

Our History

Kwantlen Polytechnic University began in 1981 as Kwantlen College, after a split from Douglas College. By 1995, Kwantlen was established as a university college with degree-granting status. In 2008, Kwantlen University College was re-designated as a regional university and renamed Kwantlen Polytechnic University, KPU.

We continue to expand and evolve to meet the needs of surrounding communities, with four distinct modern campuses throughout Metro Vancouver. In addition to serving regional communities, KPU is also committed to enhancing our reputation across Canada and internationally. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and cultures around the world and are prepared to live and work in an increasingly global context.

OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE

KPU is located in the shared traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, and Tsawwassen First Nations. We are the largest post-secondary institution south of the Fraser, and cater to a diverse population.

Our name, Kwantlen, comes from the Kwantlen First Nation of the Coast Salish People, who are based in Fort Langley. Over their history, the Kwantlen People have been respected throughout the Lower Fraser River Region as Ancient Messengers—Tireless Runners. This is reflected in our university motto: "through tireless effort, knowledge, and understanding." Additionally, the art work in the centre of KPU's Coat of Arms, a representation of the wolf and the salmon, was created by Brandon Gabriel, former Fine Arts student at KPU and nephew of the hereditary Chief of the Kwantlen People, Chief Marilyn Gabriel.

The image represents the cycle of life for all the inhabitants of the Lower Fraser River Region. As a further indication of the mutual respect between the University and the First Nation whose name we share, the Chief of the Kwantlen First Nation has conferred the title and responsibility of Sí:yá:m (Leader) on the Chancellor and President & Vice Chancellor of Kwantlen Polytechnic University.