson Rivers University.



Runnin' with the 'Pack

A conversation with Priyanca Sundher, captain of the women's basketball team

MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

ALEXA LIPTAK STAFF WRITER

Since joining the Wolf-Pack in 2021, Priyanca Sundher has made a lasting impact as both a sharpshooter and a women's basketball team leader. Throughout her 80 games played with the 'Pack, she scored 73 career three-pointers, earning the number six spot in program history for most three-point field goals per game. Recently, the Omega sat down with Sundher to discuss a variety of topics, including overcoming challenges and the growing support for women's basketball.

Omega: Can you take me back to the beginning of your WolfPack journey and why you decided to come to TRU?

PS: Basically, I got recruited in grade 12. I knew the first initial coach, and he reached out to me and came out to all of my games. Then, through that connection, I came out to a few ID camps. I saw the campus and liked it here. It's a bit smaller than other universities, which I liked. So then I decided to go here.

Omega: You have 73 career three-pointers and are sixth in the program record books for most three-pointers per

game. What does that mean to you personally?

PS: It means a lot. There's been a lot of changes in the program and a lot of growth, so I'm glad I got to add to that. I'm glad I get to leave something behind at TRU as a part of my career.

Omega: Going off of that, can you share one of your most memorable games or moments from your career with the 'Pack?

PS: I'd say my seniors' night game. That was my career-high for points in a game ... and I got the opportunity to play one of my last games with our point guard, who's from Serbia. It was really nice.

Omega: Walk me through how your leadership position on the team has changed throughout the years.

PS: From my first year at TRU, I was kind of a rookie. I didn't get very many minutes, but slowly, as the years progressed, I moved more into a leadership role and then part of the leadership group. [Now] in my fourth and final year, I'm captain of the team.

Omega: During your time with the WolfPack, did you face any major challenges or setbacks? How did you overcome them?

PS: Over my four years we've had four different coaching changes, so it's been a lot to adjust to. We've [also] had multiple rebuild years, so there's been a lot of inconsistency. But I feel like through it all, it's kind of nice to have a good, solid team program.

Omega: There's been a lot of growth in women's sports worldwide in recent times. Have you noticed any changes in your time at TRU?

PS: I feel like there was a lot of growth over this past year [in regards to] women's basketball in general.

Whether that be in Canada or even the NCAA, I felt like that highlighted how good women's basketball can truly be in comparison to men's basketball. We play the same sport, but it's two completely different games that you're watching. I feel like through school advertising for our games [and] through social media, we've gotten a lot more support at games [this year].

Omega: How does the increased support make you and the team feel?

PS: It feels amazing. Especially at home games, when you see we have a crowd of people there with our hype nights that

we started doing. It's been nice to play in front of our school and know that we have the 'Pack behind us.

Omega: If you could give your younger self a piece of advice, what would you tell them?

PS: I would probably say, "It's going to be tough, but just keep sticking through with it."

Omega: What was the most valuable lesson you feel you've learned with the program?

PS: I feel like I've learned how to face adversity and how to lean into all my support systems. [I've learned] not everything is going to be given to you, and not everything is going to be consistent. Even when you're faced with adversity, when you're faced with multiple coaching changes, I felt like keeping myself grounded with the team and just grounded in the moment just really helped.

Omega: You're graduating with a bachelor's degree in science. What are your plans after graduation?

PS: I want to go into either the medical field [or] more dentistry. So, that's kind of my path as of right now, but who knows, it may change out later.

We're missing your voice.
Come write for us.



the
omega



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