



# KPU: AHEAD OF THE CURVE

**F**or the past 30 years, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) has managed to stay ahead of the curve through continual growth and development. Beginning as a college more than 30 years ago, KPU is now the largest post-secondary university south of the Fraser and the largest teaching university in Western Canada with four modern campuses in Langley, Richmond, Surrey and Cloverdale.

“KPU is a special purpose, regional teaching university so it has been very much established to serve this region,” says Dr. Alan Davis, the President and Vice-Chancellor of KPU. “To some degree, to describe KPU is to describe the community.”

Conscious about meeting the needs of their students and the surrounding community, KPU is expanding into a new space in Surrey City Centre in 2016. “It is important for us in two ways,” explains Dr. Davis. “To expand our programming to include more professional and continuing studies, especially for working [students] and...it creates more capacity for growth.”

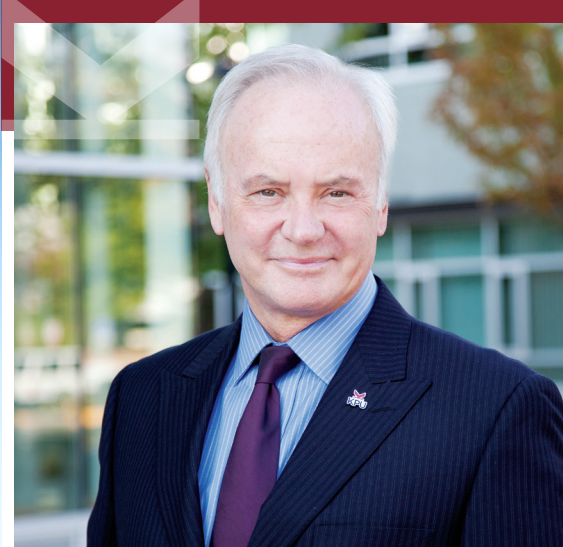
Not only will this expansion cut down commuting times for students living in the north end of the city, but the new KPU Civic



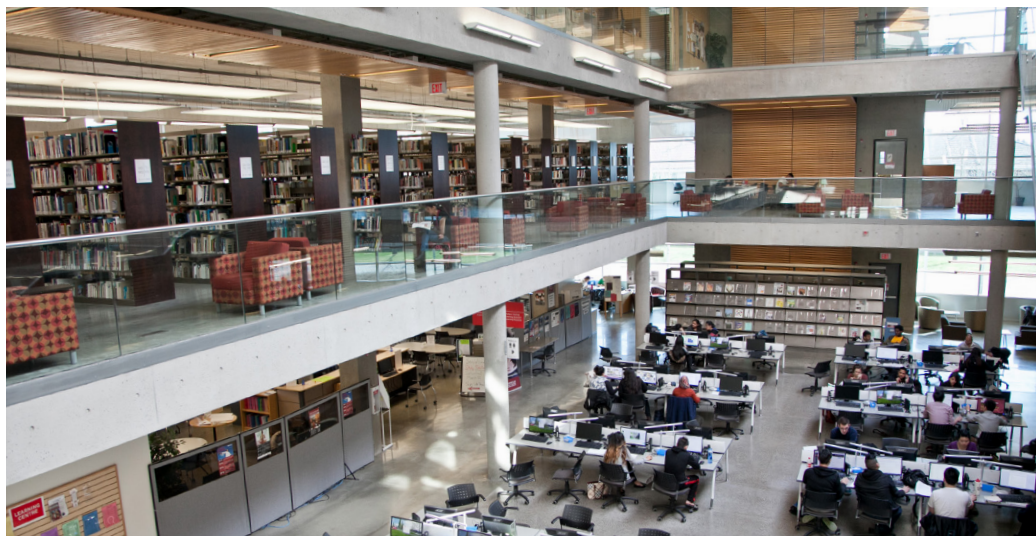
Plaza expansion will most likely become a hub for business and professional studies. “We have a fantastic School of Business, the largest undergraduate business school in Western Canada,” shares Dr. Davis. “One of its defining features is that...everybody who leaves has in fact had some real-world experience along with their classroom studies and this [new expansion] would provide them an opportunity to have a more professional environment up there with the emerging businesses.”

KPU strives to provide new, innovative





Dr. Alan Davis, President & Vice-Chancellor of KPU



academic programs. This year, KPU has added three new and exciting programs to the curriculum. In January, technical apparel design was introduced. This post-baccalaureate diploma, which is offered at the Richmond campus, trains students to design technical apparel, such as specialized safety attire and activewear. "It's part of our relationship with Lululemon and other activewear designers like Mountain Equipment Co-op. Vancouver is a major market for technical apparel," says Dr. Davis. "This [program] is a direct response to demand from industry."

Additionally, KPU launched a new program focusing on non-governmental organizations and non-profit studies. This certificate program prepares students for employment in this growing sector. "We've had a lot of demand for this from people who work in the not-for-profit sector, which is very large in Surrey," says Dr. Davis. "Again, [this program is] responding to community needs." The program teaches practical, need-to-know skills including marketing, blogging, reporting and researching.

This fall, KPU is also offering a diploma in brewing and brewery operations at their Langley Campus. This program offers students the chance to learn the science, production and business of brewing and includes a work placement during the summer term. As the craft beer industry continues to steadily grow in Vancouver, Dr. Davis notes how positive the student response has been for this program. "[For] the first intake, we have had a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of applications!"

By ensuring that their curriculum and programs offered are relevant and often created in response to industry demands, students at KPU have an edge when delving



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into the workforce. Their hands-on approach to education means that students have real-life experience when they leave school. As a polytechnic university, KPU applies theory to practice and offers work placements, internships and co-op opportunities. "Among the non-research universities in BC, we have the highest number of co-op placements in the province," says Dr. Davis. "That means those students are having very extended work experiences that actually contribute credit towards their degree. That often leads to a job."

In addition to helping their students

find success in their careers, KPU prepares and encourages students to be responsible, global citizens. "We like to balance, you know, it's not just about getting a job," explains Dr. Davis. "It's also about being prepared for adult life and to be an engaged citizen who understands and participates in the community." KPU ensures all their programs encourage critical understanding as well as social and ethical awareness in students. "We also have a very strong student association," says Dr. Davis. "There is some research that suggests that the success of students is aligned to their ability to engage more broadly with the university." With a club for almost every hobby, interest and program as well as varsity and intramural athletics, students at KPU get a chance to enhance their university experience by participating in their vibrant campus life.

With their signature approach to education which blends academic excellence with hands-on, practical learning, coupled with their response to community and industry needs, KPU ensures that all their students are prepared for a successful career and life as a global citizen.

For more information about KPU, visit [www.kpu.ca](http://www.kpu.ca)