

# NEWS RELEASE



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **TRU-Tk'emlúps increase education access with renewed agreement**

KAMLOOPS – Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) have renewed an agreement that increases access for TteS students. This renewed relationship spotlights student success and develops training and trades programs specifically tailored to the needs of TteS students.

The two parties have agreed to strong First Nations-led post-secondary education models. This agreement is a continuation of the university's vision to create a place of belonging where all people are empowered to transform themselves, their communities and the world. This principle of belonging comes from a TteS principle of *Kw'seltknéws*, which means "we are all related and interconnected with nature, each other and all things."

"I am pleased to be signing off on the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc (TteS)'s partnership agreement with Thompson Rivers University (TRU). TRU's main campus is located directly in Tk'emlupsemcúlecw. We are committed to upholding a mutually respectful relationship that values creating an inclusive environment for all students," said Tk'emlúps Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir.

"This partnership fosters opportunities for our language, culture, and knowledge to be showcased for the benefit and knowledge of all TRU staff, students, and visitors. The partnership is done in the spirit of *Kw'seltknéws* (we are all related and interconnected with nature, each other, and all things) and for that, we are proud."

TRU and TteS have agreed upon nine commitments that range from event representation to delivering programs that reflect the needs and worldview of the TteS people. A TteS representative will be provided a seat on a subcommittee of the TRU Senate, and the Secwépemc ancestral protocols will be reflected at TRU ceremonies and events.

TRU and TteS will work together to improve retention and graduation rates for TteS students and incorporate Tk'emlúpssemc ways of knowing, values and philosophy into the programs along. This agreement is part of an ongoing effort by the university to improve Indigenous education as part of the work of the Office of Indigenous Education.

TRU President Brett Fairbairn said, "This renewed agreement is not just about public declarations, but also meaningful action to see the success of TteS students. We know

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this is another step in our reconciliation journey with TteS and we look forward to implementing this agreement in the coming years.”

The university, with campuses in Kamloops and Williams Lake, also promises that programs and organizational priorities will align with Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls for Action (2015). As part of this promise, there is an acknowledgement in the agreement that the TteS have the “inherent right to education, including post-secondary education and will actively collaborate.”

TRU also commits in this agreement to work with TteS in the event of any discovery of archaeological artifacts or cultural items found in any university land development.

Kukpi7 Casimir and President Fairbairn are excited about this new partnership agreement and believe it will result in programs that reflect TteS traditions, philosophy and culture and greater student success at TRU.

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