

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Submission on Public Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review

Office of the President and Vice Chancellor

June 30, 2022

Many of us at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) are uninvited settlers to the region that KPU serves, and we respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional and ancestral territories of the hənqəmīnəm and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples:

qw̓ a:n̓l̓ á n̓ (Kwantlen)
xwməθkwayá m (Musqueam)
qi c̓á y (Katzie)
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo)
scá waθən (Tsawwassen)
qiqéyt (Qayqayt)
kwíkwəł̓á m (Kwikwetlem)

The Kwantlen First Nation graciously bestowed their name on this university. In the cause of reconciliation, we recognize our commitment to address and reduce ongoing systemic colonialism, oppression and racism that Indigenous Peoples continue to experience.

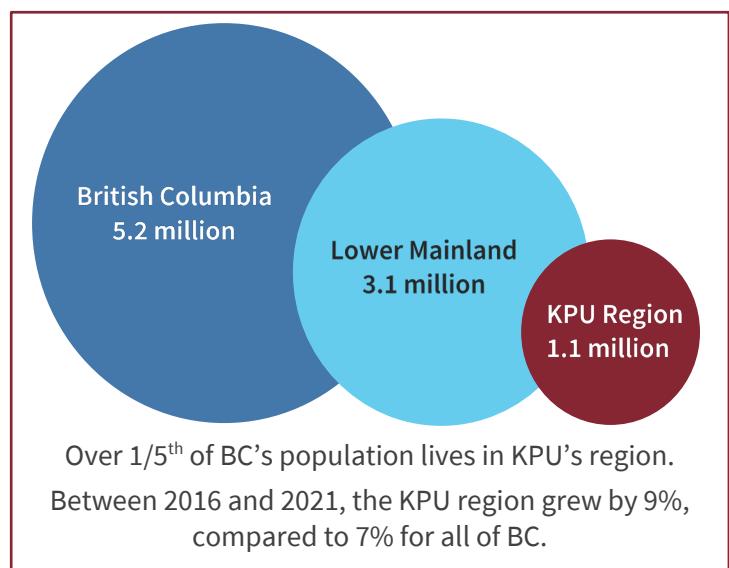
Preamble

On behalf of the KPU Community and the region it serves, we are grateful for this opportunity to engage with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) in this review of the funding formula for public-postsecondary institutions (PSIs).

We appreciate the public funding we receive that helps us address the needs in the KPU region. We agree that it is important for the BC post-secondary system to have a transparent and rational funding model irrespective of whether KPU receives increased funding as a result. We support the three objectives of the review (to develop a fair and impartial model; to align funding with needs; and to support student access and success).

The KPU Difference

Although BC's Public PSIs share many similarities, every PSI operates in a specific context, and in some cases, under a specific mandate. KPU's context and mandate reflect its formation as a college in 1981, transition to a university college in 1995, and creation of Canada's only polytechnic university in 2008. Consequently, KPU has a mandate of a polytechnic, a teaching university, and key elements of a college retained from inception. Through its complex mandate, KPU is unique in regional responsiveness with open access, degrees, skill and career focused one and two-year programs, and trades training.





FIRST GENERATION

50%

38% of Domestic
67% of International

of KPU students were the first person in their family to attend post-secondary education



VISIBLE MINORITY

78%

62% of Domestic
98% of International

of KPU students belong to non-Indigenous visible minority groups

KPU's mandate includes undergraduate degrees, applied research and graduate programming; however, the level of funding received from AEST has remained at that of a two-year college. New and important expansions of KPU's mandate have not been funded. Over the past five years, the operating grant has remained relatively constant which has forced an increasing reliance on other sources of revenue, notably international tuition, to fund ongoing obligations including inflationary pressures and amortization.

A high proportion of KPU's programs have direct connections to the labour market; this is a significant benefit to students and the local economy but results in a higher cost of delivery. For example, many have high equipment and technology costs and/or may require smaller class sizes for safety or for access to equipment, and a diverse range of experiential and work-integrated learning activities.

As a regionally focused teaching university with five campuses south of the Fraser River, KPU serves one of the more culturally diverse and rapidly growing regions of the province. KPU is complex in other ways: its region comprises six municipalities and seven First Nations communities, four school districts and 26 elected provincial and federal leaders. KPU serves this region with five campuses spread across a 42 kilometre area south of the Fraser River.

KPU's strategic plan, Vision 2023, is organized across 4 themes: student and employee **experience**, **creativity** in all we do, **sustainability** (financially, environmentally and culturally) and **quality**. Embedded in the plan are KPU's long engagement with its communities in all aspects of social justice, its willingness to innovate and the real work of de-colonization as a journey to reconciliation. Additional information can be gleaned from KPU's annual Accountability Plan and Report, with the 2021/22 version to be provided to AEST in July.

Response

This submission addresses the ten questions posed by Don Wright, Engagement Lead for the review, in his letter to post-secondary presidents dated April 22, 2022.

- 1. What are the most important contributions your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of British Columbia?*

Annually, approximately 20,000 students take courses over 145 diverse programs that include academic upgrading, apprenticeship training, certificates, diplomas, associate and bachelor's degrees, and post-baccalaureate and graduate credentials. As a polytechnic university, we combine academic excellence and hands-on, applied learning with a focus on producing job-ready graduates who have the skills required to make valuable contributions to BC's workforce and communities.

KPU offers a wide range of credit-based experiential learning opportunities that allow students to gain experience while also receiving academic credit. This includes co-op, field schools, practicum courses as well as courses that contain a service-learning component—a portion of the course that is dedicated to directly applying classroom material to a community-based experience. We work closely with industry partners and community organizations to ensure our graduates are well prepared to enter the workforce.

Contributing to the Economic Health of BC

Of BC's twenty-five PSIs, KPU is the fifth largest. KPU contributes to the economy of BC by delivering job-ready graduates to the labour market. We accomplish this by training domestic students for well-paying jobs in high demand areas such as nursing and digital technology, as well as recruiting international students who come to KPU for their two-year programs because they want to immigrate to Canada, thus helping to address labour market shortages. KPU's graduates, both domestic and international, contribute necessary talent to support the economic health of BC. Most of our international students pursue non-degree programs. When graduates of these non-degree programs were surveyed in 2021, about 18 to 24 months after graduation, 84% of those who responded were living in Canada; of these who were in the labour force, 94% were employed.

KPU offers a wide range of programs with direct connections to the labour market. These programs include four nursing programs, including one for internationally trained nurses; acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine; design programs such as fashion and technical apparel; technology programs such as digital entertainment arts; programs in business management such as operations and supply chain, green business and global business management; a range of horticulture programs; physics for modern technology; brewing and brewery operations; environmental protection technology; sustainable agriculture; farrier science; mechatronics and advanced manufacturing technology; and trades training such as automotive service technician (including ZEVs this Fall), carpentry, construction electrician, metal fabrication, millwright (industrial mechanic), piping/plumbing and welding.

Addressing the needs of our local communities and industries is a priority for KPU. Close partnerships with industry create a reciprocal milieu, with donations of essential parts and materials. There are then efforts to use those materials in important ways including experiential learning projects with city and non-profit partners.

KPU's Program Advisory Committees (PAC) are an important way that KPU remains connected to its community and ensures our programs meet the needs of employers, and are able to respond quickly to market demands. For example, The Brewing and Brewery Operations PAC consists of an industry specialist from Work Safe BC and representatives from almost twenty-four local breweries.

KPU also contributes to the economy through research and innovation. As an applied university, much of research and scholarly activities at KPU are undertaken with partners across BC who benefit from the outputs, be it knowledge or innovation. Between 30 to 55% of educators across KPU are engaged in various applied research, innovation, and scholarly activities. For example, the Applied Genomics Centre performs human health research using genetic tools to better understand the genetic underpinnings of human disease. Similarly,

Applied Genomics Centre provides several genomic and metabolomic services for industry and academic institutions, such as DNA and Sanger sequencing, custom projects in next generation sequencing, DNA fingerprinting and consultation in genomics and metabolomics. In addition, the centre uses genomic and metabolomic tools to investigate issues in agriculture around improving crop consistency, crop yield and animal health.

KPU's Institute for Sustainable Horticulture and KPU's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems support sustainability in the agriculture and land use sectors across BC.

KPU also has six faculty research chairs engaged in impactful work across economic, social, and environmental dimensions: These include lifespan cognition, nutrition informatics, South Asian literary and cultural studies, applied genomics, next-generation design, and sustainable horticulture.

Contributions to the Social Health of BC

As an open-access university, KPU provides an affordable way for students to begin their post-secondary studies. Admission to KPU's undergraduate programs often only requires that KPU's English proficiency requirements are met. If students don't meet those requirements, they can upgrade their English at KPU before starting their post-secondary studies. KPU focusses on the success of the diverse student body through small class sizes (35 students or less), and an array of support services for students, with the goal of ensuring that no student is left behind. These include one of the first Early Alert referral programs for students in Canada, a national award-winning tutoring program accessible to all KPU students at no additional cost, and low/no-cost campus recreation and intramural programs for students.

The pandemic has raised awareness of the need to provide more mental health support. Some of the supports available to KPU students include: remote counselling through KPU counselors; 24/7 counselling through the *Keep ME Safe* program, which is available in multiple languages; access to wellness resource hubs such as the *Campuswell* blog and *Keep Me Safe* app; peer wellness ambassador support; suicide prevention programming; the *Wellness in Action* program, and a joint offering from the Sport & Recreation and Counselling Services departments that provides students experiencing mild to moderate anxiety and depression with a structured exercise program that helps them navigate their experience.

The **KDocs Film Festival** is a partnership with the Vancouver International Film Centre/Vancity Theatre, that showcases award-winning documentary films, keynote speakers, filmmakers, panelists, exhibitors, and community partners. Participants engage in lively discussion, debate, and dialogue as they investigate today's most pressing social justice issues. In addition, the KDocs Community Outreach Program engages learners in the classrooms at KPU and other post-secondary institutions, and school districts, as well as at events held with community organizations to provide documentary screenings, workshops, and discussions throughout the year.

The Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships (NEVR) is a partnership hosted by KPU that supports the university's vision of transforming lives and empowering positive change. NEVR works toward the goal of eliminating relationship violence in the community and is composed of over 200 members from the fields of community services, education, law enforcement and government.

Contributions to the Environmental Health of BC

Acknowledging the role institutions have in terms of globally contributing to climate change and taking the proactive steps needed to reduce GHG emissions, KPU signed the Global Universities and Colleges Climate Letter in 2019, committing to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2050. To advance our

KPU's Graduate Diploma in **Green Business Management and Sustainability** helps future leaders reduce, or avoid by design, negative impacts on the local and global environment, and the Graduate Certificate in **Sustainable Food Systems and Security** provides an interdisciplinary examination of food systems and food security from environmental, social and economic perspectives.

emissions reductions, KPU has additionally established its first Sustainability Plan which includes a set of GHG reduction targets that exceed provincial requirements; namely, to achieve a 50% reduction compared to the 2007 base year by 2025, a 60% reduction by 2030, and a 100% reduction by 2050.

2. *What is your institution doing to promote Reconciliation with Indigenous People and First Nations?*

KPU prioritizes supporting lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through initiatives that increase the participation and success of Indigenous learners, supporting the goals, outcomes, and actions outlined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), and implementing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), as well as articles in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This work aligns with one of the strategic goals in KPU's *VISION 2023*, "*embrace all cultures and promote a renewed, authentic approach to Indigenization.*" To further our efforts in this area, this year KPU has focused on strategy development and capacity building including hiring Indigenous administrators, faculty and staff, and implementing training for all employees. This submission highlights some of KPU's efforts, considerably more information can be found in our annual Accountability Plan & Report.

KPU is finalizing its first Indigenous Strategic Plan – '*xé?elt: Our Pathway Towards Systemic Transformation*'. *xé?elt* is about shifting the culture at KPU to one where the responsibility of systemic transformation is shared amongst the entire KPU community to recognize and advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

KPU recognizes the importance of Indigenous voices in decision-making and is increasing the number of Indigenous employees in a variety of ways. KPU is hiring an Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Leadership, Innovation and Partnerships, a new position that reports to the Vice President, Students and is responsible for the overall Indigenous leadership, innovation, partnerships, and strategic planning at KPU. Further, KPU has received approval from the BC Office of the Human Rights Commission for a special five-year program to enable preferential hiring of **qualified Indigenous candidates**, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, for faculty, excluded management and staff positions across the university.

The **KPU Indigenous Dialogue Series**, launched in 2020, intends to bring together all members of the Kwantlen community—students, employees, affiliates, and the general public (settler and Indigenous Peoples)—to listen, learn, and engage with Indigenous scholars, activists, and leaders. Invitations are sent to all local First Nations, the Métis Nation of BC, Indigenous Education representatives with school districts, the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leaders Committee and others. The events, hosted virtually, are free and open to the public.

In spring 2022, KPU established a new department of **Indigenous Studies** in the Faculty of Arts, which provides a key focus for Indigenization and decolonization within the university, empowers the department faculty to determine the department's protocols in keeping with local Indigenous practices, and envisions its educational and programming goals through consultations with members of the KPU community and local Indigenous communities.

Plans are underway to expand KPU's **Elders Program** to increase support and representation to better meet the needs of a diverse Indigenous student population, and to be better positioned to respond to faculty requests for in-class participation, in addition to Elder participation at institutional and community events.

3. What is your institution doing to promote equitable access for people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances?

Access

To help address the access needs of the community, KPU is represented in a wide array of committees and organizations that support the diverse needs of those underrepresented in higher education.

As an **open access** institution, KPU provides all prospective students with a pathway for access. For those who don't meet the English proficiency entry requirements for undergraduate studies, we have the Pathway to Undergraduate Studies admission path. Based on their level of English proficiency, students take English upgrading courses until they have completed the Pathway and are qualified for undergraduate studies.

Other community-based training is provided at Fraser Regional Correctional Centre, through two programs: Introduction to Welding and Introduction to Metal Fabrication. Each program is 30 hours, with 6 intakes per year for the former and two intakes per year for the latter.

Open Doors, Open Minds, KPU's open house for K-12 Indigenous learners in our region, continues our tradition of providing Indigenous high school students exposure to the post-secondary learning environment and the opportunities available to them at KPU. The annual event is attended by several hundred students, primarily grades 10 and 11, from school districts across the region.

KPU's Adult Special Education program, Employment and Community Studies, prepares students for a semester-long work experience in the community; additionally, students can take courses in career exploration, disability rights, and social justice. While some employers have hosted student work experiences for many years, new employers are engaged each year to match the interests of incoming students.

KPU continues to participate in post-secondary system-level initiatives to support **Former Youth in Care**. The number of self-identifying Former Youth in Care attending KPU continues to increase. In the 2020/21 academic year, 63 Former Youth in Care students attended KPU, up from 44 in the prior year. These students are connected to a designated Financial Aid Advisor who helps these students navigate additional financial resources available to them, and a designated Academic Advisor who helps them navigate program choices, course planning and selection and course registration.

The Gathering Place, located at KPU Surrey, is a dedicated space housing services for Indigenous learners including advising, elder and peer support, social space and amenities for events. KPU provides Indigenous Student Orientation that has been designed to help ease the transition to post-secondary studies for new Indigenous students and build a community of support on campus whereby students feel a sense of belonging and connection.

The **Phoenix-Kwantlen Learning Centre**, a partnership between KPU and the Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society, empowers adult learners to re-enter the educational arena and the labour market through individualized assessment and personal planning that includes lifelong learning goals. Since 2007, the Centre has offered community-based instruction in English and math from basic literacy level through Grade 11. It also helps adult learners move on to KPU's campus-based offerings or to other formal educational settings.



STUDENT FINANCES

In Fall 2021

75%

39% work 10 to 19 hours a week
28% work 20+ hours a week
of KPU students work while in school

- Most common sources of **financial support**:
- personal savings
 - non-repayable support from families
 - working while in school

Food insecurity affects almost a quarter of KPU students:

22% reported that they sometimes and 10% reported that they often, ate less than they needed because they didn't have money for food

Financial Support

KPU distributes over \$2 million annually in bursaries and awards to KPU students with donors from across our region who support KPU's students and its vision for post-secondary education. In fiscal year 2022, KPU was able to donate funds to the KPU Foundation to help reduce financial barriers for students. Students will benefit this year in a number of ways, including an offset to the 2% tuition fee increase for students enrolled in fall 2022 and spring 2023, for a potential of \$3 million in savings for students. Additionally, \$300,000 has been made available for new student awards.

Various scholarships and bursaries have been created specifically for Indigenous students. We have approximately \$55,000 available annually for Indigenous learners (\$25K Indigenous Emergency Assistance Fund, \$15K Entrance Awards, \$15K donor-funded awards). Indigenous learners may also qualify for all other KPU financial awards and assistance programs. For self-identifying Indigenous students, \$50,000 in additional financial support has been allocated for the 2022/23 academic year.

KPU's **Zero Textbook Cost** initiative eliminates the cost of textbooks for many courses. In the 2020/21 academic year, this saved students an estimated \$2.3 million in textbook costs.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

KPU is committed to actively fostering an equitable and inclusive learning and working environment that enables every member of our diverse community to thrive. Building such an environment is essential to our evolution into a unique, progressive and highly regarded university that upholds a culture of sustainability, creativity and quality. Our goal is not only to reflect our diverse, dynamic and growing region, but also to enable our students, employees, and friends to enjoy rich, engaging and supportive educational and working experiences.

The work to advance equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization (EDID) is under-taken by a number of groups, each with a specific EDID focus:

The **President's Diversity and Equity Committee** (PDEC), is a broad, representational committee, composed of students and employees, that provides leadership in the advancement of equity, inclusivity and diversity at KPU. PDEC ensures the implementation of KPU's Diversity and Inclusiveness policy and facilitates diversity and equity initiatives across the various divisions of the university.

KPU's **Disability Inclusion Group** is committed to dismantling ableism by fostering awareness, exposing barriers, encouraging engagement, and promoting inclusion for people with disabilities.

The **Pride Advocacy Group** (PAG) is comprised of students and employees who represent an array of intersectional gender and sexual identities. PAG seeks to support and empower LGBTQ2S+ students, staff and faculty at KPU and identify opportunities to foster awareness, encourage engagement, and promote inclusiveness, thereby creating an environment where LGBTQ2S+ students and employees feel welcome, valued, supported and empowered.

The **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** Steering Committee, established in 2020, has made progress on the development of the action plan, building on the results of the employee diversity census and inclusion survey, conducted by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion in 2021.

KPU's **Task Force on Antiracism**, a cross-institutional initiative established in 2020, consisting of employee and student members, is focused on creating institutional supports for teaching, learning, research and scholarship, and institutional change on racial equity, systemic oppression, and intersectional social justice. Based on multiple consultations over the past two years, and the results of an employee survey designed to gain a deeper understanding of race, racism, and antiracism at KPU, the Task Force will be making recommendations to address racism; to identify where barriers exist for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) communities; and to determine pathways towards a more just and inclusive university.

4. What are your major challenges in enhancing the contribution your institution makes to the economic, social, and environmental health of British Columbia?

A significant challenge in enhancing KPU's contribution is the limited capacity, particularly financially, to engage in impactful **research and innovation**. While KPU serves a vast and highly populated region, business, industry, and community partners are not fully able to tap into the intellectual capacity and infrastructure that exists at KPU to solve their innovation and entrepreneurship challenges. BC has a large number of startups, small and medium sized organizations that lack the capacity to do this on their own. As a large applied polytechnic institution, KPU would be able to substantially enhance its economic, social, and environmental contributions in its region provided funding supports are in place.

Other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec have recognized the applied nature and impact potential of their teaching-intensive colleges, polytechnics, and universities. Provincial investments have been made to advance applied research, innovation, and entrepreneurship which has attracted substantial private and federal funding, ultimately realizing thriving innovation ecosystems in the regions anchored by these post-secondary institutions.

Likewise, our ability to expand programming to address emerging and **high demand labour market needs** is limited by our capacity. This is especially true for programs with technology or equipment requirements. KPU is developing preliminary proposals for government support (through the 2,000-tech seat program) for front-end development for interactive applications and for cloud security and architecture, and is ambitiously planning new partnerships to offer additional content on cloud skills. With additional funding, we would expand our offerings of shorter credentials (below the baccalaureate level) in the highest demand fields identified by the 2022 BC Labour Market Outlook. KPU has existing expertise on which we can build in digital design for industry and the entertainment arts, and could expand our credential offerings to add both related programming (in areas such as cutting-edge film and TV production) and

shorter credentials in existing program areas (such as digital design). We are also developing a proposal for operations and supply chain management at the graduate level.

We recognize the value of **work-integrated learning** in preparing graduates to be job ready, but we have limited capacity for a sustained effort at growing Co-op and other work integrated learning opportunities for KPU students with organizations in our region. These limitations include physical space to deliver such programs as well as the ability to hire faculty to carry on these objectives year over year.

KPU has a plan to boldly expand its commitment to its open-access values with a **new pathway** to KPU—*KPU360*, provided that funding is available. With an expedited, cost-effective prior learning recognition system, *KPU360* will increase its ability to take adult learners through a smooth online or in-person admission process and get them working on completing credentials faster than it ever has. *KPU360* will feature simplified student support with personalized contact, expanded access to zero-cost textbooks, and easy access to reskilling and upskilling after graduation.

To ensure their success, many KPU students need ongoing **language support** even once they have met the university's English proficiency entry requirement. We have started to provide more support through innovations such as embedding language consultants in undergraduate Faculties, but more could be done in this regard if we had the resources.

KPU recognizes that underrepresented and marginalized student populations have higher rates of **mental health** need. In particular, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, international students, former youth in care, and students with accessibility needs are at risk for higher rates of depression, anxiety and self-harm; and some are more likely to have experienced poverty, mental health and substance abuse challenges. Accessibility Services are supporting an increasing number of students with declared mental health related learning access needs. As a proportion of their caseloads, both Counselling and Accessibility Services have indicated an increase in students who self-identify as neurodiverse. KPU has effectively targeted resources to student-facing counselling and mental health supports – 24/7 access to mental health and counselling support and the availability of same-day counselling intake, in particular – but demand for these supports continues to grow in number and complexity.

Access to stable and affordable **student housing** would help reduce financial pressures on our students. Student housing connected to KPU would also provide an opportunity to better support the development, success, and safety of those students with additional services. Student housing also provides twin benefits of enhancing campus life in addition to reducing pressure on the local housing market.

One of our challenges is providing **access to courses** in a timely fashion; each semester we experience waitlists in high demand courses. The impact on students is that they may take longer to complete their program, and it also results in lower FTEs. Addressing waitlists has been a priority, but our faculty workload, inability to secure adequate ongoing funding to hire enough faculty, and salary structure makes faculty recruitment a challenge.

For a variety of reasons, the majority of KPU students don't take a full course load. They may study full-time, but with just the minimum number of courses needed for full-time, so they can focus on their studies, or because they need time to work, or both. This means we need more than two students, on average, to generate one FTE. All students need support, so headcount is a more accurate reflection of the demand for advising, counselling and other student support services.

Implementing the recommendations of the Indigenous Pathways plan, the EDID Action Plan and the TFA Report, as well as the changes required to reduce our carbon emissions to zero will all require funding.

We believe we've grown our international revenues as far as they should go. International students are an important source of talent for the future workforce, but we need to ensure a balance between domestic and international students so that domestic students benefit from a global experience, while ensuring international students have sufficient exposure to the Canadian experience. International revenues can't continue to grow if we are to maintain this balance.

We are also constrained by the compensation plans prepared by the Post-secondary Employers Association (PSEA). PSEA's plans limit the salaries we can offer to excluded employees, with the result that we are often not competitive even with other post-secondary employers outside of our PSEA group, and even more so when we need to compete with the private sector. Pay grids for our unionized staff are limited at levels that are not competitive. Without government support to review and adjust pay grids we are not able to attract and retain employees in key positions.

5. What are the most significant contributions your institution makes in collaboration with other parts of BC's PSE system?

KPU collaborates with most PSE institutions in the Metro Vancouver area, including University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU), from individual projects to multi-year research programs. Institutions collaborate on funding applications (for example, to Canada Foundation for Innovation), refer industry and community partners to one another, and tackle large or complex projects that are beyond the capacity of a single institution. Faculty members often hold joint appointments or adjunct appointments at other institutions which foster collaborations.

Institutions also collaborate on program development. KPU's new Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Food Systems and Security is an example that engaged Royal Roads University to realize a 18-credit certificate with interdisciplinary curriculum comprising two parts: the first part being a comprehensive interdisciplinary examination of contemporary food systems and food security from environmental, social and economic perspectives, elucidating the multi-faceted and deep challenges to humanity and the biosphere; the second part seeks to envision and facilitate a better food system future.

KPU Applied Genomics Centre partnered with Thomson Rivers University and Buck Lake Ranch to develop a new composite beef breed capable of dealing with climatic extremes by using genetically guided breeding and in-vitro fertilization between traditional angus beef and a heat-tolerant tropical breed. The composite beef breed developed will provide both the Canadian and global market with a high-quality beef, while improving cattle industry resilience and sustainability of the national beef herd, in the face of unprecedented climate change.

As a member of the **Carnegie Community Engagement** Canadian Pilot Cohort, KPU has had the opportunity to work more closely with UBC and SFU. We continue to see the ways in which collaboration across some partnerships could easily take place. In some cases, doing so could further elements of mutual and reciprocal exchange. KPU continues to meet monthly with all of the post-secondary institutions in the Carnegie Community Engagement Canadian Pilot Cohort.

One result of the pilot was KPU joining SFU's **Community Scholars** program. KPU's Carnegie Founding Members asked if there was a way to expand SFU's Community Scholars program and this led to KPU becoming a Bronze Level sponsor of the program. The program includes partnerships with Vancouver Island University, the University of Northern British Columbia, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and the University of British Columbia. The Community Scholars program provides staff of charitable and non-profit organizations in British Columbia with access to the latest research and knowledge in their fields.

KPU has diverse initiatives that support program areas and lead the development of innovative **global education** initiatives. These include the creation, adaptation, and adoption of open educational resources, KPU's Zero Textbook Cost programs, and a range of innovative open pedagogies. KPU is a proud member of the Open Education Network, International Council for Open and Distance Education, Open Education Global, OER universitas, Centre for Open Education Practice, and Creative Commons Global Network.

KPU also collaborates with **school districts** for dual credit opportunities, whereby students can take a course at KPU and receive both high school and university credit while they are still in high school. This spring, KPU hosted a meeting with the school district Superintendents and this group is one of KPU's Carnegie Founding Members. KPU has dual-credit partnerships with the Surrey and Richmond school districts.

KPU is in discussions with another post-secondary institution to jointly deliver an **early childcare and education** program on a KPU campus. This would include an on-campus child care centre, for use by both KPU students and employees, as well as members of the community.

In partnership with Squamish First Nation, KPU provides a number of programs at their North Vancouver Squamish Nation Training and Trades Centre, including carpentry level one and two, and residential building maintenance worker.

KPU actively consults with other institutions in support implementing the Provincial **Sexual Violence and Misconduct** legislation including bystander awareness training and institutional reporting.

KPU is an active member of BC's **Campus Navigator Community of Practice** supporting Former Youth in Care studying at the post-secondary level. Institution representatives directly involved in programming and services supporting Former Youth in Care meet monthly to collaborate on practices and strategy for promoting PSE access and success for Former Youth in Care.

In addition, KPU is an active participant in the BC transfer credit system and collaborates on various system initiatives, such as EducationPlannerBC, BCcampus, and BCNET, as well as participating in networks for libraries, registrar, international, student services, and IT.

We are also engaged in system-wide collaborations through the British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities Research Leaders Group, Research Ethics BC (especially on harmonized research ethics), and the BC Applied Research and Innovation Network.

6. What stands in the way of you collaborating more with the rest of BC's PSE system?

Post-secondary funding models and accountability requirements reinforce independence. Each institution develops their own unique vision that serves to differentiate the institution and is inherently unlikely to provide opportunity for collaboration.

The disparate **funding models** impede greater collaboration with the rest of BC's PSE system. For example, faculty members at KPU have an eight-section annual teaching workload which leaves little time for meaningful, ongoing research collaboration with other institutions. Institutional expertise and capacity to broker and administer large-scale research and innovation collaborations is also limited.

Funding constraints in conjunction with the requirement for budgetary surpluses discourage collaboration as the scope, timeline, and budget are then less controllable. The exploration of opportunities for collaboration entail upfront costs irrespective of whether an opportunity is found or the decision is made to collaborate. In addition, ongoing costs to fund the collaboration would be incurred.

7. What are the key economic, demographic, social and technological trends that will unfold over the next 30 years that will impact British Columbia's PSE system?

KPU's strategic plan, *Vision 2023*, was written and approved in 2018 and was prescient in suggesting that the key trends that society (and thus BC's PSE system) would need to address include:

- digital transformation that is changing the nature of work and ways of life;
- demands for action around social injustice;
- environmental impacts such as global climate change; and
- decolonization of institutions and full inclusion of Indigenous peoples is a priority.

In 2022, all these trends continue to be relevant, and have in some cases been amplified as a result of the global pandemic.

In addition, other trends that will impact the BC PSE system include the increasing need for innovation to address issues such as the ongoing climate emergency, the affordability challenges that British Columbians are facing, the growing skills shortages and need for increased immigration to provide the talent pool for the future.

8. How do you think the PSE system needs to evolve in response to those trends?

To effectively adapt to the evolving economic, demographic, social and technological trends that will continue to unfold into the future, the PSE system needs to address the following:

Tie funding to institutional mandates. On the assumption that a rational, fair and transparent multi-year funding formula can be devised, each institution should negotiate with AEST what contributions it will make to address these trends, and to report annually on its progress. BC already has a robust and useful Accountability Plan and Report cycle which can be adapted to serve this need.

Enhance EducationPlannerBC. More could be done to aggregate and integrate what PSIs collectively do in key areas, and to provide a portal for learners and others that includes offerings with more refined search parameters such as short term, competency-based reskilling and upskilling opportunities.

Expand Open Learning. AEST can encourage more open education in PSIs to increase access and success, and reduce costs to students, including, for instance, better use of recognition for prior learning, e-portfolios, and free, open textbooks.

Decide on what is meant by PSE system. What needs to work as a cohesive system? Where is institutional autonomy desirable to ensure innovation in programming and choice for students?

Ensure quality and accountability without unnecessary constraints provided by PSEA.

9. How does your institution need to evolve in response to those trends?

As stated in KPU's VISION 2023, as a polytechnic university, KPU has the unique opportunity to evolve in a way that anticipates the future by:

- reflecting and serving our diverse, dynamic and growing region by providing a wide range of offerings, services and activities;

- defining, developing and teaching the essential new competencies needed by our graduates, encompassing both technical and human literacies, creativity, adaptability, and social awareness;
- ensuring that our graduates are prepared for a life time of learning and re-learning, and providing them with opportunities to adapt to their changing needs; and
- fostering innovative teaching and learning and relevant research and scholarship.

KPU's progress reports on addressing the goals of VISION 2023 can be found [here](#).

As already mentioned, our current priorities include developing micro-credentials and other short credentials for upskilling and reskilling, as well as expanding the use of prior learning, to create an agile talent pipeline that transitions into the workforce to support BC's economic health and sustainability.

10. Considering the above, what modifications to the funding formula would you recommend?

Funding Formula

The funding formula needs to be equitable and reflect the **size, type and mandate** of the institution, the types of students served and their needs, as well as the factors that drive the cost of program delivery, such as specialized technology equipment, class size constraints of the collective agreement and the number of campuses. The formula needs to ensure that institutions have adequate levels of administration to be able to provide effective leadership, planning and support in order to address changing priorities and needs. The formula should be **transparent** so the basis of the funding is clear, and changes in funding for new programs are consistent with the formula.

Funding needs to keep pace with **inflation** and with **salary increases**, including those of administration, to ensure effective recruitment and retention. Government mandated priorities need to be appropriately funded; the expectation on institutions to make up the difference through revenue generation creates inequities, as institutions differ in their ability to generate revenue. Furthermore, a focus on revenue generation may conflict with our mandate as an open access institution.

The funding formula also needs to consider the full **context** of an institution's operations. For example, KPU delivers trades and apprenticeship training that is only partially funded by the Industry Training Authority (ITA). Of the \$7.6M in operating costs in FY22, the ITA covered \$3.2M, student fees covered \$1.8M, and the remaining \$2.5M was covered by KPU's operating grant, which ultimately decreased funds available to be used towards base expenditures.

As Figure 1 indicates, KPU's operating grant comprised 34% of operating revenues for 2021/22, compared to 40% in 2016/17. Operating revenues have grown by increasing **international tuition revenue**, but growth in this source of revenue is **unsustainable**, as mentioned earlier. In addition, international revenues are volatile and unreliable as a basis for addressing ongoing initiatives.

Figure 2 illustrates some of the apparent inequities, which shows the notional operating grants for FY23, together with the average grant per FTE target, for the six largest institutions in BC, as well as the other teaching universities that are comparable to KPU. We recognize that FTEs are not the only cost driver. Many other factors drive costs, such as the program mix, where the cost to deliver programs can vary a lot. KPU and TRU have a comparable program mix, and while KPU has a higher FTE target, it receives less grant per FTE than does TRU. KPU also receives less funding per FTE than does the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) or Vancouver Island University (VIU). Only Capilano receives less funding per FTE target.

Figure 1: KPU's Provincial Operating Grant in Relation to Total Revenues (in '\$000s)

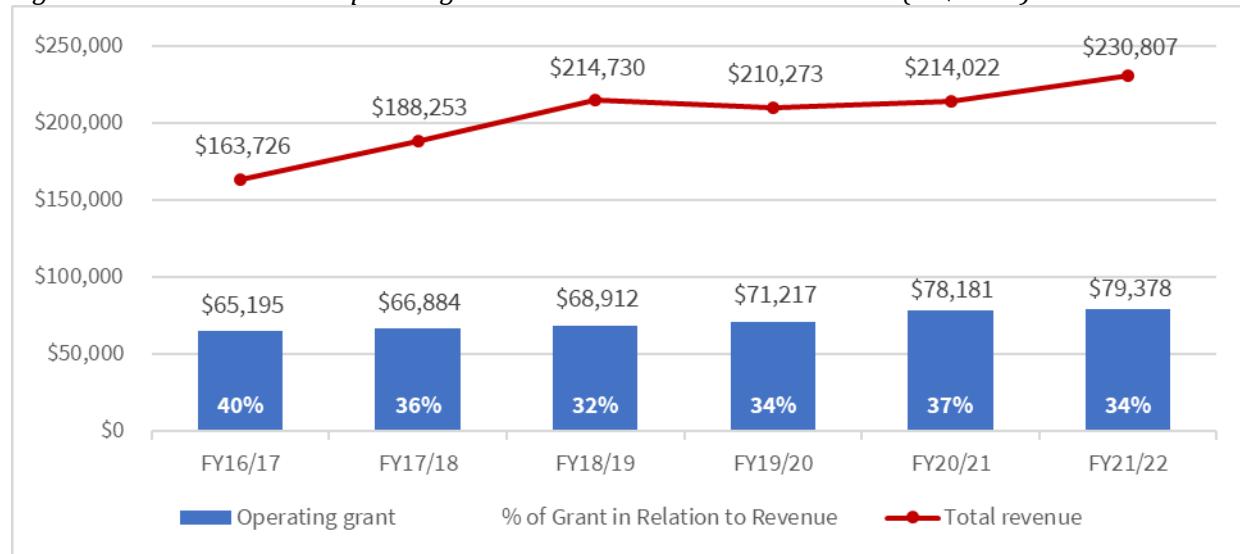
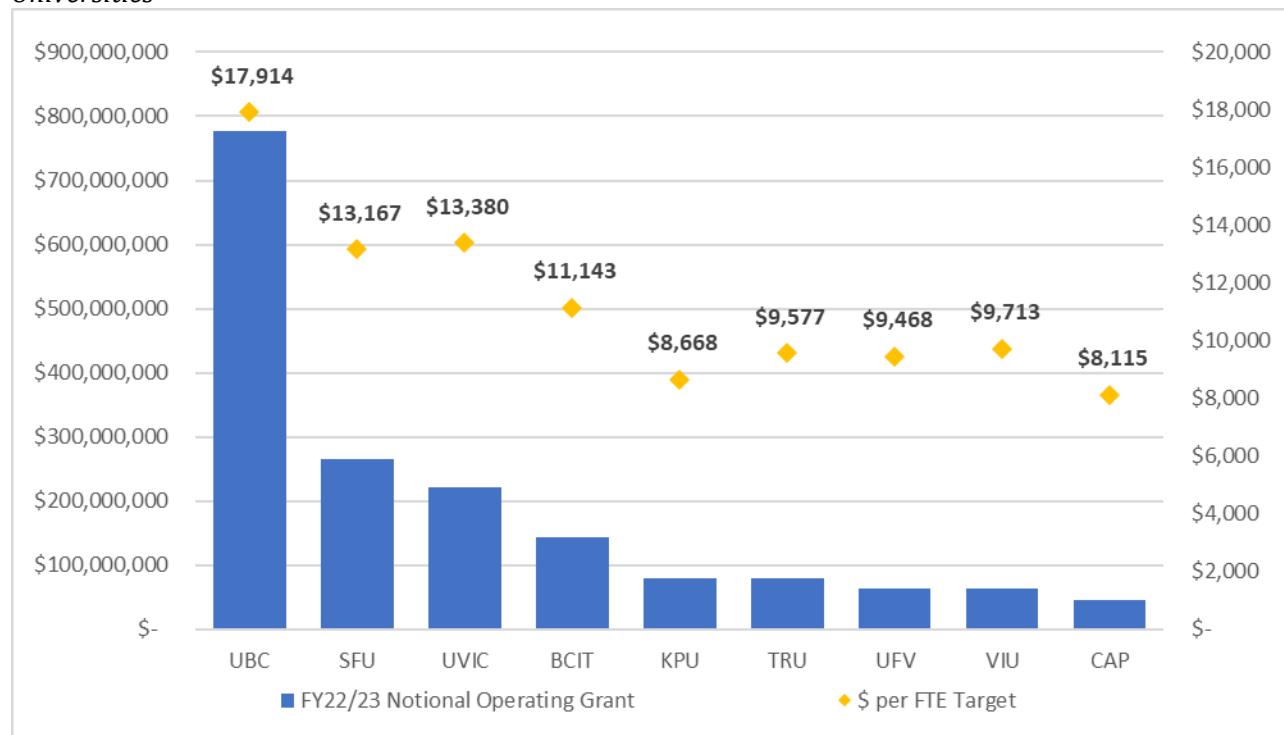


Figure 2: FY23 Operating Grant and Grant per FTE Target of Six Largest BC PSIs and Other Teaching Universities¹



One source of inequity is **faculty workload**. Our ability to hire faculty is hindered by government restrictions related to workload adjustments in the bargaining process. KPU's eight-section annual teaching workload is higher than most other teaching universities, yet KPU faculty receive comparable compensation rates. This restricts the ability for KPU faculty to engage in research and scholarly activity,

¹ Emily Carr University of Art and Design is excluded because of its different mandate.

both of which enrich the student experience, at the same level as their teaching university peers. Reducing the workload would allow more time for developing new programming, and for research and innovation, and improving our ability to recruit and retain faculty.

Another factor that limits our capacity is the requirement to have a balanced budget each year and the inability to use past surpluses for operations without special approval. Since we are so dependent on tuition revenue we need to budget for contingencies (e.g. reduction in international tuition, increase in expenses). This means advancing our strategic priorities happen more slowly, over multiple years, even though we have the reserves to fund them. Having multi-year operating grants and the ability to run deficits in the short term while balancing over a longer period (perhaps three years as in the K to 12 system) would permit the university to spend reserves on operating expenses, and would help institutions to be more flexible and responsive to change.

Funding for Research and Innovation

KPU does not receive sustained provincial funding for their research and innovation which impedes both the student experience and the positive impact we could have had on our communities. Seed provincial investment also attracts investments from other levels of government and the private sector since federal research funding must be matched by other levels of government. This issue affects all teaching intensive universities in BC. Consequently, this under-investment has meant that BC's share of federal research and innovation funding (e.g. from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and Mitacs)² for these institutions is also lower relative to its share of population. The Conference Board of Canada's 2021 Innovation Report Card grades BC as a D on innovation.

Other provinces that have invested in innovation have reaped benefits for years and decades. Ontario and Quebec (since the 1980s) colleges and polytechnics have seen sustained ongoing provincial funding for applied research; they have built capacity and attracted bigger investments as a result.

We have evidence that applied research and innovation experiences—and more broadly, work-integrated learning experiences—contribute to superior satisfaction and employability among graduates. Our educators are able to stay current with rapid changes in their disciplines, and our partners benefit from the knowledge, intellectual property, and access to highly and relevantly trained graduates. We have heard frequently from business, Indigenous partners, and community organizations about the need for research and development, and innovation capacity that is applied and accessible in their very communities.

We call for a long-term evidence-informed investment into applied research and innovation at teaching academic institutions which will provide many rich experiential opportunities for students, while helping businesses and industry to innovate and expand, thereby creating new jobs in our communities. This investment could be initiated through a ring-fenced pilot funding program where pilot funding is made available to only public teaching universities and colleges. The funding would require alignment with BC's priorities and aspirations for job creation, economic recovery, sustainability, and innovation. The pilot would allow institutions to demonstrate and provide evidence of their impact in applied research and innovation. This is similar to the pilot College Community Innovation program conducted by NSERC several years ago.

² Mitacs supports collaborative projects between the academic community and industry.