



KWANTLEN
POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

A photograph of three young women in a park-like setting with a fountain. One woman stands on the left holding a folder, while two others sit on a ledge in the center, smiling and talking. A grey backpack sits on the ledge to the right. The background shows a modern building with windows.

KPU HEALTH AND WELLNESS REPORT

This report supports the development of a **university-wide health and wellness strategy for KPU, informed by interviews, data review, and working group discussions.**

KPU Health and Wellness Report

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to support the development of a university-wide health and wellness strategy for students, staff, and faculty at KPU. Information for the report was drawn from multiple sources: (1) scoping interviews (n=14) with staff, faculty, and administrators, (2) administrative data and document review (e.g., student satisfaction surveys, employee engagement surveys, Healthy University Initiative Framework, Vision 2026 Report), and (3) discussions of the health and wellness strategy working group.

The university setting – shaped by factors such as the built environment, campus supports and services, student engagement, faculty instructional practices, and administrative policies and procedures – plays a vital role in the health and wellness of students, staff, and faculty. While a significant percentage of KPU students feel valued and connected to the university community, many still engage in health-compromising behaviors and/or experience poor physical and/or mental health. KPU employees face similar health challenges, for example, anxiety and depression along with cardiovascular disease risk factors (e.g., hypertension) are relatively common, underscoring the need for comprehensive action on Vision 2026: Goal A3 – Support the health and wellness of students and employees. Achieving this goal will require a joint effort from across the institution, including students, staff, faculty, and administration.

In response to the establishment of the Okanagan Charter in 2015, ground work for health and wellness at KPU began shortly thereafter, ultimately leading to the launch of the Healthy University Initiative (HUI) Framework in 2018. Progress toward fostering a culture of health and wellness on campus has been made, however, consistent advancement in a cohesive, culturally appropriate manner stalled with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and the limited on-campus resources available at the time. The HUI Framework was developed prior to the realization of certain KPU initiatives (e.g., Office of the Vice President, Equity and Inclusive Communities; Indigenous Student Services) and reports (e.g., Accessibility Plan, Pathway to Systemic Transformation) designed to foster greater health equity amongst the campus community. KPU desires to re-invigorate this work in a way that reflects its diverse population and serves all university constituents. However, several gaps and challenges related to the HUI Framework, campus resources, teaching practices, and institutional connection will need to be thoughtfully addressed.

Problems related to the design, communication, and coordination of the HUI Framework have been identified. Specifically, the Framework lacks integration of Indigenous perspectives and is not user-friendly, leading to a disconnect between its goals and the practical needs of the university community. Moreover, despite various wellness resources available on campus, participation in programs and services is often limited due to accessibility issues, time constraints, and/or exclusionary environments. A more centralized and culturally tailored approach is needed to improve engagement and make wellness initiatives more relevant to students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, staff, faculty, and administration also face high workloads and limited capacity to fully support student wellness needs, further exacerbating individual stress and burnout. KPU's siloed nature and the isolation felt by many people within the university community contribute to disengagement and inconsistent experiences across campus. To improve the situation and foster a connected and supportive environment for all, better coordination, integrated services, and institutional support are required.

The recommendations provided in this report are presented by priority areas of action. Below are the four action areas that collectively contain forty-six recommendations which will support KPU in its goal to

establish a campus culture that fosters health and wellness by embedding principles and practices of health promotion into programs, services, and policies across its interconnected community (See Appendix A for the full list of recommendations).

Recommendations (46):

Implement with Immediate Effect:

A. Healthy University Initiative Framework

- Update and strengthen the design and content of the HUI Framework (3 recs)
- Improve communication and awareness related to the HUI Framework (4 recs)
- Develop strong leadership, support, and coordination for the HUI Framework (7 recs)
- Establish a performance monitoring system to ensure on-going relevance of the HUI Framework (3 recs)

On-going and Long-term Recommendations to be Implemented:

B. Wellness Resources and Supports at KPU

- Improve accessibility to wellness resources and supports across KPU (5 recs)
- Modify existing and/or create new wellness resources and supports for the KPU community (4 recs)

C. Teaching, Learning, and Classroom Dynamics

- Establish targeted professional development and training opportunities for faculty (7 recs)
- Explore additional supportive learning opportunities for students (5 recs)

D. Institutional Connection and Trust Building

- Improve engagement and collegiality across the university (4 recs)
- Enhance consultation and communication related to university decision-making and procedures (4 recs)

Supporting the development of a comprehensive health and wellness strategy that aligns with the Okanagan Charter will enable KPU to further its goal to improve health and wellness across the university community. A first step in accomplishing these goals will be to sign onto the Okanagan Charter (See Appendix B). By addressing the identified challenges and moving forward on the priority areas of action and their associated recommendations, KPU can create a supportive, health-enhancing environment that will increase productivity and improve retention among students, staff, and faculty.

1. 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 xwməθkwəyə (Musqueam), qí cə ý (Katzie), SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), scə wəθən (Tsawwassen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), and kwikwəłə m (Kwikwetlem); and with the lands of the qw̓ a:nłə́ n̓ (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.

2. Introduction

About KPU

KPU is a teaching-intensive institution that provides post-secondary education to more than 12,000 full-time equivalency students annually across its five campuses in the Metro Vancouver region. The KPU community is considerably diverse, where 78% of students (98% international and 62% domestic) belong to visible minority groups (OPA, 2022). There are also at least 86 unique languages spoken by the student body (OPA, 2022). As Canada's only polytechnic university, KPU offers a unique, student-centred learning environment that focuses on hands-on skills alongside traditional academics. By thinking and acting together, KPU aims to transform lives and empower positive change. KPU's current academic plan, Vision 2026, builds on previous plans that have outwardly committed to a healthy and positive working and learning environment for all people. KPU recognizes the need to establish a campus culture that fosters health and wellness by embedding principles and practices of health promotion into programs, services, and policies across its interconnected community of students, staff, and faculty. This culture will no doubt be strengthened through the establishment of a KPU-wide health and wellness strategy.

State of Health and Wellness at KPU

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO, 2025). At KPU, much of our understanding related to the health of students, staff, and faculty has been generated via survey results from the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (CCWS) and the Student Satisfaction Survey, along with data from the Human Resources Employee Engagement Survey and information from Homewood Health Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Quarterly Reports. There is however, much that we do not know, in particular, regarding the context-specific factors within and around the university setting that impact culture, climate, and community, and thus the health and wellness of people on campus.

Students

In 2020, the CCWS was introduced at KPU to collect baseline data among the student population. Despite a low-response rate (13%), CCWS findings show general student population trends that have been verified through internal sources (e.g., Student Satisfaction Survey). The CCWS was completed by 944 students with approximately 65% of individuals self-reporting their physical health and mental health as good, very good, or excellent. However, a considerable percentage of students were regularly

engaged in health compromising behaviours, experiencing significantly poor health outcomes, and/or having difficulty accessing necessary supports and services; all issues that negatively impact academic success and overall university experience. For example, approximately 25% of respondents engaged in binge drinking at least two times over the previous month, and nearly 30% of students reported cannabis use over the past year (CCWS, 2021). Generally, students do not get enough physical activity or sleep and many experience food insecurity. For instance, 36% of KPU students were found to be moderately or severely food insecure (CCWS, 2021). Moreover, the prevalence of food insecurity is higher among international (38%) versus domestic (28%) students at KPU (OPA, 2021), where a significant percentage of students reported eating less than needed due to money, not being able to afford healthy meals, and/or using a food bank (OPA, 2024). Students also reported moderate or severe mental distress (19% and 29%, respectively) (CCWS, 2021), with the proportion of students experiencing a mental health condition increasing between 2020 and 2021 (OPA, 2021). Significant financial stress was also common (45%) for students (CCWS, 2021). And, many students (35%) indicated that the support systems available on campus were insufficient when going through difficult times (CCWS, 2021). For example, long wait times for counselling, a mis-match between counsellor expertise and student background, and poor follow-up communication were issues identified by students (OPA, 2021). Encouragingly, there is evidence that students agree or strongly agree they are attending an institution that values diversity (81%) and respects individuals regardless of personal characteristics, identity, or background (83%) (CCWS, 2021). Overall, slightly more than 60% of students report feeling part of the KPU community (OPA, 2021).

Employees

At KPU, there are over 2,500 employees (59% female; average age 43.1 years), many of whom are at risk of mental and/or physical health outcomes that require attention. It is well known that in any given year, 1 in 5 Canadian adults will experience a mental health issue (CMHA, 2021). And, by age 40, approximately 50% of the population will have or have had a mental health problem or illness (CMHA, 2021). At KPU, 26% of employees self-rate their mental health as poor or fair (OPA, 2025). Moreover, experiencing poor mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression) is the most frequently reported reason for accessing counselling services, a finding that has remained consistent since 2020 (HUB International, 2023). Of notable concern is that the ability to access a counselor who can provide appropriate and safe care to people belonging to equity-deserving groups is limited. Moreover, nearly one-third of employees report feelings of loneliness (HUB International, 2023) and 51% have poor or fair sleep quality (OPA, 2025). It is perhaps unsurprising that mental disorders were the leading contributor to both short- and long-term disability claims at KPU. Risk of experiencing a chronic disease increases with age, beginning around 40 years old. At KPU, 21% of employees self-rate their physical health as poor or fair (OPA, 2025). Moreover, nearly 60% of employees are at age-related risk of experiencing one or more negative cardiovascular health outcomes (e.g., high cholesterol, hypertension, heart disease, stroke) (HUB International, 2023). In fact, a recent survey of KPU employees found that over half (53%) of all respondents had at least one lifestyle-related chronic disease risk factor (HUB International, 2023). For instance, 33% of employees spend fewer than 150 minutes per week doing physical activity and 50% spend more than 8 hours per day engaged in sedentary behaviours (OPA, 2025). As a result, medication costs (e.g., high blood pressure drugs) and short-term disability claims among employees continue to be high for cardiovascular diseases (HUB International, 2023).

Why a Health and Wellness Strategy?

Universities are an integral part of the community in which they are located and a place where significant numbers of people work and learn. KPU is in a unique position to impact, either positively or negatively, the health and wellness of the people it serves. A variety of interconnected factors, including the built environment, campus supports and services, student engagement, faculty instructional practices, and administrative policies and procedures, all play a role in determining institutional culture and the ability of KPU to achieve its mission. By engaging in health promotion strategies, KPU can move beyond targeting individual behavior towards establishing a wide range of interventions, including at the environmental level, that will enhance health and wellness. When students, staff, and faculty experience an environment that fosters overall well-being (e.g., physical, social, mental), positivity emerges, and productivity and retention increase. The institution influences not only its immediate population – students, staff, and faculty – but also the surrounding community via targeted partnerships and intellectual endeavors that invite people onto campus. KPU also has far-reaching impacts as alumni move to new communities, organizations, and institutions, taking their learnings and experiences with them to different settings. Consequently, there is important work to be done to align KPU with the Okanagan Charter, and ultimately improve health and wellness among the campus population and beyond.

3. Okanagan Charter

The Okanagan Charter, an outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges, outlines common language and principles for institutions wanting to establish a campus environment that supports health and wellness. The purpose of the Charter is threefold: (1) guide and inspire action by providing a framework that reflects the latest concepts, processes, and principles relevant to the Health Promoting Universities and Colleges movement, building upon advances since the 2005 Edmonton Charter; (2) generate dialogue and research that expands local, regional, national and international networks and accelerates action on, off, and between campuses and; (3) mobilize international, cross-sector action for the integration of health in all policies and practices, thus advancing the continued development of health promoting universities and colleges.

From the Charter:

- a. Transformative Vision: Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities, and contribute to the wellbeing of people, places, and the planet.
- b. Shared Aspirations: Health promoting universities and colleges infuse health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates. By doing so, health promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, well-being, equity, and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play, and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society.

- c. Calls to Action: (1) Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations, and academic mandates and; (2) Lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

4. KPU Healthy University Initiative (HUI) Framework

In response to the establishment of the Okanagan Charter and to ensure personal and educational success at KPU, a Healthy University Initiative Framework was developed. The Framework channels the WHO definition of health and also incorporates six dimensions of wellness as follows:



Paying attention to and nurturing your body with mindful movement and nourishment



Realizing your abilities, ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully.



Beyond the ability to handle stress, emotional wellness embodies an optimistic approach to life, including an awareness and acceptance of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors, whether positive or negative. Self-care, relaxation, stress reduction and the development of inner strength.



Seeks meaning and purpose in human existence, and encompasses a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and the natural forces within the Universe that connect us all.



Embraces the concept of meaningful relationships - respecting yourself and others and creating a support system of valued family members and friends.



Achieving a level of understanding and comfort with managing your financial situation - where your money comes from and where it is going

The primary goals of the Healthy University Initiative include the following:

1. Increase awareness of health and wellness throughout the KPU community
2. Foster individual and organizational resilience, and
3. Encourage the development of a supportive, inclusive campus environment.

The Healthy University Initiative includes five guiding principles as follows:

- **Build on strengths and revise approaches over time;** Use an asset-based approach to recognize strengths, celebrate successes and focus on opportunities for the continual enhancement of health and well-being on campus (Okanagan Charter, 2015).
- **Adopt a comprehensive, campus-wide participatory approach;** Develop and apply multiple interconnected strategies that focus on students, faculty and staff, using participatory approaches

to engage broad, meaningful involvement in setting priorities and building multilevel commitment to action (Okanagan Charter, 2015).

- **Review and revise institutional structure: organization, planning and policy;** It is widely accepted that the broader organizational context has an impact on the wellness of those within it. Institutional structure and policies contribute to its culture by reinforcing certain values, beliefs and behaviours; and discouraging others. The structure of a postsecondary institution and its strategic goals, policies and practices therefore impact student and employee well-being. Addressing this area requires assessment of the degree to which these organizational elements support student and employee well-being (Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association, 2013).
- **Support the understanding of self-management competencies and coping skills;** The post-secondary student experience involves all aspects of living and learning both in and outside of the classroom. Similarly, many factors both in and outside of the workplace can affect the health and well-being of faculty and staff. The campus climate can support or hinder the well-being of its community members. Therefore, providing support to aid in the development of self-management competencies and coping skills can strengthen one's capacity to flourish and manage the demands one faces (Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association, 2013).
- **Use evidence-informed action and innovative strategies;** Use evidence and best practice in program development. Health initiatives will focus on meeting the needs of the KPU community based on the findings of a needs assessment. Establish a performance monitoring process to determine if objectives and targets are being met.

To begin championing the Framework, two complementary working groups (student group and employee group) were established and tasked with developing and implementing a health and wellness action plan. Despite focusing on overlapping areas of health and wellness, each group was centered around a uniquely different population, thus, the working groups adopted a continual enhancement approach to monitor and evaluate the impact of their chosen action areas, including targets and indicators.

Each working group selected different, yet overlapping, areas of focus. For instance, to improve wellness among students, the student working group chose to center their focus on the following areas: (1) stress management and academic success, (2) social connection, (3) resilience and mental wellbeing and (4) diversity and inclusivity. For employees, the employee working group focused on: (1) wellness awareness, (2) individual engagement, and (3) leadership accountability.

Progress toward fostering a culture of health and wellness on campus has been made since the working groups were created, however, consistent advancement in a cohesive, culturally appropriate manner stalled (and the working groups disbanded) with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and the limited on-campus resources available at the time. The HUI Framework was developed prior to the realization of certain KPU initiatives (e.g., Office of the Vice President, Equity and Inclusive Communities; Indigenous Student Services) and reports (e.g., Accessibility Plan, Pathway to Systemic Transformation) designed to foster greater health equity amongst the campus community. As a complex institution that recently moved from University College to University status, KPU continues to experience growing pains that have

made full integration of health and wellness across the institution more difficult. KPU desires to reinvigorate this work and move forward on a KPU-wide health and wellness strategy that reflects its diverse population and serves all university constituents.

5. Moving Forward

Priority areas of action, including the current state of information, gaps and challenges, and recommendations outlined in this report, were collated through a synthesis of the following:

- Discussions of KPUs Health and Wellness Strategy Working Group
- Scoping Interviews with KPU Faculty and Administrators
- Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities 2015
- Results of KPUs Canadian Campus Wellness Survey 2020
- Results of KPUs Employee Engagement Survey 2025
- Results of KPUs Employee Wellness Strategy Focus Groups 2024
- Results of KPUs Student Satisfaction Survey 2021, 2024
- Review of the following documents:
 - a. KPUs Accessibility Plan 2023
 - b. KPUs Health and Wellness Strategy Development 2023
 - c. KPUs Healthy University Initiative Framework
 - d. KPUs Pathway to Systemic Transformation
 - e. KPUs Student Mental Health Strategy (Draft) 2024
 - f. KPUs Taskforce on Anti-Racism 2022
 - g. KPUs Vision 2026 Report

To assist KPU in reaching its goal of enriching the experience of students, staff, and faculty through support of their general health and wellness, priority areas of action, including current state information along with gaps and challenges, were identified. Priority areas of action were grouped as follows: (A) Healthy University Initiative Framework, (B) Wellness Resources and Supports at KPU, (C) Teaching, Learning, and Classroom Dynamics, and (D) Institutional Connection and Trust Building. To move forward immediately over the next 12-18 months, KPU is encouraged to focus on the Healthy University Initiative Framework recommendations. On-going recommendations are organized under the remaining three priority areas of action and should be accomplished over time. Achieving this goal will require a joint effort from across the institution, including students, staff, faculty, and administration.

Implement with Immediate Effect (within 12-18 months from the submission of this report)

A. Healthy University Initiative Framework (Current State, Gaps and Challenges)

The current HUI Framework incorporates commonly used dimensions of wellness (e.g., social, spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and financial) and provides a blueprint from which to work from moving forward. The included dimensions of wellness are considered standard, however, there is an opportunity to determine whether, and if so how, to incorporate environmental wellness into future iterations of the Framework. A well-defined Framework with clear messaging is also needed to help determine the direction of health and wellness initiatives on campus, however the existing iteration is not well-known or widely understood by students, staff, and faculty at KPU. For example, nearly 65% of student respondents were not aware of the six dimensions of wellness (Reichert and Associates, 2023).

Consequently, there are significant gaps and challenges related to the design, communication, coordination, and monitoring of the Framework.

The Framework design is not user-friendly, nor does it explicitly acknowledge or integrate Indigenous perspectives or practices in a meaningful way. The central focus on 'health and wellness' is viewed as less relevant than placing individuals (students, staff, and faculty) at the centre of the Framework to take accountability for finding balance in life. The layout of the Framework would be more intuitive with an improved flow and culturally relevant visuals. The current imagery is less appropriate and as a result, thought to be disconnected from KPU's diverse cultural groups. In general, the Framework has relatively low visibility across KPU. Some members of the university community are unaware of the importance and applicability of the Framework to their daily activities and interactions within and outside the classroom. There is also considerable ambiguity about what initiatives are underway and who is responsible for actioning them. For faculty specifically, there has not been guidance on how to implement the Framework into classrooms which means there is significant and untapped potential to improve the wellness of students. An explicit communication strategy pertaining to the HUI Framework is needed.

The university has identified a strong need to focus on mental wellness for both students and employees (Reichert and Associates Survey, 2023; Student Mental Health Strategy Draft, 2024; Vision 2026) to date, yet the dimensions of wellness are deeply interconnected. What we do in one area has the potential to impact other aspects of individual wellness, therefore, a concerted effort to provide a balanced approach and set of programs and services across the dimensions has been suggested. Efforts to coordinate and integrate wellness across KPU can be challenging, especially when responsibility for development, implementation, and evaluation of the HUI Framework sit within different parts of the university system. It is unlikely that the university community will engage to the fullest extent possible without a cohesive Framework that is supported by leadership, and coordinated across and integrated within different faculties, departments, and units. While the Framework provides an overall structure, it lacks specific detail, including information about key areas of priority, as well as implementation strategies and deliverables for each dimension of wellness. There are not measurable outcomes nor are there objectives embedded within the Framework to assess progress and determine success. Without specific metrics and clear, trackable benchmarks, it will be difficult to know whether the HUI Framework (and the accompanying wellness efforts being implemented across KPU) are effective.

Recommendations

Improve the HUI Framework Design, Communication, Coordination, and Monitoring

1. Update and strengthen the design and content of the HUI Framework

- a. Collaborate with Indigenous leaders to ensure their perspectives and principles are meaningfully reflected within the HUI Framework. Acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing by integrating them directly into a redesigned Framework.
- b. Develop a more fulsome wellness vision and guiding principles that serve as the basis for and support of a more comprehensive HUI Framework. As part of this, modify the current HUI goals to reflect a more direct focus on awareness, access, AND action for the Framework and expand the definitions for each dimension of wellness to more accurately align with current understandings.

- c. Add SMART objectives, as well as targets and indicators, related to and under each goal so progress can be assessed and tracked over time, and benchmarks can be reported on annually.

2. Improve communication and awareness related to the HUI Framework

- a. Develop a strategic communication plan to raise awareness about the HUI Framework. Ensure that all communication materials are designed with accessibility and user engagement in mind, and are available in multiple formats (webpages, emails, newsletters) and stored in a central location.
- b. Review and update all institutional wellness language to ensure alignment with the HUI Framework and strategic communication plan. Be sure to update wellness language consistently and confirm that the Framework and supporting documents continue to be written in accessible language.
- c. Establish regular messaging that explains how the Framework impacts the university community, including guidance and/or direction on how to engage with the Framework and embed principles and best practices within faculties, departments, units, teams, classrooms, etc.
- d. Identify and connect students, staff, and faculty who can act as wellness champions of the HUI Framework across the university. The network should be linked to existing committees and student organizations to gain traction and strengthen momentum.

3. Develop strong leadership, support, and coordination for the HUI Framework

- a. Formalize KPU's commitment to wellness (Vision 2026) and the HUI Framework by signing onto the Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.
- b. Establish a Wellness Committee that includes representatives from key areas (e.g., human resources, student services, etc.) with expertise in health and wellness to guide and support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the HUI Framework across the institution.
- c. Foster sustainability of the HUI Framework by assigning an administrative unit (e.g., Office of the Provost) to be responsible for overseeing coordination of the Wellness Committee.
- d. Define clear roles and responsibilities related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the HUI Framework for staff, faculty, and administration, respectively. Include regular mandatory wellness training, as appropriate, for each group.
- e. Encourage faculties, departments, and units to integrate the HUI Framework into strategic plans and operations to foster cross-departmental collaboration and reduce duplicative wellness efforts.
- f. Develop a health and wellness support team responsible for helping faculties, departments, and units develop, implement, and evaluate wellbeing action plans that activate the Okanagan Charter and the HUI Framework in their unique contexts.

- g. Embed HUI Framework principles and goals into current administrative structures, academic programs, existing initiatives, policies, and practices. Prioritize all future KPU plans, policies, and procedures to ensure they support the HUI Framework and Okanagan Charter.

4. Establish a performance monitoring system to ensure on-going relevance of the HUI Framework

- a. Break down the HUI Framework into concrete, measurable components that include clear deliverables and a timeline for evaluation. Track progress through annual reports that assess whether HUI Framework goals and objectives are being met.
- b. Routinely conduct both process and outcome evaluations of the HUI Framework to determine continued relevance and identify any needed modifications or adjustments over time.
- c. Align the HUI Framework monitoring system with other KPU strategic plans where possible to gather cross-cutting data that can be used to strengthen collaborations and partnerships both within and outside of KPU.

On-Going and Long-Term Recommendations to be Implemented (not listed in order of importance)

B. Wellness Resources and Supports at KPU (Current State, Gaps and Challenges)

KPU provides an abundance of wellness initiatives for its university community, ranging from individual- (e.g., counselling, sport and recreation, peer wellness, prayer room, food bank) to group-level (e.g., wellness fairs, employee benefits, EFAP) programs and services. What is offered covers a variety of topics and supports wellness across multiple dimensions, however, engagement in these initiatives can be limited, in part due to availability, accessibility, and/or time constraints. For instance, most campuses have limited fitness facilities, if any at all, which means that walking is the primary form of physical activity available. Programs and clubs are not equally distributed across all campus locations, and there are still exclusionary environments (e.g., racism, ableism, sexism) happening that hinder full participation. Students, staff, and faculty also face heavy workloads, high stress levels, and strong feelings of isolation that reduce engagement in on-campus wellness programs and services. For some, establishing inclusive environments within departments has helped alleviate some of these issues. For others, there is simply not enough time to engage in wellness initiatives (especially ones that are not culturally relevant) when other more urgent academic-, teaching-, or work-related responsibilities are present. There is an opportunity to establish supportive processes and procedures on campus that make wellness easier to engage in – where people can actively and passively benefit from the environment around them. More wellness resources are not necessarily needed, however, empowering individuals to take control of their personal wellness via stronger institutional support of relevant and easily accessible services, is.

The wellness resources (e.g., programs, handouts, modules) available at KPU are sufficient in number yet scattered across different areas (e.g., Human Resources, Student Health Promotion), making them difficult to track down and therefore access. With an already busy workload, it is unrealistic to expect the university community to spend additional time navigating institutional structures. A central location that houses internal wellness resources and connects to external supports is therefore required. Moreover, offering resources in multiple formats (e.g., online, in-person) could help bolster engagement with certain programs and services. However, these resources alone, while well-meaning and helpful, are not likely to

be sufficient in bringing about wellness for all groups. A one-size fits all approach is not conducive to improving health and wellness, especially for KPUs culturally diverse community. Careful consideration around the unique needs of students, staff, and faculty is warranted and tailored, culturally-specific resources should be pursued. There is also a need for practical, job- and school-related supports aimed at reducing everyday stresses and making daily interactions on campus easier. When the university is simpler to navigate, a positive campus culture that allows individuals to thrive can be established.

Recommendations

Increase the Accessibility and Relevance of Wellness Resources and Supports at KPU

1. Improve accessibility to wellness resources and supports across KPU

- a. Establish a strong web-presence or other central location where all wellness resources at KPU can be stored and easily accessed. The webpage should include internal resources as well as links to credible, external wellness resources and supports.
- b. Collate a monthly or yearly calendar of wellness events, activities, and supports available at KPU to be shared with students, staff, and faculty on a central webpage.
- c. Develop a comprehensive wellness handbook (students, staff, and faculty) that outlines wellness strategies (e.g., healthy snacking, time management, etc.) and primary campus resources. Ensure that all members of the university community are provided a handbook link upon joining KPU.
- d. Improve the accessibility and visibility of wellness resources and supports across campus by integrating them more effectively into everyday experiences. Consider highlighting the HUI Framework via posters or murals around campus.
- e. Implement and integrate practical job- and school-related supports (e.g., consistent onboarding processes, stronger cross-departmental collaboration and communication, proactive student advising) aimed at addressing common day-to-day challenges experienced across campus.

2. Modify existing and/or create new wellness resources and supports for the KPU community

- a. Develop culturally specific wellness resources and supports (e.g., cultural days off for faculty and staff) that are inclusive, flexible, and personalized. Consider broadening the scope of eligible wellness services beyond those that are strictly Eurocentric.
- b. Expand supports for basic needs (e.g., food, housing, financial aid) and strengthen access to healthcare services (e.g., nurse practitioner, social worker) for students as relevant through stronger communication and coordination between campus and community partners.
- c. Encourage and/or establish programs, activities, and spaces on campus (e.g., common spaces, lounges, cafes) for students, staff, and faculty that support connection, foster collaboration, and develop community, while also addressing barriers such as prejudice and discrimination.

- d. Continue to invest in making the natural and built environment on campus more accessible and inclusive. Beautify the campus environment through art, music, and cultural activities and initiatives that maintain the state of cleanliness of facilities.

C. Teaching, Learning, and Classroom Dynamics

KPU has made significant strides toward having comprehensive teaching resources available to faculty and instructional staff through the Teaching and Learning Commons, yet uptake of these supports is not as desired. Faculty who use these resources provide strong support to students through the development and implementation of thoughtful and inclusive teaching practices. Faculty have found success supporting students in various ways, including responding to inquiries within 24-48 hours, incorporating mindfulness exercises into class time, using flexible grading methods (e.g., extended due dates, multiple feedback opportunities), and offering alternative assessments such as “un-grading.” Faculty have also embraced innovative learning approaches like collaborative note-taking and shared projects that allow students to connect and build relationships. These strategies have helped reduce student stress and thus increase wellness. However, most faculty and staff report that it is difficult to fully support students given their limited capacity. On top of this, many students are open to sharing their personal challenges and concerns with faculty, which generates an added layer of complexity to student-facing roles. These new classroom dynamics, along with the fact that many faculty lack formal training in assessment techniques and classroom management strategies, creates roadblocks in being able to best support students.

Faculty at KPU are facing significant challenges trying to balance the increasing demands placed upon them within their classrooms. The overwhelming focus on student wellness at the institutional level has put many faculty into unfamiliar territory, where they are not only responsible for student learning, but also charged with helping young people navigate day-to-day personal and academic issues. For instance, the vast and increasing number of student accommodations that faculty encounter all require additional work to support (e.g., converting materials into more accessible formats, submitting exams to Assessment and Testing Services earlier than planned). Balancing these responsibilities without adequate support from the institution is leading to stress and burnout, along with feelings of isolation. When faculty choose to focus solely on student learning in the traditional sense, many students then feel unsupported and dismissed by their instructors which can impact mental health (concerns that are then brought into the classroom setting). Clarity around roles, expectations, and boundaries for all parties are necessary to foster a stronger classroom dynamic. Faculty, in particular those who are new to teaching, also need trusted spaces for connection with peers to talk about and work through the challenges they face.

KPU is a very diverse institution where incoming students bring with them varying levels of exposure to the Canadian education system. New students may not understand or be able to navigate the vast amount of resources on campus, and some will arrive unprepared for the academic and life challenges they are to face. When students are overwhelmed and at the same time under-resourced, they disengage from their learning which contributes to a less fulfilling experience for both faculty and classroom peers. Helping students get the support they need can be difficult when working with modest resources and when some employees show a lack of concern for students. The siloed way in which KPU operates only compounds these issues. Strong integration of services across the institution is therefore needed to ensure a cohesive and positive student experience. Certain departments are supporting and celebrating students in unique ways (e.g., attending student events, participating in extracurricular activities), but this is not consistent across the university. Sharing best practices across faculties and departments would support faculty and instructional staff in their efforts to improve student experiences.

Recommendations

Provide Additional Support for Faculty Teaching and Student Learning

1. Establish targeted professional development and training opportunities for faculty

- a. Explore additional professional development opportunities for faculty and instructional staff, for example, through established paid KPU orientation and teaching bootcamp or by requiring a set portion of accountable time be focused on developing individual teaching practices or other classroom management strategies (e.g., establishing expectations, building relationships, etc.).
- b. Enhance the experience of new faculty and instructional staff at KPU by developing a community of practice that is supportive of and specifically directed to the unique needs of individuals with less teaching and classroom management experience.
- c. Consider establishing a formal mentorship program through the Teaching and Learning Commons and/or a certified coaching or thought-partner program for faculty and instructional staff.
- d. Provide KPU-specific training and resources (e.g., template emails, meeting facilitation, scheduling software) to all program Chairs (prior to the commencement of their term) to increase consistency across faculties and improve the experience of faculty, staff, and students within departments.
- e. Develop a plan for student support services (e.g., counselling, peer wellness, etc.) to regularly highlight their portfolio of work to faculty (e.g., presentations at FoW, Faculty Connect, etc.). Faculty should also receive guidance on how to refer students to KPU services.
- f. Provide faculty and instructional staff with additional training commensurate with their level of responsibility in areas such as respect, equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and health crises to better support students in the classroom learning environment.
- g. Continue to provide opportunities for faculty to engage in teaching, research, and/or scholarship projects through consistent and sufficient time-release options.

2. Explore additional supportive learning opportunities for students

- a. Create courses in personal health and wellness, particularly for first-year students, to help them develop the life- and coping-skills necessary for success in academic settings and beyond.
- b. Establish a formal student mentorship program, especially for first generation students, to ease the transition to university and improve student retention.
- c. Consider expanding student orientation sessions to include information about classroom roles, expectations, and boundaries at the undergraduate level. Ensure that all students, regardless of Faculty, receive a similar orientation to postsecondary education at KPU.

- d. Include key student supports (e.g., counselling, peer wellness, tutoring, etc.) as a standard part of Moodle course pages so that students know what supports are available (e.g., video overview) and how to access / sign up for them (e.g., link embedded within Moodle tabs).
- e. Identify opportunities to address health and wellness within the academic environment to increase student success. Consider developing and enhancing activities delivered by students, such as the Peer Support program and other student-led offerings.

D. Institutional Connection and Trust Building

The KPU community is filled with unique, creative, and innovative people who work hard to foster a supportive and inclusive campus environment. With an institution of this size, there are however, circumstances that make it more difficult to have a well-connected campus. As members of the KPU community, students, staff, and faculty have reported experiencing isolation from their peers (e.g., students) and disconnection from their colleagues (e.g., staff and faculty). Following the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting transition to a hybrid school- and work-place, these challenges have become more exaggerated for certain individuals. At the same time, factors within KPU (e.g., understaffed faculties, departments and units) and external to the university (e.g., policies reducing international student enrolment) have made for a stressful climate of late. KPU is also a commuter school where opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to connect and gather with one another are more limited. For example, there is no dedicated student social hub and the campus closes at 10:00pm. More often than not, the campus environment at KPU is particularly quiet.

Not all members of the university community feel connected to the institution in similar ways. For instance, only 48% of domestic students feel part of the KPU community (OPA, 2021). Even less likely to be connected are students with a disability or students from gender or sexual minority groups. The university also operates in a siloed manner which means that the experiences of students, staff, and faculty on campus are not consistent. For example, many aspects of the institution are department centric (e.g., employee onboarding) where support and connection vary considerably. These types of situations can lead to confusion and lack of clarity around processes and procedures, where trust in the institution can become eroded. The lack of standardization and coordination between faculties, departments, and units also creates additional barriers for students, staff, and faculty, who often find themselves navigating complex administrative procedures. Moreover, when decisions are made without consultation of all impacted parties, frustration and burnout may occur. For example, when initiatives designed to benefit students are put in place without consulting faculty, this can result in greater complexity and additional workload for other impacted parties. As an institution, we move from thought to action quickly, and a greater emphasis on planning and execution is needed. Intentionally creating opportunities to collaborate and incorporate on-going communication across faculties, departments, and units, would begin to grow institutional connection and build trust across the university.

Recommendations

Grow the Depth of Connection and Collaboration Across the University Community

1. Improve engagement and collegiality across the university

- a. Develop a culture of collaboration by providing opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to connect across departments through interdisciplinary communities of practice or learning. Encourage faculties and departments to regularly share best practices and materials with one another to reduce stress and increase efficiency.
- b. Integrate Indigenous Services and/or representatives, along with other cultural groups across the institution (e.g., teaching and learning, behavioral intervention team) in a more meaningful way. Proactively engage these groups in campus events to ensure equal access to opportunities.
- c. Foster greater connection between students, staff, and faculty by formalizing a program to bring community / industry /academic partners on campus (e.g., speaker events, career panels, alumni networking, community events) to support engagement and discussions. Additional on-campus events can provide opportunities for connection and will bring more life to campus.
- d. Establish and share on department websites standard information for faculty and instructional staff (e.g., pictures, education, courses taught, research projects) to foster collaboration among individuals with shared teaching or research interests.

2. Enhance consultation and communication related to university decision-making and procedures

- a. Invest in a lean process facilitator to look at work flows across campus, including those between faculties, departments, and units (e.g., teaching and learning, counselling, Indigenous services, human resources) and/or surrounding teaching practices (e.g., scheduling, course syllabi).
- b. Increase opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to provide anonymous feedback to the university administration regarding current challenges and opportunities for improvement.
- c. Establish a strategic transformation department to help identify how cross-collaboration and functioning can be improved and to help facilitate policy and procedural changes across KPU.
- d. Standardize and streamline processes across KPU to reduce complexity and make it easier for the university community to access resources and communicate with one another.

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Appendix A – Summary of Recommendations

Implement with Immediate Effect (within 12-18 months from the submission of this report)

Improve the HUI Framework Design, Communication, Coordination, and Monitoring

1. Update and strengthen the design and content of the HUI Framework

- a. Collaborate with Indigenous leaders to ensure their perspectives and principles are meaningfully reflected within the HUI Framework. Acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing by integrating them directly into a redesigned Framework.
- b. Develop a more fulsome wellness vision and guiding principles that serve as the basis for and support of a more comprehensive HUI Framework. As part of this, modify the current HUI goals to reflect a more direct focus on awareness, access, AND action for the Framework and expand the definitions for each dimension of wellness to more accurately align with current understandings.
- c. Add SMART objectives, as well as targets and indicators, related to and under each goal so progress can be assessed and tracked over time, and benchmarks can be reported on annually.

2. Improve communication and awareness related to the HUI Framework

- a. Develop a strategic communication plan to raise awareness about the HUI Framework. Ensure that all communication materials are designed with accessibility and user engagement in mind, and are available in multiple formats (webpages, emails, newsletters) and stored in a central location.
- b. Review and update all institutional wellness language to ensure alignment with the HUI Framework and strategic communication plan. Be sure to update wellness language consistently and confirm that the Framework and supporting documents continue to be written in accessible language.
- c. Establish regular messaging that explains how the Framework impacts the university community, including guidance and/or direction on how to engage with the Framework and embed principles and best practices within faculties, departments, units, teams, classrooms, etc.
- d. Identify and connect students, staff, and faculty who can act as wellness champions of the HUI Framework across the university. The network should be linked to existing committees and student organizations to gain traction and strengthen momentum.

3. Develop strong leadership, support, and coordination for the HUI Framework

- a. Formalize KPU's commitment to wellness (Vision 2026) and the HUI Framework by signing onto the Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.
- b. Establish a Wellness Committee that includes representatives from key areas (e.g., human resources, student services, etc.) with expertise in health and wellness to guide and support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the HUI Framework across the institution.

- c. Foster sustainability of the HUI Framework by assigning an administrative unit (e.g., Office of the Provost) to be responsible for overseeing coordination of the Wellness Committee.
- d. Define clear roles and responsibilities related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the HUI Framework for staff, faculty, and administration, respectively. Include regular mandatory wellness training, as appropriate, for each group.
- e. Encourage faculties, departments, and units to integrate the HUI Framework into strategic plans and operations to foster cross-departmental collaboration and reduce duplicative wellness efforts.
- f. Develop a health and wellness support team responsible for helping faculties, departments, and units develop, implement, and evaluate wellbeing action plans that activate the Okanagan Charter and the HUI Framework in their unique contexts.
- g. Embed HUI Framework principles and goals into current administrative structures, academic programs, existing initiatives, policies, and practices. Prioritize all future KPU plans, policies, and procedures to ensure they support the HUI Framework and Okanagan Charter.

4. Establish a performance monitoring system to ensure on-going relevance of the HUI Framework

- a. Break down the HUI Framework into concrete, measurable components that include clear deliverables and a timeline for evaluation. Track progress through annual reports that assess whether HUI Framework goals and objectives are being met.
- b. Routinely conduct both process and outcome evaluations of the HUI Framework to determine continued relevance and identify any needed modifications or adjustments over time.
- c. Align the HUI Framework monitoring system with other KPU strategic plans where possible to gather cross-cutting data that can be used to strengthen collaborations and partnerships both within and outside of KPU.

On-Going and Long-Term Recommendations to be Implemented (not listed in order of importance)

Increase the Accessibility and Relevance of Wellness Resources and Supports at KPU

1. Improve accessibility to wellness resources and supports across KPU

- a. Establish a strong web-presence or other central location where all wellness resources at KPU can be stored and easily accessed. The webpage should include internal resources as well as links to credible, external wellness resources and supports.
- b. Collate a monthly or yearly calendar of wellness events, activities, and supports available at KPU to be shared with students, staff, and faculty on a central webpage.

- c. Develop a comprehensive wellness handbook (students, staff, and faculty) that outlines wellness strategies (e.g., healthy snacking, time management, etc.) and primary campus resources. Ensure that all members of the university community are provided a handbook link upon joining KPU.
- d. Improve the accessibility and visibility of wellness resources and supports across campus by integrating them more effectively into everyday experiences. Consider highlighting the HUI Framework via posters or murals around campus.
- e. Implement and integrate practical job- and school-related supports (e.g., consistent onboarding processes, stronger cross-departmental collaboration and communication, proactive student advising) aimed at addressing common day-to-day challenges experienced across campus.

2. Modify existing and/or create new wellness resources and supports for the KPU community

- a. Develop culturally specific wellness resources and supports (e.g., cultural days off for faculty and staff) that are inclusive, flexible, and personalized. Consider broadening the scope of eligible wellness services beyond those that are strictly Eurocentric.
- b. Expand supports for basic needs (e.g., food, housing, financial aid) and strengthen access to healthcare services (e.g., nurse practitioner, social worker) for students as relevant through stronger communication and coordination between campus and community partners.
- c. Encourage and/or establish programs, activities, and spaces on campus (e.g., common spaces, lounges, cafes) for students, staff, and faculty that support connection, foster collaboration, and develop community, while also addressing barriers such as prejudice and discrimination.
- d. Continue to invest in making the natural and built environment on campus more accessible and inclusive. Beautify the campus environment through art, music, and cultural activities and initiatives that maintain the state of cleanliness of facilities.

Provide Additional Support for Faculty Teaching and Student Learning

1. Establish targeted professional development and training opportunities for faculty

- a. Explore additional professional development opportunities for faculty and instructional staff, for example, through established paid KPU orientation and teaching bootcamp or by requiring a set portion of accountable time be focused on developing individual teaching practices or other classroom management strategies (e.g., establishing expectations, building relationships, etc.).
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