

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to serving its communities through teaching, research and innovation.

Kwantlen has always been committed to serving the diverse needs of the South Fraser region of British Columbia. As Canada's newest and most innovative polytechnic university, Kwantlen will continue to place the learning needs of its students first by focusing on the integration of theory, critical insight, and practice. The university's purpose is to provide students the skills and understanding necessary to be engaged, aware, and responsible citizens, and to pursue fulfilling careers. Kwantlen is committed to teaching, research and innovation that focus on the human capacity to influence and improve our world.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to offering traditional and career programs with multiple pathways leading to university degrees.

Kwantlen offers citation, certificate, diploma, and degree programs in the traditional liberal arts and science disciplines, in trades and technology fields, and in career and professionally focused areas. Its citation, certificate, and diploma programs are specifically designed to bridge into degree programs. Through its highly successful programs in qualifying studies, Kwantlen provides access pathways for students of varying abilities with opportunity and support to help them realize their potential. Kwantlen is committed to meeting the needs of non-traditional students pursuing additional educational opportunities.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to providing curriculum and services necessary to prepare our students to be global citizens.

Kwantlen, which has evolved from a college to a university college and now to a university, will continue to embrace its established role as an important educational, cultural, and recreational resource for its communities. Kwantlen recognizes the centrality of international, indigenous, and multi-cultural perspectives in curriculum, and its responsibility to prepare graduates to be global citizens. Located on the Pacific Rim, the university specifically acknowledges its position as an attractive option for international students. Kwantlen is committed to principles of diversity and freedom of belief and expression, and to providing a supportive, secure learning environment for all its students.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to the tireless pursuit of learning, in keeping with the values of the Kwantlen First Nation.

Kwantlen, which means "tireless runner," represents the university's unabashed commitment to quality and excellence. In keeping with its First Nations name, Kwantlen recognizes the uniqueness and richness of First Nations' learning and wisdom, and the distinctiveness and dignity of their culture, informing as it does the belief that all forms of cultural expression enrich one another.

Kwantlen's Status and Commitment as a New University

Kwantlen is now a university. This significant change in status validates its present mandate—core traditions, educational programs, and student services—and offers guidance for its future ambitions.

The adjective 'polytechnic' speaks to the integration of theoretical and applied learning that is a distinguishing feature of many existing Kwantlen programs, and the noun 'university' orients enhanced program possibilities yet to come. Together they signify that what we now do will continue to be important in our new university and help define our focus and differentiate us from other post secondary institutions in British Columbia.

Kwantlen currently offers a wide array of bachelor degrees and other credentials that are built upon a liberal arts and science core typical of universities. Kwantlen also incorporates leading edge programming in trades, technology, vocational and qualifying studies that are purposefully designed to bridge into degree programs. Kwantlen's highly successful approach to curricular and programmatic design focuses on providing access pathways for students of varying abilities and providing opportunities for those who are willing to work hard to realize their potential.

As a polytechnic university, Kwantlen will build on its traditional strengths while pursuing new opportunities that university status offers to students, faculty, and staff. As a university, Kwantlen will have an expanded capacity to integrate research, scholarly activity, and external community engagement within a learning environment that places students at the centre of all that we do. Innovative certificate, diploma and degree programs in traditional and career-focused areas will provide distinctive focus.

Steeped in the Kwantlen tradition of valuing all individuals, the university will . . .

- be accessible to everyone with a desire and ability to learn...and willingness to work hard
- focus on serving the diverse people of the South Fraser region and meeting their education needs—including trades, developmental, and career and academic programs
- integrate these programs with undergraduate degrees designed to prepare people to serve their professions and their disciplines as well as, their region, their province, and the world
- enhance and integrate the mix of core liberal arts and science and polytechnic programs encompassing theory, critical insight and *praxis* (practice)
- expand research and scholarship activity by engaging students and faculty in the application of knowledge and by facilitating innovation
- remain dedicated to developing educated, engaged, and responsible global citizens.

Kwantlen's change in status will also move the institution toward a bicameral governance system in which academic authority rests directly with a faculty-oriented senate and fiduciary responsibility for the organization as a whole remains with the Board of Governors. This centuries-old university governance model is built upon collegial decision-making by a professional community of educators. It calls all individual members of the university to the responsibility of governance.

Testament to Kwantlen's credibility and status is the acknowledgement of the university by many national and international organizations:

- Kwantlen's Business, Nursing, Interior Design, and Environmental Protection programs are accredited nationally and / or internationally
 - Business—Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs
 - Nursing—Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing
 - Interior Design—Council for Interior Design Accreditation
 - Environmental Protection—Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists

- Kwantlen was recently advised that it has been welcomed into the International Association of Universities (IAU – affiliated with UNESCO).
- Kwantlen’s request for membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) produced a positive site visit report, and its application will be voted upon this fall.
- Kwantlen’s application to the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has been accepted.

Envisioning Kwantlen’s Future as a New University

New Opportunities

- Having the opportunity to forge a new university is a ‘once in a life time’ experience for most faculty and staff. There is no way to underestimate the importance of the announcement regarding the new university designation. We need to take the time to celebrate this moment and acknowledge the enormous achievement. Kwantlen’s trajectory over the last 26 years has been remarkable, and its identity as a unique institution has been confirmed.
- Kwantlen’s polytechnic university designation introduces an exciting new paradigm in post-secondary education. Traditionally, universities and colleges have existed in marked isolation from each other within Canada. What we now have within one institution is the formal acknowledgement that knowledge is converging, and the programs that colleges and universities are offering are moving closer together. Kwantlen’s distinctive diversity and mandate will ensure more opportunities for its students within one university.
- Kwantlen’s history and new designation as a polytechnic university promises to challenge the division so often maintained between theory and practice within universities by moving decisively into the realm of interdisciplinary and applied learning curricula.
- In this new university all faculties will be of equal importance in fulfilling its mandate. The contribution of everyone will be required and recognized as the university’s success depends on collaborative effort in support of shared ambitions and values around higher education.
- In this new university consultation and flexibility will inform decision-making.

The Past as a Guide to the Future

- Kwantlen’s new university designation is the expression of the cumulative effect of individual and collective contributions that have been made by students, faculty, and staff over the past 26 years. It has achieved university status because of these contributions. In a relatively short period Kwantlen has gone from a community college to a university college and now to a university. Kwantlen’s history will serve as the foundation upon which it will build and grow.
- In this new university Kwantlen’s traditional academic disciplines and preparatory pathways will continue to serve as the core for new initiatives. All of us must consider how best to assist the university in moving in new directions that respond effectively to student and societal need while ensuring a strong and well-rounded university education.
 - For example, how might different faculties integrate applied learning without sacrificing the arts and science core that is fundamental to university education?
 - Might co-op be an option?
 - Might principles of service learning be an option?
 - Might a technology mandate across all disciplines be an option?

Setting a New Course Together

- Kwantlen aspires to be the institution of choice for students. To that end, the university should map out its distinctive niche and not simply replicate current program structures and approaches readily available in the post secondary system in British Columbia.
- In confronting the challenges and extraordinary opportunities before it, Kwantlen should strive for innovation that is relevant to its students' learning and its capacity. Intensive consultation and time are necessary to consider appropriate new paths for the university.
- Kwantlen students, faculty and staff are all part of the same educational institution, and we share a commitment to the ongoing pursuit of learning. Our responsibility is to endeavor to make Kwantlen a better place than it was when each of us arrived at the institution.
- Although Kwantlen's name change signals a different status, it does not confer instant credibility. Reputation is derived from the actions and commitments that faculty and staff individually and collectively make, and is expressed most poignantly by our students' accomplishments.

Establishing Immediate Priorities

- As a new university, Kwantlen should identify 5-6 priorities for the next 2-5 years through which we will give voice to the institution. For example . . .
 - Move more programs away from being 'transfer' programs into 4 year programs
 - Draw our four campuses together so that each has equal billing, equal participation, and equal recognition
 - Shift governance to a bicameral model
 - Devolve greater authority and responsibility to the Faculties / Colleges / Schools / Divisions under the auspices of their Dean and the faculty as a whole
 - Position and communicate a strong institutional identity (in relation to other universities in BC, Canada, and the world)
 - Enhance, stabilize and strengthen our liberal arts and science core, without which, we cannot design new and innovative degree programs
 - Support greater research opportunities for faculty and students

University Legislation and Governance

- Kwantlen Polytechnic University is a new university in the province to be created through regulation by the Lieutenant Governor as per the recently adopted amendments to BC's *University Act*. This will make Kwantlen a full member of the university sector guided by university legislation, which includes institutional authority to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees, a mandate for research and scholarship, and more autonomous governance than exists in other sectors (colleges and institutes).
- Significant changes for Kwantlen include the ability to offer Masters degrees (as opposed to Applied Masters degrees under the *College and Institute Act*), and "...so far as and to the extent that its resources from time to time permit, undertake and maintain applied research and scholarly activities to support the programs of the special purpose teaching university" (Section 47.1(d) of the *University Amendment Act*).
- A key differentiating point between the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act* relates to institutional governance. Bicameral governance within a university delineates the fiduciary

responsibilities of the Board of Governors from the academic authority of the Senate. Authority under such a governance model is tied to one's ability to offer cogent, convincing arguments in a collegial, professional environment.

- Importantly, this tradition of university governance is central to a unique yet always changing institution (the University) that has retained a pivotal place in society for over a millennium. Few other institutions can make such a claim.
- University bicameral governance situates more direct authority and responsibility with faculty. This governance model challenges us to take collective responsibility for answers we develop to critical and strategic questions related to educational issues.
- One of the necessary first steps for the new university will be the creation of a Senate that has authority as outlined in the amended *University Act*.
- Additionally, the roles for Deans and their Divisions within the university will change as they will have greater independence. Greater authority and responsibility will devolve to faculty, chairs, and deans in a collaborative arrangement.

University Research Funding

- National and provincial research funding is largely allocated through competitive, peer review adjudication of proposals by individual or groups of researchers, not to institutions based on their status or reputation.
- As a university with an explicit polytechnic mandate, Kwantlen faculty are well positioned to take advantage of the attitudinal shift toward “relevance” in research occurring within the funding opportunities provided by major granting councils such as the National Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).
- University status will also enable Kwantlen faculty and staff to access many other community and business-based funding sources in keeping with aspects of an applied research focus.
- Kwantlen faculty will be better positioned to compete for research grants under its new university status. One early opportunity for the university will be to re-conceptualize the place of research and scholarship within faculty roles. Recognizing this obligation in the faculty collective agreement, in the development of existing faculty, and in the recruitment of new faculty is crucial to Kwantlen's ability to access funding from major granting agencies.
- Major granting agencies have, for several years, been prioritizing innovation and application research, particularly collaborative research. Kwantlen should focus on interpreting and practicing “applied research and scholarly activities” (Section 47.1(d) of the *University Amendment Act*) in a manner that creates a rich field of opportunities for its faculty across their distinct disciplines.

Some Distinguishing Features of Polytechnic Universities

- According to the Greek roots of the word, ‘poly’ means ‘many’ or ‘much’ (*polus or polloi*) and ‘technic’ means art (*tekhne*). So, ‘polytechnic’ means ‘many arts’ (Simpson and Weiner, 1991).
- ‘Technology’ is an expansive term derived from Greek roots (*technologia*), connoting not only the human application of knowledge in shaping the physical environment, but also the

development and application of critical and conceptual methods, skills, approaches, and thought processes that comprise human knowledge more generally.

- ‘Polytechnic’ traditionally describes the program mix and focus of a special purpose university. This mix typically includes business, arts and science, design, health, engineering, journalism, education, media studies, visual and performing arts, as well as trades and qualifying studies programs.
- General characteristics of polytechnic universities include . . .
 - High quality learning and teaching
 - A learn-by-doing environment
 - Application of theory to practice
 - Flexible learning environments and approaches
 - Full-time and part-time studies
 - Bridging pathways
 - Work placements / co-op education
 - Student diversity widening participation in higher education
 - Curricular innovation—new programs at undergraduate and graduate level
 - Multi-disciplinary programs
 - Career focus programs
- Examples of polytechnic universities . . .
 - Ryerson University (Toronto)
 - California State Polytechnic Universities (San Luis Obispo and Pomona)
 - Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, Mass.)
 - Middlesex University (UK)
 - University of Greenwich (UK)
 - University of Plymouth (UK)
 - University of Limerick (Republic of Ireland)
 - Dublin Institute of Technology (Republic of Ireland)
 - Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Australia)
 - University of Technology Sydney (Australia)
 - Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)

References

Province of British Columbia. (2008). *University Amendment Act, 2008*. Queen’s Printer: Victoria.

Simpson, J.A. and Weiner, E.S.C. (1991). *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.