

KPU is an Age Friendly University

2025 Report

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) offers many courses, programs, and projects that promote research and education for and about older adults. KPU has five campuses located in the Metro Vancouver region of British Columbia, Canada. KPU offers bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, diplomas, certificates and citations in more than 140 programs. Almost 20,000 students annually attend courses at KPU campuses in Surrey (3), Richmond and Langley. The following is a collection of submissions that describe and discuss age related activities at KPU and affiliated organizations in 2025

Kwantlen Polytechnic University promotes an age friendly environment

KPU's Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities leads the development and implementation of key anti-racism, accessibility, gender equity, social sustainability, and broad Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies in alignment with the university's Strategic Vision and Academic Plan. The focus of the work is on eliminating all forms of bias and raise awareness about unconscious bias in the workplace.

Ageism is a form of bias and discrimination that impacts the wellbeing and inclusion of all employees in the workplace and of all students in a university. It is important for institutions to work on eliminating age bias and to foster an environment where intergenerational collaborations lead to productivity and innovation. As many Indigenous scholars have reminded us, our elders are knowledge keepers, and we must respect them and learn from them. As KPU strives to be an inclusive institution, it will continue to strengthen its relationships with our community of seniors to ensure that we are inclusive in a meaningful and respectful way.

Submitted by Dr. Asma Sayed, Vice President, Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities

KPU grows as an Age-Friendly University and extends these principles into the community through its Alumni

KPU's Vice President of External Affairs office has been supporting the work of [TALK](#) (Third Age Learning Kwantlen), the KPU [Retirees](#) Association and others to continue to grow as an Age Friendly University. One of the things we are most proud of is the work of KPU alum Yongjie Yon, who works for the World Health Organization (WHO). Yon's work helps to battle ageism and shape policies for aging populations in 53 countries around the world. His work earned him the KPU Distinguished Alumni Award in 2025. Read the full article in [The Alumni Magazine Vol 8, pages 28 to 30](#).

Submitted by Randall Heidt, Vice President, External Affairs

KPU Retirees Association (KPURA) connects, informs, and advocates for the needs of retired KPU employees

KPURA organizes educational and social events throughout the year. A comprehensive newsletter is circulated three times per year to inform retirees about current seniors' concerns, opportunities, and social gatherings. KPURA attends KPU Day for all employees, offers pre-retirement seminars, and invites employees to join our "friends" list before retirement. A comprehensive list of private extended health, dental, and travel insurance options is available on the KPURA website.

KPURA invites guests to monthly Board meetings to discuss seniors' issues within KPU and beyond. For example, Anthony Kuferschmidt, City of Vancouver's Staff Liaison for the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee, described his role and committee activities which improve the "age friendliness" of Vancouver. KPURA is a member of provincial, national, and international organizations that support post secondary retirees. Currently, KPURA is exploring the formation of an Advisory Committee that would consist of representatives across KPU offices and departments. The Advisory Committee would be tasked to ensure that the needs of older adults are considered in all activities, developments, and educational opportunities at KPU.

The AFU file has now been transferred to the Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities at KPU. KPURA was instrumental in promoting AFU Principles and initiated KPU's application to the AFU Network in 2023. The subsequent AFU foundation constructed by Randall Heidt, VP External Affairs, will ensure that, wherever administrative responsibility for the AFU is placed, KPURA will continue to advocate for an Age Friendly University.

Submitted by the KPU Retirees Association Board of Directors

TALK (Third Age Learning at Kwantlen) provides life long learning for older members of the community through a variety of affordable courses and programs

Third Age Learning at Kwantlen (TALK) is pleased to report on our relationship with Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) as it relates to KPU's Age-Friendly University status.

TALK is a volunteer organization with a 26-year relationship with KPU. KPU serves those in the community of a different age from typical post secondary age students by having supported the establishment and long continuation of TALK. The KPU Faculty of Academic and Career Preparation (ACP) provides administrative support, classroom and meeting space, a website, printing and mailing of our spring and fall brochures and other marketing materials, and generous support of TALK's mission, which is to provide lifelong learning to those over the age of 50. By retaining the TALK course fees, ACP's support for TALK is almost revenue neutral.

In May 2025, TALK had 250 active members in KPU's catchment areas – Richmond, Surrey, Cloverdale, White Rock and Langley – and approximately 900 on its mailing list. TALK's main strategic plan goal for 2025/26 is to increase membership.

By supporting TALK, KPU contributes to an age-friendly environment through the following:

- TALK promotes to our members KPU's [Lifespan Cognition Lab](#), by regular mentions in our newsletter and a link on our website and by welcoming volunteer instructors from the

lab to present TALK courses. In this way, KPU is encouraging the participation of older adults in all the core activities of the University, including educational and research programs.

- TALK has a policy of inviting KPU staff and students to attend TALK courses free of charge, space available. We have regular articles about TALK in the student newspaper The Runner. Current and retired KPU instructors (and occasionally their students) regularly volunteer to present TALK courses. KPU is thereby promoting intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
- TALK has both online and on-campus courses, plus field trips, Philosophers' Corners and public events, which widen access to online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation. Philosophers' Corner and public events are open to people of all ages, thus fostering intergenerational interaction.
- TALK has a close relationship with the Faculty of Academic and Career Preparation (ACP) and the Dean reports to VP Academic, which ensures that the university's research agenda is informed by the needs of an aging society and promotes public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
- TALK's regular promotion of KPU activities through its newsletter and social media (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) help KPU enhance access for older adults to the university's range of health and wellness programs and its arts and cultural activities.
- TALK has a relationship with the KPU Retirees Association (KPURA), submitting regular articles in KPURA's newsletter and having KPURA members sitting on TALK's Board and Committees, hence assisting KPU in engaging actively with the university's own retired community.
- TALK Board and Committee members participate in organizations such as the BC Seniors Advocate Advisory Council and the Semiahmoo Seniors Planning Table. Through them, KPU is ensuring regular dialogue with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.

In conclusion, TALK is proud to be a prime driver of KPU's age-friendly status and looks forward to continued and improved connections with the university.

Submitted by Heather Cross, Chair, Third Age Learning at Kwantlen (TALK)

Office of the Registrar / Recruitment and Admissions, provides support and opportunities for older adults, including:

- The Senior Citizen Fee Exemption process - Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents residing in BC who have reached the age of 65 before the first day of classes may be eligible to apply for the Senior Citizen Fee Exemption and take certain courses for free. <https://www.kpu.ca/admissions/general-interest/senior-citizen-fee-exemption>
- Individualized recruitment support – one-on-one appointments and assistance with applying
- Transfer credit available on request for all applicants, for past post-secondary achievement

- PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition), for work and professional/volunteer experience to potentially receive credit
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) is partnering with [Progressive Intercultural Community Services \(PICS\) Society](#), a Surrey-based non-profit organization, to offer streamlined pathways to education and employment for internationally trained professionals. Often these professionals are older adults that require upgrading to qualify for employment in Canada.

Submitted by Molly Kirsch, Associate Registrar, Admissions & Recruitment

A Research and Education Laboratory at KPU brings people of all ages together to study and participate in a variety of thinking and memory projects

Dr. Daniel Bernstein, Canada Research Chair in Lifespan Cognition, heads the [Lifespan Cognition Lab](#) (LCL) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The LCL is a diverse, inclusive, and active research lab containing 15 to 20 students. Lab members span a wide range of ages, races, ethnicities, political and religious beliefs, gender identities and sexual orientations, and include able-bodied individuals and those with disability and/or chronic illness. We have high school students and grandparents in the LCL, and all ages in between. Our diversity helps us promote an inclusive work environment, while enriching our understanding of the communities we serve. Lab members work with typical and atypical populations (e.g., those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder) from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. Our lab members obtain experience with these populations, testing preschoolers, school-age children, younger adults, and older adults. Lab members also undergo regular training in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As part of the LCL, the team is committed to enhancing accessibility to research findings and educating the public about the importance of understanding the changes in thinking as we age. The team has dedicated efforts towards engaging in knowledge sharing with various communities through presenting talks pertaining to thinking and memory, publishing academic blog posts for all ages, creating social media content to communicate current research, and attending both local and international conferences to showcase the LCL projects.

The LCL has initiated various projects involving different age groups, ranging from young children to older adults. Two of the lifespan projects: the Lifespan Cognition In-Person study (LCIP) and the Lifespan Cognition and Memory Online study (LCMO), delve into how thinking and memory changes across the lifespan. These studies involve active engagement with the community for recruitment and testing purposes. The team has established relationships with facilities for seniors, private schools for children, and local event organizers through their consistent dedication towards educating and engaging the community by hosting relevant presentations or by partaking in conversations to address research questions.

The LCMO team has also extended its efforts to coordinate an event with the KPU Retirees Association (KPURA), which will allow our lab to showcase our lifespan research projects and collaborate with KPURA to inform our future research approaches and organize upcoming events. The LCL has also been invited to collaborate with Surrey Libraries to establish a program for seniors which will commence in Fall 2026. This program will entail multiple sessions of activities and educational presentations related to thinking and memory. The KPURA event and Surrey program will both serve as an opportunity for knowledge sharing and for transparent

conversations related to the effects of aging. These initiatives are intended to not only educate seniors, but to also promote dialogue for two-way knowledge transfer between older and younger generations.

Submitted by Dr. Daniel Bernstein, KPU psychology instructor

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO) promotes the Rights of Older Adults

COSCO, Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, celebrated their 75th anniversary with a two-day conference in October 2025. KPURA Board member, Terri Van Steinburg, 2nd vice president of COSCO, was the conference organizer and facilitator. Many organizations within BC and across Canada attended and reported on activities and programs that improve the lives of older adults. Sessions titled "Ageism and Human Rights", "Health Care for Older Adults", "Inequality, Social Connections and Age-Friendly Communities", and "Transportation" described the breath and depth of age-based issues and solutions, both possible and realized, that are required to alleviate age related disparities.

An umbrella group is lobbying the UN for a Human Rights Convention to declare that ageism cannot be part of decision-making. There are also advisory committees being formed, often provincially based, to coordinate other organizations with common goals and promote effective and efficient strategies to combat the many issues that affect the quality of life of seniors and older adults.

Submitted by Carol Barnett, Chair, KPURA and attendee at the COSCO 75th Anniversary Conference

Oral History Project: KPU captures its history through recorded interviews of retired employees and former students

The KPU Oral History Project is conducting interviews with several generations of students, staff, faculty, administrators and board members to capture the institutional memory. In the meantime, the following interviews transcripts have been posted and are available for your reading pleasure at <https://archives.kpu.ca/oral-history-project>

Submitted by Roger Elmes, KPU Retirees Association Board Member and Former Dean of Arts and Humanities