Journey of Understanding:

Recommendations for Greater Inclusion of Gender Diversity at Royal Roads University

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Table 1. Summary of Seven Themes among Cisgender and TNB Respondents

Key Theme A	Better understanding of gender diversity among current students in comparison to former students at RRU
The survey results reveal that former trans and non-binary students report less safety and more gender-based challenges at RRU compared to current trans and non-binary students. Interestingly, despite the differences in challenges, there are comparable levels of belonging for both current and former trans and non-binary students. Furthermore, former cisgender students expressed more pushback and less desire to learn more about gender diversity compared to current counterparts. These outcomes point to an evolution on this matter over time at RRU.	Cisgender alumni more likely to <u>not</u> want to learn more about gender diversity (28.4%) compared to current cisgender students (16.6%)

Key Theme B	TNB and questioning respondents report less safety, belonging, and greater challenges compared to cisgender respondents at RRU
Trans and non-binary and questioning respondents are less likely to report high levels of safety or that they belong in their cohorts or teams at RRU compared to cisgender respondents. The contrast in results between TNB and questioning respondents on measures of safety and belonging highlights the trade-off between anonymity for safety (at the cost of belonging) and visibility providing greater belonging (with higher risks). Furthermore, less than half of trans and non-binary respondents reported <u>not</u> facing gender-based challenges at RRU compared to more than three-quarters of cisgender respondents and questioning respondents. Among trans and non-binary respondents by role, students are less likely to experience safety or belonging compared to employees; however, trans and non-binary employees report more experiences of gender-based challenges.	27.8% of TNB respondents and 50.0% of questioning respondents report high levels of safety compared to 74.0% of cisgender respondents [<u>Benchmark</u>: Across other organizations, the average is 28.5% among TNB respondents]

Key Theme C	TNB respondents face specific cultural challenges, especially misgendering
A majority of trans and non-binary respondents experience misgendering at RRU, which happens more among students than employees. Furthermore, 43.3% of trans and non-binary respondents report wanting to use different or additional sets of pronouns from the ones they are currently using at RRU, which is more common among employees than students. To address these and other issues, 51.9% of trans and non-binary respondents feel the need to provide free education to others at RRU about gender diversity out of necessity to be safe, which is more prevalent among trans and non-binary students compared to trans and non-binary employees.	51.4% of TNB respondents are misgendered at RRU compared to 5.8% among cisgender respondents [<u>Benchmark</u>: Across other organizations, the average is 46.0% among TNB respondents]

Key Theme D	**TNB respondents face specific structural challenges, especially related to communications, first names and pronouns in systems, and washrooms**

More than half of trans and non-binary respondents experience structural challenges, of which employees (75.0%) are more likely to experience than students (57.1%). The types of structural issues shared include lack of a field for chosen first names (different from their legal first names), voluntary pronouns, insufficient gender categories, and not enough all-gender washroom options in each building at RRU.

Some of these issues are known by departments at RRU and steps are currently being taken to address them, including: Updating systems, developing resources, and responding to requests, especially for graduation.

54.3% of TNB respondents encounter structural challenges at RRU compared to 9.7% of cisgender respondents.

Key Theme E	**TNB respondents rarely report challenges to RRU administration, partially explained by lower levels of TNB outness[2]**

Most trans and non-binary respondents (85.0%) have not or are hesitant to report their gender-based challenges to RRU administration, particularly among trans and non-binary employees. Cisgender respondents have this in common with trans and non-binary respondents, but at lower levels (i.e., 72.5% do not report).

Many transgender individuals hesitate to report their challenges to RRU administration because they are not fully out and, as such, need to balance safety with visibility. They fear the administration will not take their needs seriously, making the risk of outing themselves seem unjustifiable.

58.8% of TNB respondents are not fully out at RRU.

[Benchmark: Across other organizations, the average is 66.9%]

Key Theme F	**Many cisgender respondents want to respect TNB people, but lack information and hesitate to speak up**

The majority of cisgender respondents (75.9%) personally know someone trans and non-binary, mostly friends or co-workers. Furthermore, they also report being prepared to respectfully interact with trans and non-binary people (92.9%). However, they do not observe and/or feel ready to speak up when trans and non-binary challenges occur and express the need for more information to do so. The topics of the most need are: 1) How to respectfully interact with trans and non-binary people, 2) knowing their challenges better, and 3) knowing how to intervene when issues arise.

57.2% cisgender respondents indicate that they are not ready to speak up on TNB issues

[Benchmark: Across other organizations, the average is 52.0%]

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[2] The term "out" is used to describe when someone has shared with some or most people at RRU that they are transgender or non-binary.

Key Theme G	Circumstances are getting better at RRU with many positive examples shared

In qualitative survey results, trans and non-binary and cisgender respondents provided more positive examples (141 comments compared to 100 examples of challenges) with the following common messages:

- Trans and non-binary people are appreciated, celebrated, and accepted for who they are and their contributions.
- Everyday actions: Sharing pronouns in introductions and email signatures and inclusive washrooms in some buildings at RRU.
- Visible signs: President's messages, rainbow crosswalk, transgender flag raising, and Pride events.
- Clear and matter-of-fact coming out processes.
- Staff consider and are responsive to unique needs of trans and non-binary people.

These examples represent momentum towards positive change and are important to continue and expand upon.

"I would love to see RRU **continue on this trajectory**. The effort to make a positive difference **really shows and matters**."
- Cisgender Respondent

What can be done

In light of these key findings, TransFocus recommends the following 12 solutions to address the needs of trans and non-binary people and support cisgender people in their understanding of trans and non-binary issues. In general, the recommendations seek to expand options, reduce assumptions, and clarify practices at RRU. Table 2 summarizes the recommendations. Furthermore, about half of the recommendations are low-hanging fruit (i.e., quick and easy to implement) and are denoted by an icon in Table 2. Several of the recommendations designed for TNB inclusion also have broader benefits for cisgender people.

Table 2. Summary of Key Recommendations to Support TNB employees

#	Type	Description of Recommendation	
R1	Culture	Introduce anonymous feedback mechanism to allow continuous sharing of issues to effectively resolve and address them on an ongoing basis.	
R2		a) Develop and distribute resources for cisgender alumni to address common misconceptions about trans and non-binary people and foster greater understanding. b) Develop and distribute a *Toolkit on Gender Diversity* for cisgender employees and current students, including standards for interactions, how to come out, and how RRU employees can support.	
R3		a) Provide education to cisgender employees at RRU, with a particular focus on management, to fill in the gap of information on gender diversity most requested by cisgender employees.	

		b) Provide information to current cisgender students about issues of gender diversity as well as opportunities for connections between cisgender and trans and non-binary students to foster greater understanding.
R4		Design and run a trans and non-binary mentorship program to connect trans and non-binary students and employees in intentional and mutual support to navigate everyday and systemic challenges.
R5	**Communications**	Written communications: a) Complete and distribute the "Inclusive Language Guide" with specific references and examples of gender-inclusive terms. b) Establish standard pronoun practice for events, where people can voluntarily share their pronouns during introductions.
R6		Visual communications: Update standards for visual communications at RRU by avoiding problematic visuals and adding more nuanced and expansive visuals.
R7	**Washrooms**	Introduce inclusive signage for washrooms and a map of all-gender options at RRU for both employees, students, and visitors to support easier and quicker access.
R8		Introduce more inclusive washroom design in existing and new buildings at RRU to improve privacy, safety, and increase choice among options.
R9	**Information Systems**	Refine systems to prioritize chosen first names and privatize legal first names, add a gender-neutral option to titles, add pronouns, and expand gender categories in the employee and student system(s).
R10		Provide consistent and centrally-located information about how to change records in systems at RRU, including first names, pronouns, titles, and/or gender data.
R11	**Programs**	Introduce and distribute information about gender-affirming procedures in RRU's extended health care benefits that are not included in MSP. Of particular need and interest are mental health support and laser hair removal.
R12	**Measures of Success**	Measure success over time by collecting annual surveys among employees using the 2024 survey results as a baseline.