



KWANTLEN  
POLYTECHNIC  
UNIVERSITY

# xé?el̓t

KPU Pathway to  
Systemic Transformation

Artwork by Roxanne Charles, Semiahmoo First Nation

The Bedford Channel of the Fraser River on territory of the Kwantlen, Stz'uminus, S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), W̱SÁNEĆ, and Semiahmoo First Nations.






## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at Kwantlen Polytechnic University respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and study in a region that overlaps with the unceded traditional and ancestral First Nations territories of the xw̓məθkwəy̓ə (Musqueam), q̓í cə́ y̓ (Katzie), SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), scə́ wəθən (Tsawwassen), q̓íqéy̓t (Qayqayt), and kw̓ikwə́łəm (Kwkwetlem); and with the lands of the q̓w̓ a:n̓ł'ə́n̓ (Kwantlen First Nation), which gifted its name to this university. We are honoured to carry the Kwantlen name, bestowed upon the university by Grand Chief Joe Gabriel from Kwantlen First Nation. Kwantlen means Tireless Runner, and is reflected in our university's motto: Through tireless effort, knowledge, and understanding.

In view of advancing truth and reconciliation, we recognize our commitment to address and reduce ongoing systemic colonialism, oppression and racism that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience.



### LEGEND

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  q̓w̓a:n̓ł'ə́n̓ (Kwantlen) |  Semiahmoo (SEMYOME)     |
|  q̓íqéy̓t (Katzie)         |  scə́ wəθən (Tsawwassen) |
|  xw̓məθkwəy̓ə (Musqueam)   |  Qayqayt                 |
|  kw̓ikwə́łəm (Kwkwetlem)   |  Kwantlen Campus         |



# xé?elt

[hee-yeath] noun

A hən ǵəmiñ əm phrase for pathways; chosen to represent this work.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The xé?elt-pathways framework is KPU’s response and commitment to upholding the responsibilities expressed through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action, the Calls for Justice stemming from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA people, and the United Nation’s Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Indigenous Advisory Committee members have consisted of KPU members, Indigenous Elders, students, leaders, community members, representatives from the various school districts, Métis Nation of BC and urban Indigenous organizations over the years. The critical process of paving the road for systemic transformation throughout KPU was made possible thanks to countless Indigenous Advisory Committee meetings and conversations with faculty, staff and students over the years and is now coming to fruition with the release of the xé?elt-pathways framework.



*Salmon People  
Karl Morgan, Tsawwassen First Nation*

*The Coast Salish Tribes are often referred to as the “Salmon People”. The face of the Salmon People is carved in circle form, much like the popular spindle work. The four Sockeye surrounding the face represents the four directions.*

*Photo Credit: Karla Parker*

## INTRODUCTION



*Fallen cedar tree covered in Spaghnum moss and surrounded by Bracken ferns at Alouette Lake, territory of the Katzie, Kwantlen, S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), W̱SÁNEĆ, and Semiahmoo First Nations. (Photo Credit: Karla Parker)*

### **Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Journey to Reconciliation**

The creation of this framework, and how its growth through countless conversations and contributions, reflects the journey towards achieving systemic transformation at KPU. Systemic transformation does not happen through a simple series of checklists. Commitment to change is an ongoing process that involves active and meaningful listening to the contributions of Indigenous peoples. Active engagement will build effective relationships built on trust that moves beyond the surface and delves into the deep-rooted systems, beliefs, and culture of an organization. This process is not linear or direct, it involves a series of intersecting pathways that reflect the various needs, abilities, and experiences of the community. Thus, xé?elt, a hən̓ qəmiṅ əm̓ phrase for pathways, was chosen to represent this work.

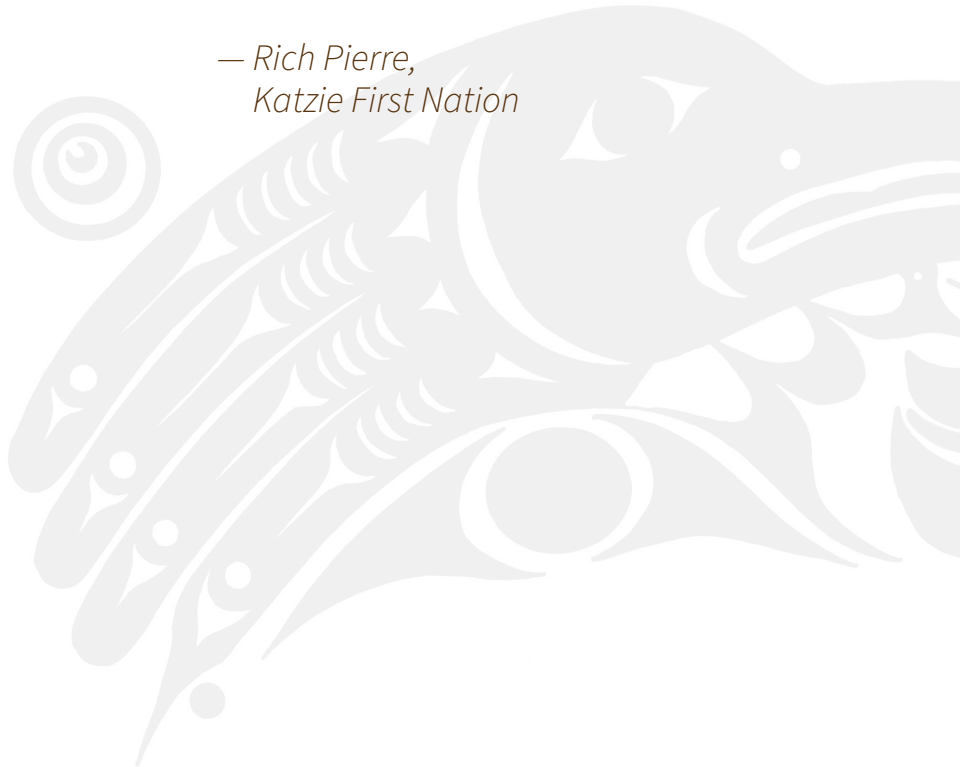
The pathways are not exhaustive, and in terms of implementation, they are shared in a way to encourage and enable individuals, groups, facilities, and departments to create their unique pathways that reflect their own environments, experiences, and abilities. We invite you to walk with the Indigenous peoples as we strive for equity within a euro-centric education system.

The KPU community would like to thank the Elders, Indigenous leaders, students, colleagues, alumni and non-Indigenous advocates for their ongoing courageous conversations, challenging the status quo for many years that led us to this moment. We are grateful to those tireless runners who had a vision of a responsive post-secondary system for Indigenous learners. We are honouring their vision by carrying this important work forward.



“  
**Don't lead; I may not follow. Don't follow;  
I may not lead. Let's walk together on this  
journey and see where it leads us.**

— *Rich Pierre,  
Katzie First Nation*



## WELCOMING STATEMENTS



**Chancellor Kwuntiltunaat  
(Kim Baird)  
Tsawwassen First Nation**



To make transformation happen, we must learn from each other, set a path with vision and action, and move forward with care and courage.

We are at a unique time in the history of this country. A time when we are confronting the colonial past of Canada. A time when Indigenous Peoples and Canadians are wondering how do we move forward?

Whether it is increasing Indigenous participation, improving curriculum and convening important discussions about our way forward, post-secondary institutions have a critical role to play for how Indigenous Peoples and Canadians move forward.

As KPU's first Indigenous and woman chancellor, I am proud of seeing the work xé?elᑦ represents to ensure KPU contributes to transformation over time. Through a focus on its progress from year to year, xé?elᑦ is the first articulation of the next five years. This will be evidenced with the current work underway combined with the vision KPU wants to achieve.

To make transformation happen, we must learn from each other, set a path with vision and action, and move forward with care and courage. Treating each other with dignity and respect is the way forward for us all, and the faculty and students of KPU are in a great place to walk this talk.

Thanks to all KPU faculty and students leading this important work. My hands go up to you with respect and I look forward to seeing our progress as set out in xé?elᑦ and the transformation ahead of us.

hay cx<sup>w</sup> q̄ ə



**Rhiannon Bennett**  
**Musqueam First Nation**  
 Vice Chair of  
 KPU Board of Governors

“ I am honoured and grateful to have been a part of this process at KPU. I am very excited for the necessary changes the xé?elł will bring to KPU; it is a long-awaited and critical path forward, and I can only hope it sets a precedent for other educational institutions, both locally and across what is colonially known as Canada. I am also hopeful that these changes will allow Indigenous students to form a sense of belonging within their post-secondary careers.

The education system has long been used as a tool of genocide; it is vital for education to transition to a tool of healing and empowerment to create equitable and inclusive learning spaces for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students – after all, what is good for Indigenous students is good for all students. The xé?elł’s holistic approach is fundamental to its inevitable success, as it allows for a transformative opportunity for the entirety of the education system here at KPU. The xé?elł will help pull out the thread of Anti-Indigenous Racism that is woven into the fabric of Canadian culture and will help

ensure KPU graduates are leading the way in stopping the harm that far too many Indigenous Peoples face at work, in healthcare, and in all places KPU graduates pursue their careers. Engaging with local Indigenous communities, forming relational rapport and togetherness, and instilling perspectives of people of the land in educational spaces are all necessary aspects of xé?elł. The impact that these strategies will have on all students will be a profound and much-needed change. The xé?elł is truly putting thought into action.





**Alan Davis**  
President and Vice Chancellor

“I am an uninvited settler to these beautiful lands, the unceded and ancestral territories of the Coast Salish peoples, lands which were stewarded by the Indigenous Peoples for millennia.

I am truly grateful to have lived and worked here for the past 50 years, and I humbly recognize the privileges that I arrived with.

I accept and recognize my role, and that of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, to address and reduce ongoing systemic colonialism, oppression and racism that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience. We must also do all we can to heal the lands themselves and make them sustainable for generations to come. And we can only do this by having open and generative partnerships with the Indigenous communities in our region and beyond.

Kwantlen means “tireless runner”, and we thank the Kwantlen First Nation for graciously bestowing their name on this university, but also for inspiring us to ceaselessly work towards the goals of xé?elᑭ.

The medieval and colonial coat of arms of KPU has a motto that aligns with Kwantlen: “Through tireless effort, knowledge and understanding”, but more importantly, the more recent

KPU tag line which we live by is “Where thought meets action.” We will do our work and we will know and understand more, but that will mean nothing if we do not also act in the ways suggested by xé?elᑭ.

The Province of British Columbia is the first government in Canada and the Common Law world to pass legislation implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and this provides a context for our work, along with the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Finally, the xé?elᑭ KPU Pathway to Systemic Transformation will guide KPU as outlined in the framework. The actions of xé?elᑭ intersect with those of fostering all human rights, inclusion and antiracism, both within KPU and beyond.

Métis dance group  
V'ni Dansi.

Photo Credit: KPU



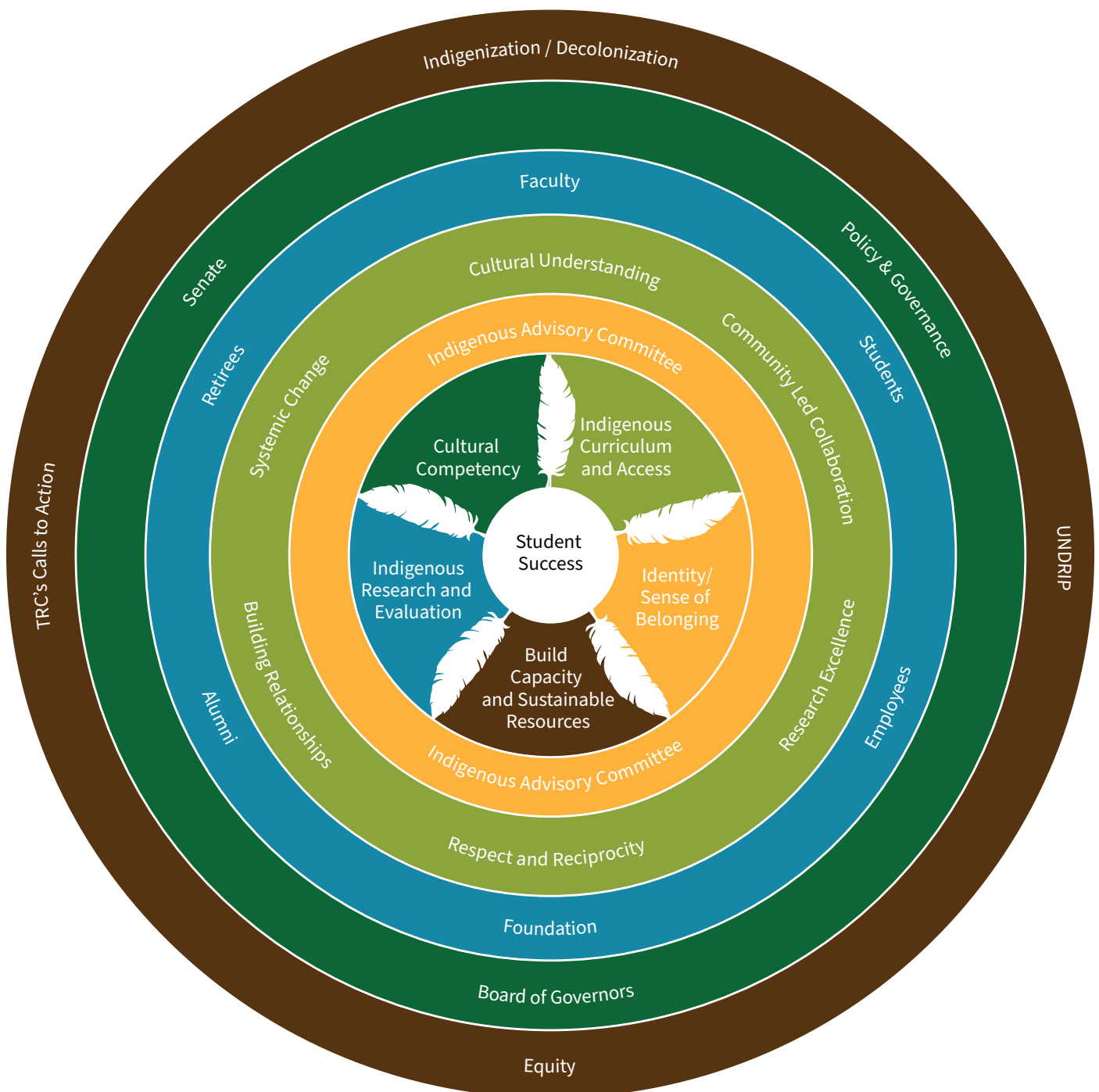
Celebrating  
members who  
graduated or  
passed grade at  
Kwikwetlem Day  
2021.

Photo Credit:  
Kwikwetlem  
First Nation



## WHO IS xé?elł INTENDED FOR?

xé?elł is about shifting mindsets and culture at KPU to one where the responsibility of systemic transformation is shared amongst the KPU community to recognize and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples. As illustrated below, everyone within the KPU community, be they the Board of Governors, Senate, administrative executives, faculty, students, employees, or alumni, are asked to reflect on xé?elł and ask themselves how they can meaningfully carry out its inherent messages through their own areas of interest and influence. Ultimately, it is about reimagining what it means to be a university with a name gifted by the Kwantlen First Nation and respecting the responsibilities that come with that privilege.



Elder Lekeyten at the Open Doors, Open Minds 2018.

KPU welcomed more than 60 Indigenous students to its Surrey campus to hear from inspirational speakers and learn about post-secondary study options.

Photo Credit: KPU



Captured at Open Doors, Open Minds 2022.

Open Doors, Open Minds gave Indigenous high school students a taste of the learning opportunities open to them at KPU. Pil'alt Canoe Family performing traditional dance.

Photo Credit: KPU



# xé?el† PATHWAYS TO SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION

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## **Pathway 1** Reflecting Upon Our Own Biases

Commit to supporting Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation by being responsible for undertaking a personal journey to examine your beliefs and biases about Indigenous Peoples and cultures.

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## **Pathway 2** Open to the Community

Decolonize KPU by personally creating a system that is culturally responsive, ready for all learners, and favorable to actions that foster reconciliation.

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## **Pathway 3** Indigenous Voices Matter

Strengthen relationships/partnerships with Indigenous Peoples based on mutual recognition, respect, sharing, accountability and responsibility.

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## **Pathway 4** Holistic Learning and Wellbeing

Weave Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being and becoming in education, personally and professionally within the KPU community.

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## **Pathway 5** Weaving Indigenous Worldviews

Cultivate inclusive communities that foster student's sense of belonging and wellbeing.

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## **Pathway 6** Thought Meets Action

Commit KPU to annual funding to build capacity for Indigenization across the five campuses.

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# TRANSFORMATIVE PRINCIPLES AND CALLS TO ACTION: OUR PATHWAY

**Examine Beliefs  
and Biases**

**Open to  
Community**

**Indigenous  
Voices Matter**

**Holistic Learning  
and Wellbeing**

**Weaving Indigenous  
Worldviews**

**Thought Meets  
Action**














təməx<sup>w</sup>

[tum-ugh]

land, territory,  
mother earth

## Pathway 1: Reflecting Upon Our Own Biases











Commit to supporting Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation by being responsible for undertaking a personal journey to examine one's beliefs and biases about Indigenous Peoples and cultures. The recommended actions are:

- 
-  Empower students, staff, faculty and leaders across the all campuses to shift the current culture by providing learning opportunities and culturally informed training to mitigate bias of others and build a growth mindset culture.
  -  Commit to decolonizing self / others about Indigenous relationships to the land, and the impact of Canadian society's need for production, profit, and exploitation of the traditional territories within BC and across the country.
  -  Support each individuals' journey of reconciliation and Indigenous awareness, both in the workplace and in our places of learning, through the creation and implementation of professional development and training programs for all groups, including: Board of Governors, Senate, senior university leaders, faculty, other employees and students.
  -  Evolve cultural awareness by providing tools for self-assessment and prompts for self-reflection, as well as by ensuring comfort and safety for students, faculty and employees before they introduce worldviews to students and colleagues.
  -  Create traditional knowledge sharing circles with teachers and cultural advisors from local Indigenous communities to bring together Indigenous leaders and Elders with members of the Board of Governors, Senate, senior university leaders, faculty, employees and/or students.
  -  Develop and offer experiential learning opportunities for faculty, students, and employees to raise greater insight and understanding about Indigenous histories, knowledges, ceremonies, and cultural protocols.
  -  Expand on existing online Indigenous resources and repositories to provide students, faculty, and employees access to resources, video and audio recordings, written guides and reports, literature, and publications about Indigenous topics, knowledges and cultures.
  -  Create a culture of inclusivity and a sense of belonging across all campuses for all Peoples, acknowledging that who we are as individuals and as a community relates to one's identity, worldviews, values and beliefs.
  -  Identify, report, and celebrate growth in the Indigenous student population along with the number of Indigenous studies, programs, classes, and projects that are delivered at KPU.
  -  Continue to provide a forum for critical discourse through the provision of spaces and platforms that encourage open minds and open hearts that leads to ongoing personal and professional growth.



## Pathway 2: Open to the Community

Decolonize KPU by personally creating a system that is culturally responsive, ready for all learners, and favorable to actions that foster reconciliation. The recommended actions are:

-  Bring key campus units together in a 'Community Engagement Collaborative' to increase collaboration and leverage resources and capacities to strengthen Indigenous community engagement.
-  Strengthen university-community partnerships and authentic Indigenous stakeholder engagement by providing opportunities for discourse and having courageous conversations.
-  Focus on jointly building vocabulary to define what Indigenization, decolonization, reconciliation, Indigenous community engagement, and good relations mean within an Indigenous context.
-  Review and prioritize all existing or future KPU plans, policies, and procedures to ensure they support the principles and goals of xé?ełt and reflect the commitments expressed through the TRC's Calls to Action, the Calls for Justice stemming from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
-  Build on-campus spaces and deliver appropriate services to support the needs of Indigenous and non- Indigenous students, such as childcare and housing.
-  Encourage, host and learn from ongoing teachings and discussions that identify the intersections between Indigenous communities and other communities confronting colonization, other forms of systemic harm and exclusion, and their lasting impacts as experienced globally.
-  Collaborate with the KPU Anti-Racism Task Force to form an Indigenous Anti-Racism Committee, to help identify and eliminate anti-Indigenous racism in systems and structures throughout the institution.
-  Establish and maintain effective working relationships and openly engage with Indigenous Peoples, communities and organizations whether they are First Nations, Métis or Inuit.
-  Create a road map to identify and define methods to collaborate on the revisioning of all campuses, to include Indigenous values, presence and histories in the design of open spaces, buildings streetscapes and installations.
-  Create opportunities for dialogue, and recommendations reimagining how to foster a stronger sense of Indigeneity and presence on all campuses by allocating space for gathering, community celebrations and ceremonies that are grounded in Indigenous ways.






stí?a?əq<sup>w</sup>t


[sthlee-uh-ow-gtwo]


future generations


## Pathway 3: Indigenous Voices Matter


Strengthen relationships/partnerships with Indigenous Peoples based on mutual recognition, respect, sharing, accountability and responsibility. The recommended actions are:


- 


“Nothing about us without us”: Ensure that Indigenous Peoples are always included in decisions and processes about them.
- 


Meet quarterly with Indigenous Services to review the structures and ongoing supports needed to build capacity.
- 


Develop sustainable and effective methods for Indigenous consultation, at multiple levels, to address knowledge, cultural protocols, guidelines and ethical frameworks, decision making, and the evolution of the Indigenous Advisory Committee.
- 


Support and collaborate in the development of an Indigenous-led institution at KPU that is autonomous as well as cultural knowledge transmission and programs that lead to careers in the 21st century.
- 

Address the systemic hierarchical barriers faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada by recognizing the distinct and unique histories, cultures, and modern realities.
- 

Recognize that new Canadians and international students quickly adopt the dominant views about Indigenous peoples. Deconstruct with learners the implications for this ongoing alignment with Euro-centric views in order to effectively anticipate and prepare responses to racism.
- 

Celebrate and recognize the achievements and contributions of Indigenous students, employees, faculty, and community members.
- 

Work with Kwantlen First Nation Elders to honour and share the story of how the name Kwantlen became gifted to KPU, making use of interactive media where appropriate.
- 

Partner with Indigenous communities and organizations (such as the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre and Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee) to provide programs for youth that include training and skills development.
- 

Collaborate with local Indigenous communities, and incorporate land-based learning into instruction that reflect Indigenous presence and history.

*Community feast held in the Fall at the Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School, bringing together TFN community members, Chief and Council, KPU staff, and program supporters.*

*Photo Credit:  
KPU Sustainable  
Agriculture and  
Food Security*



*Tsawwassen First Nation Elder Ruth Adams providing a blessing at the Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School.*

*Photo Credit:  
KPU Sustainable  
Agriculture and  
Food Security*





## Pathway 4: Holistic Learning and Wellbeing

Weave Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being and becoming in education, personally and professionally within the KPU community. The recommended actions are:



Commit to revitalizing the hə́n' qə́míh' ə́m' language by partnering with other post-secondary universities with established language programs.



Host traditional cultural ceremonies that celebrate community and bring people together such as a modern potlatch, smudging, powwows, etc. Support the teachings of preparing, weaving, beading, and cedar mats as giveaways, celebrations.



Host annual gatherings of local Elders at KPU, inviting students and the wider community to also participate.



Create a dedicated safe space for Elders and Cultural Advisors to talk and gather where they can also initiate and partake in practices such as smudging.



Incorporate ongoing visits and sharing from Elders and Cultural Advisors in classrooms, at gatherings, and celebrations.



Collaboratively prepare and honour local Indigenous communities' cultural protocols to ensure that there are consistent and respectful approaches for the inclusion of traditional knowledge in teaching, research, and community celebrations.



Ensure that han'q'emin'am' and other dialects are evident and accessible throughout the campuses and online to create connection with language, and to offer insights into Indigenous worldviews.



Incorporate the "First Peoples Principles of Learning" into curriculum design, and reflect the traditional teachings and knowledge from all Indigenous communities on whose traditional territories KPU's campuses are located.



Decolonize assessments by including Indigenous assessment as a component of Indigenous indicators of success.












Recognize the importance of the relationship between all peoples and the land, to ensure that the built and natural environments on every campus feel like an extension of the Gathering Place.



## Pathway 5: Weaving Indigenous Worldviews











Intentionally and consistently foster sense of belonging, personal growth, wellbeing and empowerment. The recommended actions are:

-  Complete a university-wide, faculty-level curriculum review to ensure Indigenous histories, experiences, worldviews and knowledge systems are appropriately integrated in course content.
-  Commit to building staff and student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.
-  Provide guidance and resources to faculty in order to ensure the respectful and appropriate incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into their instruction.
-  Create additional Indigenous scholarships to recognize and celebrate both academic and community achievements.
-  Initiate priority course registration for Indigenous students ensuring they secure the required courses for their program of study.
-  Work with Indigenous alumni to foster mentorship and relationship opportunities for current and future Indigenous students.
-  Support further Global Indigenous Learning Experience programs fostering opportunities for meaningful cultural engagement and learning opportunities between students, Elders, community members and presenters globally.
-  Create physical and virtual spaces at each of the five campuses that reflect Indigenous peoples' histories, contributions, languages and diversities.
-  Host welcoming events and community circles to support students sense of belonging to connect with their peers in classroom settings.
-  Create an environment where Indigenous students feel welcome and supported throughout the admissions process. This includes assisting Indigenous students and families with their registration, and identifying through clear communication the programs, courses, and resources that are available.



## Pathway 6: Thought Meets Action

Commit KPU to annual funding to build capacity for Indigenization across the five campuses. The recommended actions are:

- 
 Align KPU's operational budget to provide meaningful and flexible allocations and resourcing for the goals identified in the xé?elt Pathways to Systemic Transformation plan.
- 
 Collaboratively work with the Kwantlen Faculty Association (KFA) to support the development and implementation of actions that support decolonization, reconciliation and Indigenization, in direct response to the TRC's Calls to Action and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 
 Collaboratively work with KPU's BC General Employees' Union to strategically address the TRC's Calls to Action, to cultivate a deeper understanding of the impact of intergenerational trauma and systemic racism, and to work together to dismantle colonialism.
- 
 Incorporate Indigenous cultural protocols and ceremonies into convocation, including the opportunity to wear Indigenous regalia at the ceremony.
- 
 Expand the Indigenous Cultural Advisory Program to include Elders and Cultural Advisors from multiple Indigenous communities, to reflect the needs of current and future students and Indigenous participation at KPU.
- 
 Compensate Elders and Cultural Advisors on the same level as instructors and faculty.
- 
 Expand the Gathering Place into an Indigenous Student Centre ensuring to interweave Indigenous cultures, and to provide a growing presence on every campus.
- 
 Expand recruitment, hiring and retention practices to recognize Indigenous ways of knowing, community-validated kinship and lived experiences that may not be reflected in Euro-centric definitions.
- 
 Create a credited course or process offering an introduction to KPU and its Indigenous connections to help in the transition of new students to navigate the university experience, and to further support Indigenous cohorts, communities, and relationships.
- 
 Create institutional capacity and resources through the Office of Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies for Indigenous learners that is led by and with Indigenous peoples.

## IMPLEMENTATION: OUR FIRST STEPS FORWARD

Ensure that KPU's operating budget provides the financial resources to deliver xé?el̓t and the flexibility to accommodate specific Faculty, Division and Departmental needs, including a requirement for each unit to report annually how such budgets were allocated towards advancing reconciliation.



Create a Community Engagement Council composed of campus and community members who will meet 4 times per year to review the impacts of the xé?el̓t Pathways framework, with a yearly report on progress.



Create an Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Partnerships with appropriate levels of staffing and resources to uphold the principles and goals, and sustain the actions identified in xé?el̓t and subsequent reviews.

*Forest of trees and ferns at Alouette Lake, territory of the Katzie, Kwantlen, S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), WSÁNEĆ, and Semiahmoo First Nations. (Photo Credit: Karla Parker)*

Dedicate resources to have a professional grant writer support future student, employee, and faculty projects that deliver xé?el̓t.

Update xé?el̓t every five years to ensure the pathways reflect the evolving landscape and needs of Indigenous Peoples and those supporting the work.



Facilitate annual discussions to share the efforts and actions taken in support of xé?el̓t, considering the challenges, lessons, and achievements.



*Let's Gather  
Leonard Wells, Semiahmoo First Nation*

*Each figure represents both the First Nations in the area - Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Katzie and Kwantlen - and the diversity of non-First Nations people attending the University. The figures rest one hand on the inner circle, this being the Bowl of Knowledge from which they draw .  
Medium: 450 year old Red Cedar, January 2020*

*Photo Credit: Karla Parker*



## WAI WAH – LET’S DO THIS TOGETHER!



**Gayle Bedard**  
**Tsimshian Nation**

Indigenous Associate Vice  
President, Indigenous Leadership,  
Innovation and Partnerships

“Weaving together our traditional languages, vibrant cultures and histories with Western knowledge systems will create educational opportunities to learn the true colonial history of Canada. Together we can make a stronger future for Indigenous peoples and their communities.”

As the Associate Vice President of Indigenous Leadership, Innovations and Partnerships, I am pleased to be part of the many voices in the creation of the xé?ełt Pathways to Systemic Transformation framework.

The purpose of the xé?ełt KPU Pathway to Systemic Transformation framework is to provide guidance to the KPU community, in their commitment to honoring the Truth and Reconciliation’s 94 Calls to Action, and the United Nations on the Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples by advancing decolonization and Indigenization in curriculum, policies and governance across the five campuses.

Weaving together our traditional languages, vibrant cultures and histories with Western knowledge systems will create educational opportunities to learn the true colonial history of Canada. As non-Indigenous peoples commit to walking this path of transformation with respect, accountability and transparency, they will proudly recognize their contributions to a better and stronger future for Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

Toyaxsutnuun

## St. Mary's Residential School Mission, BC 1867-1984



### BC Indian Residential Schools

● These schools have buildings that are still standing



Photo Credit: St. Mary's Residential school,  
Mission BC - google maps 2009  
Photo Credit: Map - fns.bc.ca  
Photo Credit: St. Mary's photo - NCTR 2023

Missionaries opened a boarding school at the St. Mary mission in the Fraser Valley in 1863. The school was relocated in 1882 and a new school was built in 1933. In its early years the school made little use of corporal punishment, but this policy was dropped as the school was increasingly integrated into the federal residential school system. The school closed in 1984.

For a period of more than 150 years, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation children were taken from their families and communities to attend schools which were often located far from their homes. More than 150,000 children attended Indian Residential Schools. Many never returned.

The first church-run Indian Residential School was opened in 1831. By the 1880s, the federal government had adopted an official policy of funding residential schools across Canada. The explicit intent was to separate these children from their families and cultures. In 1920, the Indian Act made attendance at Indian Residential Schools compulsory for Treaty-status children between the ages of 7 and 15.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) concluded that residential schools were "a systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples." The TRC characterized this intent as "cultural genocide."

***“It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation”***

-Justice Murray Sinclair



Photo Credit:  
NTRC (2023)  
History of the  
TRC, The Truth  
and Reconciliation  
Commission



*The Katzie First Nation Tradition & Spirit  
Lorraine Pierre and Josephine James, Katzie First Nation*

*This plaque-style carving is a rendering of Katzie First Nation Traditions within its Territories. The use of 2x6 boards represents the traditional style of their ancestor's plank lean-to. The backdrop of "Golden Ears Mountain" with a traditional fishing canoe is shown with the sacred Eagle, Wolf, Crane, and Bear with Salmon. All are found within the Katzie Traditional Territories with whom the people share their food, water and lands.*

*Medium: Red cedar  
January 2010*