KPU Academic Plan 2024 – 2027

Context

Academic Plan 2023 was developed in 2018 and launched in the winter of 2019. The plan included an ambitious set of goals built around innovation, inclusion, flexibility, and digital transformation. Open Education, multiple delivery models, and innovative pedagogy would all contribute to excellence in teaching and learning, and from there to student success. In launching the plan, Dr Salvador Ferreras, Former Provost and Vice President Academic, noted the potential for increased access and inclusion inherent in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

One year later, in the late spring of 2020, the ambitious goals of Plan 2023 met the realities of a public health pandemic in that globally connected world. Teaching modes shifted, not out of preference or planning, but out of necessity. Everyone at KPU – whether student, staff, administrator, or faculty – was required to adapt, innovate, and demonstrate inordinate flexibility. By the time the campus reopened fully, the world of higher education looked very different. Covid had created space for innovation but had revealed serious challenges in the areas of inclusion, access, and more broadly, mental health and work-life balance.

This new plan aims to build on the potential revealed by the pandemic, while addressing several of the structural challenges that continue to impact our institution in its wake.

Approach and Development Process

The new academic plan parallels Vision 2026 but will extend to the end of 2027. Thereafter, it is hoped that the Vision and Academic Plan will run parallel so that the academic plan supports, reinforces, and achieves the Vision.[1]

In Fall 2023 Dr. Tracey Kinney was appointed as the plan coordinator. Dr. Kinney has been a member of the History Department since 1994. Over thirty years they have chaired the History

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[1] What follows here is a 'realignment plan' built around the central theme of coherence. The most common theme to emerge from the NAP27 consultations concerned the lack of coherence among our programs, courses, academic Faculties, and campuses. Interviewees consistently called for a more holistic approach to all elements of our academic programming. *The goal of NAP27 is not simply to reach a series of markers by 2027, but rather to show continuous improvement in key areas over the life of the plan.* Specific goals may need to be adjusted depending on environmental changes in higher education generally, and at KPU more specifically. By building the plan around flexibility and ongoing improvement, we will have hopefully "planned for the unplanned".

Department three times, served as Asian Studies coordinator, and chaired various Faculty- and University-wide committees, including Arts Curriculum and Arts Planning & Priorities. In assembling this new academic plan, we issued an open call to participate to the KPU community. Contributors were invited to meet with the plan coordinator for 30 minutes or more as needed, and to identify key priorities, specific areas in need of improvement, and systemic challenges. In total 69 members of KPU faculty, staff, and administration participated in this process. The plan coordinator also sought input from academic council and met regularly with the Provost & Vice President Academic, Dr Diane Purvey, throughout the development process. In Spring 2024, 1945 administrators, faculty, and staff were surveyed on the proposed goals and key actions. 392 responses were received for a survey response rate of 20%. Finally, input from KPU's student body was collected via a series of facilitated meetings on each of KPU's five campuses. Students were provided with QR codes which allowed them to comment on each of the key actions under Goal 1 and to provide more general feedback on issues impacting student success and engagement. Almost 300 student responses were received. Further edits to the key actions were made on the basis of all of these survey responses.

Vision 2026 and the Academic Plan

Vision 2026, the goals of which are excerpted below, was the foundation upon which this new academic plan was built. By the end of 2027 it is hoped that the public value[2] of KPU will be more clearly defined for our communities. Rather than diving further into neoliberal HE paradigms, the new academic plan builds upon the ideas of Henry Giroux, aiming "to create curricula and programs throughout the university that provide students with the *humanistic knowledge, technical knowledge, scientific skill, and mode[s] of literacy* that enables them to engage and transform, when necessary, the promise of a global democracy."[3]

- **Experience**: We will enhance the experience of our students; Enrich the experience of our employees; Support the health and wellness of our students and employees
- **Sustainability**: We will foster environmental sustainability through our offerings, research, and operations; Integrate planning to sustain institutional health by aligning KPU operations with our resources; Ensure financial sustainability for KPU through long-term financial and enrolment planning

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[2] On public value governance see John M. Bryson, Barbara C. Crosby, and Laura Bloomberg. "Public Value Governance: Moving Beyond Traditional Public Administration and the New Public Management," *Public Administration Review* 74, no. 4 (2014): 445-456.

[3] Henry A. Giroux, "Bare Pedagogy and the Scourge of Neoliberalism: Rethinking Higher Education as a Democratic Public Sphere," *The Educational Forum* 74, no. 3 (2010): 191. Emphasis and pluralization added.

- **Creativity**: We will foster teaching excellence and expand innovation in teaching, learning and curriculum; Expand activity, funding, intensity and impact of research, scholarship, and innovation in partnerships; Embolden creative problem solving across KPU's operations
- **Justice**: We will foster decolonization and reconciliation; Advance Antiracism across KPU; Advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility across KPU
- **Quality**: We will ensure continuous improvement of all KPU programs and services; Hold each other responsible for our promises and our expectations; Be accountable and transparent to our friends, communities, partners, and governments[4]

New Academic Plan 2027 (NAP27)

The aspirational statements that follow each main objective in the draft plan were developed from the consultative meetings in Fall 2023. They are intended to guide, rather than direct our actions.

Goal A: Improve Student Success and Engagement

By 2027 KPU will have made demonstrable progress towards the provision of proactive supports for students, including a comprehensive mental health strategy. Access and support will be foregrounded in our admissions processes and will aim to assist and support a diverse range of learners in coming to KPU. UDL and Supported Learning course will have been designated and made identifiable and transparent to students. We will continue to innovate with delivery modalities such as enquiry-based learning, that facilitate decolonization and Indigenization. Flexible program pathways and pacing will be introduced where possible. Supports for BIPOC students, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and students from equity-denied communities will be provided and students will have opportunities to engage in anti-racism and decolonization work through a variety of university-wide initiatives, built upon the Accessibility Plan, the Anti-Racism Task Force Report, and the xéʔelɬ Pathways Framework. Our culture of academic integrity will be built around the twin pillars of reciprocity and respect.

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[4] https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Institutional%20Analysis%20and%20Planning/VISION%202026%20-%20April%2027%202023.pdf, accessed September 12, 2023.

Students at KPU will have been provided with meaningful global educational opportunities, as well as increased opportunities for research and mentorship, including in key areas such as climate change and sustainability. Students will be provided opportunities to undertake internships, practica, and other forms of work integrated learning. Internationalization at KPU will be a holistic process that recruits, retains, and supports a diverse international student base. As a part of our commitment to lifelong learning, KPU will build programming and facilitate access for mid-career and mature learners, while engaging actively with the university's own retired community of staff, faculty, and administrators.

Key Actions:

A1. Providing *proactive* supports, including accessibility supports, for all KPU students in our admissions processes and our program pathways, including a comprehensive mental health strategy

A2. Providing opportunities for students to engage in decolonization and anti-racism work

A3. Providing global educational opportunities and internships/practica to all KPU students

A4. Expanding mentorship, applied research opportunities, and internships/practica for all KPU students, including opportunities focused on climate, sustainability, and other key initiatives

A5. Facilitating access and developing pathways for mid-career and mature learners

A6. Expanding innovative program delivery methods that facilitate decolonization and Indigenization

Strategies[5]

- create multiple, flexible access pathways AND the supports necessary to ensure student success (examples include PLAR, ePortfolios, supported admissions, KPU Flex, and so on)
    - ensure UDL and Supported Learning courses are designated, identifiable and made transparent to students
- revise outward-facing KPU documents and websites to reflect best practices in equity and inclusion (including UDL principles)
- create a core set of courses that are guaranteed to be offered in online mode and ensure that students can complete a credential successfully if they select an online learning environment

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[5] The strategies listed are intended to highlight ways in which we can make progress towards the goals listed. This is not an exhaustive list.

- develop open resources for the KPU community that support the implementation of the recommendations of the xéʔelɬ Pathways Framework, the Anti-Racism Task Force Report, and the Accessibility Plan
- increase broad-ranging student supports that recognize and ameliorate housing precarity, mental health issues, and food insecurity; improve the physical learning environment, mindful that learning happens both on campus and off
- expand and make meaningful the connections between the Faculty of Trades and Technology[6] and KPU's other Faculties, including the implementation of academic credit for students in programs governed by SkilledTradesBC
- increase undergraduate research and mentorship opportunities, including in anti-racism and decolonization work, in climate action, and in sustainability initiatives
- build a culture of academic integrity around the principles of reciprocity and respect[7]
- provide equitable access to career guidance and other supports as students transition out of KPU

Goal B: Improve Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Success and Engagement

By 2027 KPU will have made demonstrable progress towards supporting faculty professional development and celebrating faculty achievements. We will have developed innovative approaches to support and encourage faculty service. Hiring, onboarding, and ongoing training will be provided equitably and consistently across the institution. KPU will have expanded its support for research-informed teaching, encouraged the scholarship of teaching and learning, advanced new, applied graduate credentials, and expanded access to professional development in key areas such as anti-racism, cultural safety, decolonization, Indigenization, accessibility, and gender and sexual equity.

KPU will have expanded and made clear its polytechnic advantage by further developing initiatives such as experiential learning and applied research, and by continuing to enhance its role as a leader in open education. We will have reconfigured our campuses spaces – both physical and online – to foreground community, engagement, sustainability, and multidisciplinarity, as well as recognizing the requirements of our faculty and programs. We will have increased

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[6] In interviews with leaders and students in the Faculty of Trades and Technology the disconnect between Trades & Technology and KPU's other Faculties was clear. Specific reference has been made in this plan to initiatives that would build on preliminary work to more fully connect Trades & Technology to KPU's academic programs, while still recognizing the unique needs of the programs governed by SkilledTradesBC.

[7] Some of the points on academic integrity have been drawn from Keeta Gladue's presentation to the KPU community: "Indigenous Paradigms, Pedagogies, and Academic Integrity" October 16, 2023.

opportunities to participate in internationalization initiatives and KPU will be a place where we allow our Deans and Associate Deans to become creative, proactive leaders.

Key Actions:

B1. Championing equitable and consistent hiring, onboarding, and training opportunities to all members of the KPU community

B2. Expanding support for research-informed teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning

B3. Expanding access to professional development in key areas including, but not limited to, anti-racism, cultural safety, decolonization and Indigenization, accessibility, and gender and sexual equity

B4. Expanding KPU's role as a leader in open education

B5. Increasing opportunities to participate in internationalization initiatives

Strategies:
- promote and support research-informed teaching
- acknowledge and build upon existing expertise, including engaging meaningfully with the university's retired community through initiatives such as KPURA and TALK
- expand access to applied graduate studies opportunities, including attracting students with varied backgrounds and from a variety of age groups
  - create supported pathways that would allow students from the Faculty of Trades and Technology to access and succeed in applied graduate programs
- ensure that all graduate credentials under development foreground accessibility, anti-racism, cultural safety, decolonization and Indigenization, and gender and sexual equity and that these elements are reinforced through the program review process
- expand, promote, and support professional development opportunities, including those related to anti-racism, cultural safety, decolonization, gender and sexual equity, accessibility, and Indigenization
- implement a proactive recruitment process within the institution that provides advance training to faculty interested in moving into administration
- create innovative departmental clusters as a way to promote interdisciplinarity, break down silos, reduce the service load, and begin to decolonize the academy
  - support and expand cross-Faculty collaborations such as Arts & Design, Design & Business, and inter-Faculty collaborations such as ENTA, POLI, and MUSI
  - create a staff office to support and facilitate interdisciplinarity and to manage the challenges associated with these initiatives (Moodle, ETFs, RFCs, and so on)

Goal C: Expand and Promote Experiential Learning and Scholarship

By 2027 we will consider learning outside the classroom and in simulated practical settings to be equally as valuable as in-class learning. KPU will have increased the number and quality of community and industry partnerships, recognizing that our students benefit greatly from learning in our communities. Every KPU student will have been given the opportunity to undertake some form of work integrated or applied learning or internship. Sampler courses in the Faculty of Trades and Technology will allow students across the KPU community to gain hands-on experience in for-credit courses.

We will provide consistent support for faculty-student research initiatives and will build connections across Faculties and with the Office of Research Services. KPU will have developed two applied graduate degrees which embed the core principles of anti-racism, experiential learning, decolonization, Indigenization, and sustainability from the outset. Program review will ensure that applied and work integrated learning and scholarship is effectively integrated into our existing programs.

Key Actions:

C1. Expanding opportunities for learning outside the classroom, in nature, and in simulated practical settings
C2. Increasing the number and quality of community and industry partnerships
C3. Providing work-integrated learning opportunities to all KPU students
C4. Promoting for-credit sampler courses in the Faculty of Trades and Technology
C5. Providing consistent support for faculty-student research initiatives
C6. Developing new community initiatives that support decolonization and Indigenization

Strategies:

- recognize and reward learning outside the classroom, including simulated practical settings, place-based learning, and learning in the community
- weave Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being and becoming in education, personally and professionally within the KPU community (xéʔelɫ Pathway 4) and support the inclusion of oral and visual storytelling in all of our courses
- increase the number of community and industry partnerships

- support the university-wide implementation of program advisory committees, tracked via a single, readily-accessible database
- foreground global Indigenous partnerships, exchanges, and remote learning opportunities in all Faculties and programs
- create an office to support the integration of WIL initiatives, simulated learning, cooperative education, and to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives over time
- support the Faculty of Trades & Technology in the development and promotion of 'sampler' courses in the trades
- support the scholarship of applied and experiential learning through the ORRS and the Teaching and Learning Commons

Goal D: Update and Futureproof[8] the Curriculum

By 2027 KPU will have made demonstrable progress towards revising its programs and curriculum in such a way as to foreground anti-racism, decolonization, equity, inclusion, accessibility, Indigenization, and sustainability. The university will continue to identify the systems that perpetuate colonialism and will have begun the transformation of those systems. The priorities identified in the xéʔelɫ Pathways Framework will be integrated within every new program. KPU's Department of Indigenous Studies will be fully supported and resourced, and the university will have developed new global and community initiatives that support decolonization and Indigenization. An anti-racism and decolonizing lens will be applied to every new and revised credential and program, including new initiatives in graduate studies.

Sustainability[9] – environmental, academic, and social – will be a guiding principle in the development and revision of programs and courses at KPU. A focus on the climate crisis will be integrated into courses and programs across KPU. The KPU community will be actively engaged in responding to the potential inherent in generative AI, as well as its challenges.

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[8] "Futureproof" in this context is intended to mean that programs and courses will be developed and revised proactively, anticipating new and emerging trends and technologies.

[9] Drawn from the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 guidance on reorienting educational programs which calls for "[r]ethinking and revising education from nursery school through university to include a clear focus on the development of knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values related to sustainability." UNESCO, "UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014: the DESD at a glance," https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141629, accessed October 10, 2023; on the importance of all three dimensions see: Eleni Sinakou, Jelle Boeve-de Pauw, Maarten Goossens, and Peter Van Petegem. "Academics in the Field of Education for Sustainable Development: Their Conceptions of Sustainable Development." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 184, (2018): 321-332.

Key Actions:

D1. Ensuring that the program and curricular development and revision process foregrounds the recommendations of the KPU Accessibility Plan, including anti-ableist pedagogy

D2. Integrating the priorities identified in the xéʔelɬ Pathways Framework into every new and existing program

D3. Applying an anti-racism lens to every new and revised credential and program, guided by the report of the Task Force on Anti-Racism

D4. Ensuring that gender and sexual equity are key considerations in all program and course development and revision

D5. Facilitating and prioritizing course and program development, including experiential learning, in the Department of Indigenous Studies

D6. Developing a comprehensive climate strategy to guide KPU's policies, programs, and curriculum while ensuring that sustainability[10] – environmental, social, and economic – is a guiding principle in the development and revision of all KPU programs

D7. Involving the entire KPU community in the creation of a broad-ranging institutional response to the potential and challenges of generative AI

Strategies:

- facilitate and prioritize course and program development, including experiential learning, in the Department of Indigenous Studies
- create a resource bank for anti-racism, decolonization, and Indigenization curricular initiatives with a single point of access
- encourage and model curricular and pedagogical shifts that reflect best practices in anti-racism, decolonization, inclusivity, anti-ableism, and anti-oppression, and that embody the principles of the Scarborough Charter[11]
- include program review questions that foreground a variety of decolonization initiatives

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[10] Here, the academic plan has incorporated the definition of sustainability developed through the KPU Sustainability Hub and approved by the Provost & Vice President Academic: "Sustainability means conducting all activities in such a way that fosters environmental health, social justice, and economic responsibility. KPU recognizes that human society and its economy are wholly encompassed by and inherently dependent on a healthy environment and the ways we care for the Earth. For all life forms to flourish, now and in perpetuity, it is paramount that Indigenous worldviews are integrated into sustainability practice. Indigenous peoples – the original stewards of the land – offer invaluable insights and perspectives rooted in generations of co-existence and reciprocity with nature. KPU is committed to a holistic, forward-looking, and ethical approach to navigating the complexity, interrelatedness, and intersectionality of sustainability challenges. We acknowledge that sustainability is an ongoing, collective responsibility that requires collaborative action and accountability for the impact of all our activities. Together, we will listen, learn, and act as stewards of the land and our communities."

[11] KPU signed the Scarborough Charter in November 2021. See
https://wordpress.kpu.ca/antiracism/files/2021/11/Scarborough-Charter-ENG-final.pdf

- ensure that departmental action plans include concrete steps towards decolonization, guided by the xéʔelł Pathways to Systematic Transformation, and anti-racism, guided by the recommendations of the Task Force on Anti-Racism
- lobby for changes in legislation and government policy/funding to support anti-racism, decolonization, anti-ableism, gender and sexual equity, and Indigenization
- foreground sustainability learning outcomes oriented around environmental health, social justice, and economic responsibility through the program review process
- foreground actionable responses to the climate crisis through program and curricular revision, as well as other initiatives across KPU
- engage the entire KPU community in discussions of and policy development surrounding generative AI
- create a more nimble program revision timeline to ensure sustainability and futureproofing