

## **Trill College Review: Report**

### **Introduction:**

Catharine Parr Trill College has undergone several major changes in its history, from a women's college through to its current instantiation as a graduate college. Over the course of each transition it has remained an integral part of the story of Trent University. Today, some think that Trill has lost some of its traditional vibrancy and its historical association with the Peterborough community. Coupled with the belief that the college has become a financial drain on an already challenged university budget, a review of Trill's operations, potential, and future possibilities is in order. For the most part, the current review has been welcomed as an opportunity for different segments of the college (and some outside the college) to tell their story to the wider community, while reflecting on the things they do well and how those things may be enhanced in the future.

Trill is Trent's graduate college. It is also the home of the undergraduate departments of English Literature, Canadian Studies and Cultural Studies. The graduate Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies (MA & PhD), Theory, Culture and Politics (MA), Public Texts (MA), Cultural Studies (PhD) and History (MA) programs also call the College home. Trent's Continuing Education Program in Peterborough is based at Trill, along with the Trent Community Research Centre. In terms of enrolment and budget, Trill is the smallest of Trent's colleges (with an annual budget of \$170,000). While the programming and support for student staff is thereby limited, the monies available are expended to optimum effect.

In conducting this review over the early months of this year, I have benefitted from the considerable input of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and members of the Peterborough community. The task of conducting the review would not have been possible – or as pleasurable – without these many contributions both in person and through written submissions. I would like to express my thanks to all involved.

Given the range of responses to the initial call for input, I have not been able to include or accommodate all of them in this report. I would still emphasize that they played an important role helping me arrive at a balanced appreciation of the interest in the college and the possibilities pertaining to its future. I can assure all that everything I heard and read has been carefully considered. To recognize those who responded, I have included a list of groups and individuals who have played a part in the review in an Appendix.

I would like to single out two groups whose insights were of special value. The first is the graduate students who currently hold Traill as their college. After an initial suspicion they embraced the chance to reflect seriously on some of the challenges confronting the college and offered a range of valuable suggestions. Most importantly, I would also like to thank the staff at Traill, who have kept the college running on a day-to-day basis in spite of all the difficulties that we might expect to be associated with financial challenges. If nothing else, I hope that this report will lead to an approach to Traill which will alleviate some of these challenges.

After the President's announcement of the review in mid-January, I made three trips to Peterborough to consult with members of the college, the university, and the city, including the mayor and the DBIA. These visits were supplemented by phone conversations with several people who had not been able to meet with me, and a few meetings outside of Peterborough. We extended the deadline for submissions from interested parties from mid-January until the end of April, which we judged to be ample time for groups to discuss the review and develop submissions, and for individuals to offer the benefits of their reflections. Many written submissions were follow-ups to the discussions held on campus.

In all of this, I was assisted by Ashley Horne, who was present at all meetings that involved two or more people, and who oversaw the schedules and collected submissions. The review would not have been completed as efficiently and in as timely a fashion without her assistance, for which I am extremely grateful.

In what follows, I give a summary of the main recommendations flowing from the review and then provide a detailed discussion and justification for each of them. In the course of these

discussions other related recommendations will be forwarded. The President's call for the review was expressed in terms of four central questions, and I have structured this report around responses to those questions. It should be recognized, however, that the answers to some questions presuppose what is said in response to others (In view of this, I would encourage interested readers to ingest the total before isolating any particular comments or recommendations).

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

**R1.** Traill should be an Interdisciplinary College in ways that enhance the programs, graduate and undergraduate, that currently operate there.

**R1a:** A specific range of undergraduates should be added to the college.

**R1b:** Traill should revisit the merits of becoming a residential college for undergraduate and graduate students, and include apartment residents as members of the college. **R1c.** Traill should consider having teaching faculty along the lines of the Durham model, reporting to the College Head and offering innovative, interdisciplinary courses. **R1d:** The graduate core should be enhanced by moving the Office of Graduate Studies to the college.

**R1e:** The College should retain graduate student offices as much as is feasible, given other commitments and the desire of some graduate students to have offices on the Symons campus.

**R1f:** The University should consider the addition of some professional programs to the Traill mix.

**R2:** Traill should have a different administrative structure from the other colleges, with an academic head reporting to the Academic Vice President and Provost.

**R2a:** College staff should include support for academic skills and counselling, as well as a porter/maintenance person with a knowledge of the requirements of the college buildings.

**R2b:** The College should develop an appropriate, financially viable, policy on ancillary fees, and have a student council to help oversee the policy.

**R3:** A financial plan should be developed that draws on a range of potential revenue sources that are currently underutilized.

**R3a:** Traill College should implement a fundraising/development campaign aimed at providing an endowment that could be used for various purposes (e.g., to address building maintenance).

**R3b:** The University should immediately double the graduate fee paid to the college, and negotiate with the GSA to develop a schedule of additional increases to eventually bring the fee in line with that paid by undergraduates.

**R3c:** In accord with recommendation 1a, the College should build a strong body of undergraduates in the college to enhance this source of revenue.

**R3d:** The University should enhance the Continuing Education program so that it eventually reflects the robust, revenue-providing program that was terminated in 2008.

**R3e:** Future college heads should negotiate the Trend contract in a way that reflects the interests of the college but allows for revenue as the Trend's business grows.

**R4:** Traill administrators should work actively to increase the college profile in the community, building on the firm relationships now in place.

**R4a:** The next iteration of Traill College should facilitate and promote events like the Writers Reading Series and the Symons Seminar.

**R4b:** A clear communication strategy should be worked out between the future Heads of Traill and the relevant Trent office.

**R4c:** The Traill administration should pursue possible collaborations with the City's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee.

**R4d:** The administration of the college should consider having it become a regular venue for the film festival and a place for Peterborough's artists to exhibit their work.

**R4e:** Connections like that provided by the Trent Community Research Centre should be supported and replicated.

**R4f:** If Trent desires a further presence beyond and in addition to Traill, then there are a number of major buildings and sites currently vacant or soon to be so, and the viability of expanding into these premises could be explored.

**R4g:** Traill administrators should work with the DBIA to advertise its activities more widely.

**R4h:** Traill administrators should also look at expanding the parking facilities and/or work with the city to provide occasional transit passes to Traill events.

**R5:** Trent should consider enhancing the value of service to the colleges by returning such service to the collective agreements.

**R6:** In relation to R4h, Traill administrators should address future parking needs by opening a discussion with Hospice Peterborough, the new occupant of the corner of London and Reid.

**R6a:** Consideration should be given to placing more parking spots on the Traill campus.

**R7:** Traill should give alumni the opportunity to become active or associate members of the college.

**R8:** The college should consider extending some type of college membership to the wider Peterborough community.

#### **Discussion:**

#### **What sort of College should Traill be?**

**R1:** An Interdisciplinary college comprised of students (graduate and undergraduate) more mature in their focus and expectations.

From all the discussions held and the materials and submissions received, two clear possibilities emerged for the future of the college. Colleges as they have evolved at Trent focus on student experience, which is understood in a variety of ways. Earlier colleges played a key role in the basic academic experience of students. While this is still present, it is less pronounced. Given the current makeup of Traill, there is an opportunity to promote the academic vision of the earlier model within the more practical realities of the contemporary university. As Traill has developed as a graduate college, the result has been—intentional or otherwise—an environment that caters well to the more mature student. This is an aspect of Traill which is

worth strengthening and developing in a college that could have a more academic focus than her sister colleges.

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This invites two related possibilities. The first is [R1] an interdisciplinary college that acknowledges and promotes the current strengths in the humanities, and that builds on Traill's core graduate cohort by adding a selected range of undergraduates [R1a]. Specifically, these could be undergraduates in their third or fourth years who are connected to the departments that have made their base at Traill (and to which others might be added), who find many of the academic seminars in which they are involved taking place at Traill, and who have been prepared for the more advanced student experience that a strong interdisciplinary college can offer.

A further cohort to add to this mix would comprise 105s for whom the student experience offered at the other colleges is not as attractive. These students have already been introduced into post-secondary education, have moved to Trent to enhance their academic experience and credentials, and are likely to be older.

To these, I would suggest the university add mature and part-time students in their first year of post-secondary education (international students might be included in this category). This last point is a recommendation that arose in different ways from my meetings with undergraduate students and with the heads of the other colleges. Both groups appreciated the need to address the needs of students for whom the current programming offered by the colleges was not clearly appropriate and who were therefore difficult to engage. These students would seem ideal to add to the mix of a more mature college. Adding this range of undergraduate students would be a significant step towards addressing the financial challenges unique to Traill.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I would note that this proposed composition of the future student body at Traill is consistent with that recommended to the Provost by the College Planning Committee (June, 2013), which noted that undergraduate affiliation with Traill would best suit "upper year students, students affiliated with Traill academic departments, and older part-time students" (p.16).

If Traill admitted this range of students, it would be possible to revisit the prospect of it becoming a residential college of some description [R1b]. While there would be initial costs associated with this, it would be the best way to return a full sense of college life, throughout the week and on weekends. With this in mind, the residents of the fourteen apartments at Traill should be members of the college and encouraged to participate in the life of the college.

One ambitious feature of a potential Interdisciplinary College could be the development of college-specific courses that would become part of a student's degree, possibly in first year before they specialized, but also as attractive electives in later years. This could take the form of courses that introduced students to a range of disciplines by exploring particular themes. The ambitious element here would involve the acquisition of Traill teaching faculty, reporting to the Head of the college, who would develop and deliver these courses. Trent at Durham has already established the precedent of having faculty specific to that campus and I would encourage Traill to explore something along similar lines [R1c].

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I should stress what was mentioned in passing above—that the core of the interdisciplinary college is the graduate student body. This core should be retained and even reinforced by moving the Graduate Studies office and Dean to Traill [R1d]. When Traill was made a graduate college, the Dean of Graduate Studies assumed the role of college head by default. This was successful but not deemed a necessary feature of the college, and subsequent heads have not been Graduate Deans. An impartial observer looking at the make-up of Traill might find it strange that it would be designated as a graduate college but have the office of Graduate Studies with its Dean located elsewhere.

Locating the office at Traill would serve to underline the importance of both Graduate Studies and the college. It would help to foster connections between the two campuses as meetings are shifted, requiring more members of the Trent community to spend time at Traill. It is true that some graduate students remain connected to the Symons campus (science students to their labs, for example), and are able to easily access the office of Graduate Studies when necessary. But most of these students live in the Peterborough community and should

easily be able to access the office at Trill at the beginning or the end of the day on their way to and from the Symons campus. The new mandate envisioned for the college would not permit the roles of college head and graduate Dean to be fulfilled by one person as in the past. But these two administrative leaders could quickly form a mutually-supportive relationship.

A further fixture of the graduate college is the students' access to and use of offices there. This has become a point of some controversy due to a widespread perception that these offices are underutilized. That aside, the university is obligated to provide graduate students with offices. If there is a desire on the part of the university or the college to revisit this situation, then the appropriate course is through future negotiations of the collective agreement. But it is clear that these offices are an important component of the experience of many of Trent's graduate students. They attract some students to Trent, and they offer an important space for quiet study that is simply not available in any comparable form on the Symons campus. While adjustments to the number of offices may be necessary to provide for other kinds of space that can be used to generate revenues for the college, I would recommend retaining as many offices as needed [R1e] because their value to the college community, present and future, is one of those intangibles that it is worth keeping. That aside, a regular audit of office use to determine how many are required is quite appropriate.

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A variant on the interdisciplinary college recommendation follows from a range of further suggestions, and it is important to include it here (I do not believe the two possibilities are incompatible). This second possibility is that Trill become a professional college that mixes mature graduate and undergraduate students with some of the (also mature) professional programs [R1f]. These would be programs that depend less on a home on the Symons campus and are more connected to the community. For various reasons Nursing would not be practical here. But the Consecutive Bachelor of Education would be a good fit under this model, as would, perhaps, the program in Social Work.

Currently, B.Ed. students are affiliated with different undergraduate colleges. But the schedule of these students does not neatly coincide with that of undergraduates, creating a



situation in which college events are not always available to them (though students affiliated with Otonabee may have a slightly better experience because the School of Education is located there). Further, the programming of the undergraduate colleges naturally addresses the needs of younger students rather than the needs of post-graduate B.Ed students. An affiliation with Trill would connect these students with other graduate students in a rich interdisciplinary environment.

Social Work is evolving. But there are strong connections with Trent in Durham, and if teaching space could be provided with teleconferencing capabilities, then this would allow course delivery to both campuses from one site. Situating the program within the community could facilitate clinical placements (the relocation of Hospice Peterborough to the borders of the college suggests one of the opportunities that could develop there).

**If Trill were to be a more traditional college how should it operate?**

**R2:** Trill should have a different administrative structure from the other colleges, with an academic head reporting to the Academic Vice President and Provost.

In conducting this review, I assumed that “traditional college” referred to the kind of college structure that characterized Trent through most of its history (but which has recently been abandoned). Given that these were residential colleges with an integration of faculty work space with student residences and the full involvement of the college community in its activities, a traditional model might not be fully feasible immediately. Too many things have changed, both in the physical plant and the structure of institutional support. But it is still possible to provide some residential experience so as to enhance the life of the college, and this, in turn, could be developed in the future.

In answering the first question I have essentially said that Trent should be a traditional college. But there remains the issue of how the college should operate, and that is the focus of my response to the current question.

Given the enormous potential to develop something unique and imaginative at Traill, whatever emerges will not be like the other colleges. This is not to suggest that it will be better than the others; just different. This difference justifies a number of things, including a separate administrative model.

Currently Traill suffers from being removed from the centre of many services that are located at the Symons campus. Over time, a situation has evolved that sees a number of offices administering space and providing services at Traill in a way that is less than efficient. These include Housing, Housekeeping, the Registrar's office, the Dean's office, in addition to IT services, security and maintenance. This is far removed from the kind of efficient coordinated operation that characterized Traill (and the other colleges) in the past.

To best achieve the kinds of things I envision as possible for Traill, the college should aim, as much as possible, to operate separately from the colleges on the Symon's campus, and from the operation in Oshawa. This suggests a different administrative structure should be considered for the college, with an academic head reporting to the Academic Vice President and Provost [R2]. That individual should be given a multi-year contract to allow time for them to develop the ideas they bring to the job. This will be particularly important during the phase in which any of the recommendations are implemented. With respect to the appointment of the academic head, it might be appropriate, as in the case of Deans, to have the Vice-President Academic (to whom the Head/Principal reports to) chair an advisory committee with representation from Traill fellows and students and staff.

The Head/Principal would be responsible for managing the operations and finances of Traill, and for ensuring that the college operates in a way that garners it the resources needed to support and oversee the affairs of the college, including but not limited to an administrative assistant. The college needs to provide support for academic skills and counselling, and, ideally, it should have a porter/maintenance person with a knowledge of the requirements of the college buildings to provide full-time support to the other staff [R2a]. Graduate and undergraduate students will require a council [R2b] to oversee their affairs and assist in the development of an appropriate policy on ancillary fees.

The question has been raised as to whether such a different model is possible given the university's current structures, and, importantly, its responsibilities to the Ontario government. I think it is. It is to be noted, for example, that the Ontario government's policy on ancillary fees (December, 1994/2004) allows a different protocol document<sup>2</sup> for institutions with a multicampus facility. Specifically, that document notes: "Institutions with a multi-campus facility may wish to have multiple protocols documents to address the different compulsory non-tuition related ancillary fee configurations at their institution" (Appendix 5.2, Part A, section 1). I interpret Trent to be such an institution, with campuses at Trill and in Oshawa. This policy should allow the future administration at Trill to work with student organizations there to establish a protocol that meets the variant needs of that academic community. Of course, if an undergraduate cohort officially returns to Trill, what needs to be ensured is that those students receive the same or comparable services as their counterparts on the other campuses.

### **How can Trill's budget issues be resolved?**

R3: A financial plan should be developed that draws on and implements a range of potential revenue sources currently underutilized.

I understand the thrust of this question to address the disparity regarding student fees received by colleges on the Symons campus and Trill. As a graduate college, given the lower fees assessed graduate students for their college affiliation, there is a considerable shortfall from that resource. More generally, the question reflects the general perception that Trill generates very little in the way of revenues and thus needs to be subsidized each year from other sources within the university.

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<sup>2</sup> These protocol agreements are required to explain and justify increases to ancillary fees (nontuition related fees) beyond those in existence in 1993-94 (the point at which they are fixed).

One common belief is that deferred maintenance is part of the main problem at Traill. While deferred maintenance issues exist, as they do for most buildings in the Ontario system, they have in fact been indirectly addressed by the sales and upgrades that have occurred over the last eight years. As a result, they do not stand out in comparison with Trent's other colleges and buildings.

The last building audit (2012) estimated Trent's deferred maintenance deficit at around 55 million, of which Traill's share was 1.5 million. The bulk of the repairs needed fall into the 'necessary but not yet critical' category. Under \$27,000 falls within the 'currently critical' category, and \$57,000 within the 'potentially critical' category. This compares very favorably with the other colleges. This situation stems in part from the sale of Bradburn House and Langton House, both of which were in poor repair. In addition to this, the conversion of Traill to a graduate college saw the kitchen removed from Scott House and that building upgraded. Kerr House has benefitted from Canadian Studies' support, which has provided upgrades like the Wilson Reading Room. Bagnani Hall, of course, is the centrepiece of the college thanks to the support of the Bagnani Trust.

Even Wallis Hall, while it remains a building in need of attention, has seen upgrades like the new flooring as a result of the conversion of much residence space to student offices. The Principal's Lodge was well maintained over the years, and this has left it still in reasonable condition, although it does have \$4,500 in critical repairs pending. Crawford House requires work, but the bulk of it is in the 'not yet critical' category. The final building in the college is Stewart House, which had been temporarily shut during the period of this review. It would appear to be the building most in need of attention and some decision will need to be made (perhaps in relation to this review) as to whether the building should be upgraded, sold, or removed and the space used for additional parking.

The upshot is that deferred maintenance is not as serious an issue at Traill as it is at some other colleges and would not seem to threaten the continuation of the college, especially in view of the upgrades in place.

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Of course, this is not to ignore the reality of these building costs. In addition to deferred maintenance there are costs related to accessibility. Scott House needs in the region of \$25,000 to make it compliant. There was a strong alumni response to the review, many of whom indicated a desire to contribute financially to the college if there was a viable plan in place. Given the exposure this review has received among the alumni, this may be the time to construct a Development campaign aimed at building a general endowment for Traill which could be used to support the maintenance of the College, and for other uses [R3a]. American institutions have demonstrated what a tremendous contribution such endowments can make to the long term viability of a college.

I have other suggestions about alumni involvement below.

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Before this review, it was not generally known that graduate students contribute less by way of a college fee than undergraduates (\$15, compared to the \$241 paid by an undergraduate). Of course, the current cohort of graduate students played inherited the current fee structure. It seems to have been short sighted of the university and those who established the fee in the way they did (with no adjustment for inflation or cost of living increases). An impartial observer might think that, in assigning graduate students to Traill College, the University addressed two problems that it was unsure how to resolve (what to do with Traill, and what to do with graduate students), and simply hoped that a favorable outcome would somehow emerge. That aside, the reality that exists does need to be addressed.

It is to be noted that graduate students are aware of their situation and willing to contribute more. While several of them have observed that they pay far more to the university than undergraduate students, they are generally appreciative of the higher costs associated with the level of education and training that they receive. Responses to the graduate student survey in relation to the review showed strong support (63%) for doubling the graduate student ancillary fee paid to Traill (to \$30). Realistically, this will not go far in relieving Traill's budgetary

pressures, but it will help, and should be adopted, with further increases scheduled through negotiation with the GSA [R3b].

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For Traill, a clearer route to financial stability is the introduction of undergraduate students along the lines suggested above. It is possible that the number of undergraduates affiliated with Traill will have increased by the time this review is discussed. During the review, it was clear that the college was well used by students who live in the vicinity, who seek a quiet place to study, and by those upper-year students who have frequent seminars at Traill. Many of these students were unaware that affiliation with Traill was an option.

Initially, it appears that students were not able to choose Traill as their college since, being identified as a graduate college, it was not listed in the drop-down menu. I understand that this situation has now been remedied, and that some students have, as a result of publicity around the review, chosen to affiliate with the college. Those aside, the addition of groups of undergraduates to Traill along the lines proposed above would allow the college to receive a portion of ancillary fees at the higher level paid by undergraduates. This will vastly improve its viability as a college. Adding four hundred undergraduates, for example, would generate close to \$100,000 in additional college fees [R3c].

There are related ways in which the Traill financial picture could be improved, depending on the type of college that Traill becomes. If it is possible to return some residence students to the college in order to improve college life, then this will, after the initial costs, become a source of revenues.

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One initiative Traill could pursue for financial benefit is a return to the kind of Continuing Education program the university closed in 2008 [R3d]. This is a good fit for the college, both in view of the university's desire for community connections and the fact that a fledgling Continuing Education Program survives at Traill with a shoe-string budget. This budget should be increased to allow the Program to develop, ideally to its former heights, and with the

expectation (requirement) that it achieve a revenue line which will allow it to be self-supporting, and subsequently generate revenue for the college.

The Continuing Education Program received considerable investment over seven years as it emerged from the dissolution of Julian Blackburn College. In 2008, it achieved financial viability and held the promise of becoming a very successful revenue source. I was not able to determine why such a strong program was closed suddenly, at a time when many community members were in the middle of acquiring certificates, and at the cost of some frustration in the community. At the time of this dissolution, the program boasted a series of interest and professional courses, some carefully tailored to the specifications of local businesses and organizations. Certificates were offered in areas as diverse as workplace coaching, conflict resolution, and teaching English as a second language (among others). Fees ranged from over \$1000 to several hundred, depending on the costs involved.

After Trent closed this Continuing Education program, other organizations stepped in. So it will not be easy to replicate the earlier success. But as it stands now, Continuing Education is restricted to a few special interest courses with quite small fees. Trent should give serious thought to the kinds of revenue streams that can be associated with a strong, diverse, and vibrant Continuing Education Program, along with the significant community goodwill that could flow from this. Traill is a good location from which to offer such a program.

While many of the people I spoke to recalled the strong program that existed in 2008, most have no clear idea of why it was discontinued. Apparently, it fell victim to a period of cuts and “changes in priority.” Unfortunately, this change involved a retreat from the community that has had some repercussions for Trent’s local reputation. In my discussions with community partners, some still saw the withdrawal of these certificate programs as a sore point, as a negative reflection on Trent’s relationship with the larger community. While serious efforts to rebuild this program would (again) involve an initial investment, it could provide some significant returns, and this is a possibility that should be explored.

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The Trend is another potential source of revenue. Currently, Traill receives no return from the facility and the university only receives a small percentage from the cards that students use there. No portions of the profits nor any rent returns to the college. This reflects historical difficulties that arose in attempts to find and keep a contractor. Earlier Trend operators failed to derive sufficient revenues to survive. The current operators derive most of their profits from catering to events in the college, rather than the day to day operations of the café. Certainly the Trend is the social hub of the college. It was an important step on the university's part to allow Traill to enter into a separate services agreement with the contractor. In spite of the absence of any serious returns to the college, there are reasons to encourage this situation to continue in one way or another. The administration of Traill College needs to choose future operators of the Trend and enter into contracts that are mutually agreeable to both parties [R3e]. It would be best to enter into contracts that provide some returns, but the primary concern should be the continued operation of the Trend in a way that supports the life of the college. As that life develops and expands, and especially if the residential component of Traill is able to expand, an expansion of the operating hours might allow for a contract which would provide some revenue for the college.

#### **Is Traill a successful Trent connection to downtown Peterborough?**

R4: Traill should work actively to increase the college profile in the community, building on the firm relationships now in place.

If there is one clear outcome of this review, it is that the answer to this is an emphatic 'yes'. As straightforward as this seems, the question raises several other questions that complicate any direct response to it and the recommendations that follow.

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First, what do we mean by "downtown Peterborough"? Secondly, what counts as a "successful Trent connection" such that Traill may be said to provide it?

In the course of doing this review, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of interested parties from the Peterborough community, both individuals, such as the Mayor and



people who attend events at Traill, and groups such as the DBIA and Trent donors from the community. All had important perspectives to share and contributed to my thinking in valuable ways. At the same time, just about everyone has a different idea of where downtown Peterborough is, or at least whether Traill currently falls within such a boundary.

The DBIA designates the area essentially between Aylmer and the water, and from Murray in the north to south of Dalhousie. But it's a segmented area that exceeds these boundaries in places, and falls within them in others. The largest suggested area runs from Landsdowne in the south to Parkhill in the north, and from the river west to Monaghan. The merits of this boundary, beyond its inclusion of Traill, is that it is a projected one, anticipating the core's growth over coming decades. It seems likely that any future development of Traill would want it to accommodate such growth.

Given the dispute over where the downtown core lies and whether or not Traill is within its boundaries, we may be better off thinking of Traill in terms that were expressed in one of our meetings: asking not where the Peterborough core lies but where we would find the Peterborough community. Since Trent is a university lying in the northern reaches of a vibrant community, Traill represents an extension of that university that already has important community connections and possesses the potential to do much more in that area with the right encouragement. Several contributors noted that its significance lies in its character as a "town" college (rather than "downtown"), with the kinds of community connections that such a title makes possible.

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Once we accept that it is the community that matters rather than disputed physical boundaries, we can turn our attention to the second question of what counts as successful connections. Success in this respect might be measured in terms of the intellectual contributions Trent, through Traill, makes to the community that hosts it. Or it may be measured in terms of the economic value it contributes. Somewhere in between might lie the support in expertise, services, and energy that are contributed to organizations and groups within the community, and the reciprocal value to students' experience of working with and learning from these

groups. In truth, a balanced response to this last question of the review should accommodate all of these.

It is clear that within the means available to it, the college community at Traill offers much to the local community. We see examples of this in the Writers-Reading series and the Symons Seminar Series. The former is clearly the largest attraction to Peterborough citizens. Originally, the Writers Reading Series was distributed among the colleges, with different writers reading at different colleges throughout the year. Now, the events take place almost entirely at Traill (I noted eight occasions in the first term of the current school year), allowing the series to evolve into one of the most successful series of its type in the country. This is a considerable contribution that Traill makes to the intellectual life of the university but, as importantly, it brings many people in from the community. The value of the series was impressed upon me in both community meetings and a number of written submissions.

The Symons Series is likewise open to the community and attracts a wide (and slightly different) audience. These are only two recurring events of note; there are others. The type of college that Traill becomes should facilitate and promote events of this nature [R4a]. If there is a drawback, it is on the promotion side. More could be done to make Traill events more generally known in the community. As much as events such as these draw people in, there are other members of the community unaware even of the college's location. To some degree, this review and its associated publicity has begun to rectify that. But the college could do more to promote itself and its activities. A clear communication strategy should be worked out between the future Heads of Traill and the relevant Trent office [R4b].

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There is a strong and active segment of Traill with connections to the artistic community within Peterborough. This is apparent in the attention given to creative writing (in academic programs, in the Writer's Reading series, and in the offering of the Continuing Education program); in drama (through the efforts of key faculty with high community profiles in this area); and in visual arts (through a variety of initiatives). The strong desire for rehearsal and gallery space at

the college does not seem likely to be met in the near future. But there are opportunities for Traill to be connected to other spaces of this nature in the city (like Artspace).

The city's Municipal Cultural Plan (2012) calls for the recognition of the value that postsecondary institutions bring to the town and for collaboration with them to explore opportunities for program delivery in the downtown. Traill is well placed to respond to such an initiative. In particular, the city, through the work of the Public Art Advisory Committee (a subcommittee of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee) sees Traill as a potential hub for things like a residency program and a provider of space for artistic groups. The next Traill administration should pursue possible collaborations with the ACHAC [R4c]. There are a number of other possibilities that would allow Trent to become more involved in the cultural life of the community through careful use of space at Traill, including becoming a regular venue for the film festival and a place for Peterborough's artists to exhibit their work [R4d].

Many submissions to the review noted contributions that Traill makes to the community that are intangible, and thus will never appear on a costs and benefits ledger. But there is a clear sense of appreciation coming from members of the community for Traill's presence, from city councilors through to former students living in the city. Such good will should facilitate any initiatives that aim to enhance and promote community involvement.

One of Traill's current connections with the community is provided by the activities of the Trent Community Research Centre (previously, this was called Community-based Education). The Centre currently operates out of the Principal's Lodge at Traill and a number of university departments are involved, such as ERS, ID, Forensics, Geography, Sustainability Studies, History, Canadian Studies. This is a tangible connection between Trent and the Peterborough community, via Traill. The Centre works with a number of organizations in the community, such as the YMCA and Youth Emergency Services, and it's clear that it is an important resource for not-for-profit groups (who may not have the funds to conduct their own research), as well as a valuable vehicle for undergraduate mentoring. There are costs involved in maintaining the Centre which have to be responsibly managed. As long as this can be done, the Centre provides one way for Traill and Trent to engage the community [R4e].

\* \* \*

There is a clear desire on the part of many for Trent to contribute more to the economic wellbeing of the community. Whether Traill can be an active partner in such endeavours is less clear to me. As the enrolments at Trent have climbed, with numbers that more than double what can be accommodated in the established and new residences on and near the Symons campus, it seems clear that a far greater number of students are living in the Peterborough community than at any previous time in the university's history. If the students in residence on the Symons campus are removed from activities in the city (and it's by no means clear that they are), then this other large cohort of students is not. They pay rent and frequent the restaurants and bars (as do many of their parents and friends who visit).

Among some, there is a perception that Trent has withdrawn from the city. I am not certain this is true, but a further Trent presence beyond Traill might be warranted. Although I think it falls outside of the purview of this report, I would note that there are a number of major buildings or sites in the downtown area that are vacant or soon to be. If Trent desired a further presence beyond and in addition to Traill, then this is an avenue that might be explored [R4f]. But this would require considerable vision (and some significant expenditure) beyond what is needed to strengthen Traill itself.

To return to the remit of this review, a more relevant set of recommendations is that Traill should look to advertise its activities more widely, and should consider connecting with the DBIA in this respect [R4g]. It should also look at expanding the parking facilities<sup>3</sup> and/or work with the city to provide occasional transit passes to Traill events [R4h].

#### **Some further recommendations:**

The following recommendations don't fit neatly under any of the questions driving the review, but they all follow from the discussions it has generated.

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<sup>3</sup> Losing Bradburn House was a gain insofar as a considerable repair cost was lifted from the college and university. But at the same time that saving came with a loss of parking space that is now being felt. There are around 22 parking spaces available, in addition to the street parking on London Street.

Recommendation 5: return college service to the collective agreements in some way. Make college contributions count in considerations of service to the university (and community). There is clearly a desire among a group of Trent faculty to contribute more to college life, but they have other possibilities that count more clearly towards their career development. College service once counted in this way and both the university and individual faculty (and maybe staff) members would benefit if this was returned.

Recommendation 6: address the future parking needs by opening a discussion with Hospice Peterborough, the new occupant of the corner of London and Reid to see if they will use all their spots in the evening and, if not, whether they could be available for college event parking. In addition, consideration should be given to placing more spots on the Traill campus [R6a]. Angled parking behind Wallis Hall is a possibility, as is replacing Stewart House with a small lot.

Recommendation 7: Give alumni the opportunity to become active or associate members of the college. There are many interested members of Traill's alumni body who would welcome a closer association of some kind, and would like to be more informed of the college's programs and successes. Membership could extend from simply adding them to the college's communications through to full membership in college committees. The latter would support the establishment of an endowment fund to address the college's needs. Such a fund would clearly be welcomed by a number of alumni members.

Recommendation 8: Along the lines of the previous recommendation: consider extending college membership to the wider Peterborough community. There is interest here from a number of different areas, where people already have some association with the college and would like to see something more formal develop. A college/community committee could oversee initiatives that look to enhance Traill's presence in the town.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Throughout its various iterations, Traill has never lost its capacity for innovative programming. It retains the potential to develop into something quite distinct among Ontario's postsecondary institutions, on par with the Liberal Arts College at Concordia or some of the independent

colleges in the University of Toronto network. At the core of the college is a cohort of highly effective teachers, passionate about what they doing and eager to develop the college if the encouragement is given.

Whatever threads of potential are chosen for development, there will inevitably be the need for an investment of finances and energy. The Trent community will need to believe that what is to be produced will be worth this investment. And current and future administrations will need to stay the course over the long term. Traill cannot be transformed overnight. But if a multi-year plan is put into place, with a series of clear and achievable interim goals to measure success, then something unique and exciting can emerge.

It is apparent that what continues to attract students to Trent University are the ways the university differentiates itself from other institutions in the system. Traill College has the potential to complement that differentiation in exciting and attractive ways.

## **Appendix:**

List of those who contributed to the review through interviews or written submission

### **Individuals**

Philip Abbott	Doug Evans
Sandra Affleck	Karen Everett
Jason Allen	Ann E. Farquharson
Allie Anderson	Joanne Findon
Heather Avery	Louise Fish
Melissa Baldwin	George Fogarasi
Natalie Baron	James Forrester
Darryl Bennett (Mayor)	Christine Freeman-Roth
Paul Bennett, (Ashburnham Realty)	Sandra Fry
John Bessai	Peter Gaffer
Mike Bingley	Lindy Garneau
Jonathan Bordo	Natalie Gingerich
Steve Brak	Jon Grant
Stephen Brown	Jean Grant, (Toy Shoppe on Hunter)
Alex Campagnolo Sean	Shelagh Grant
Carleton	Katie Green
Dennis Carter-Edwards (Arts Culture and	Laura Greenwood
Heritage Advisory Committee) Nadine	Jessica Grover
Changfoot	Rebecca Harison
Erica Cherney Ian	Lee Hays
Clark	Marla J. Hayes,
Peter Coin	Matthew Hayes (Frost Centre Student
James Conolly	Association)
Julie Cosgrove (KWIC)	Patricia Hefferman
Smolly Coulson	Don Herald
Jeannine Crowe	Susan Hillock (Social Work)
Bryan Davies	Hugh Hodges Dr.
Julie Davis (VP External Relations &	David Holdsworth
Advancement)	Charlene Holmes
Rosemary Devlin Denis	Moira Howes (Dean)
Desjardins	Jennine Hurl-Eamon
Finis Dunaway	Rishi Jalan
Michael Eamon	Sarah Jessup
Deb Earle (Social Work)	Isaac YunQi Jiang
Kelly Egan	Matt Keefer
Rev'd Glenn Empey	D. Jeanne Kimber
Mike Epp	Helen Knibb
	Olujoba Kolawole

Mike Konopaski, (Tacit Accounting) Emma Langley  
Adam McLaughlin  
Dave Madill, (Knock on Wood)  
John Marris (TCRC)  
Lewis MacLeod  
Madeline Macnab  
Keila MacPherson (*Arthur*)  
Richard Manley-Tannis  
Carmen Meyette  
Jon Miller  
Thomas Miller  
Liam Mitchell  
Orm Mitchell  
Louise Musgrave  
Gail Johnson Morris Lindy Morris  
Jackie Muldoon (VP & Provost) Abigail Myerscough James Neufeld  
Lynn Neufeld Deb Nichols  
Joshua Noiseux  
Duc Hien Nguyen  
Catherine O'Brien  
Pippa O'Brien, student VP  
Nick Overduin. Bryan Palmer  
Dean Pappas  
Anhiti Patnaik  
Michael Peterman Robin Quantick  
Katherine Quinsey  
Kate Ramsay James Redditt  
Adam Rejak  
Keith Riel  
Nona Robinson (AVP, Students) Murray Rodd Brian Rump  
Susan E. Ryan Tim Salisbury  
Joan Sangster Elaine Scharfe  
Alvin Schieck, lawyer  
Cathy Schoel  
Melanie Sedge  
John Sewart  
Peggy Shaughnessy  
Julia Smith

Alaine Spiwak, student Pres.  
Yasmin Strautins  
Robin M. Sundstrom  
Doug Sweet  
Thomas B. Symons  
Bob Taylor-Vaisey  
Jennifer Thomas  
Laura Thursby  
Victoria Veenstra  
Amy Vosper  
Linda Viscardis  
John Wadland  
Ashley Wall  
Tom Whillans  
Robert Winslow  
Ken Withers (Director University Student Recruitment Enrolment Services University of Toronto) Zara & Yumna (*Arthur*)

**Groups:**

Alumni Council  
Downtown Business Improvement Association  
College Heads Finance Department, Trent  
Graduate Students (general) Graduate Student Association (Executive)  
Graduate Studies (Dean and Committee)  
Physical Resources department, Trent  
Traill Department Chairs  
Traill Donors and Community Leaders  
Traill Faculty  
Traill non-academic Staff  
Trent Central Student Association