

March 6, 2018

UN World Interfaith Harmony Week at KPU

4th Annual

February 4; 6-8, 2018

Overview

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) marked its fourth annual celebration of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week from February 6-8, 2018, led by the KPU Multi-Faith Centre.

This year's theme - Paths to Peace - was a call to share experiences or personal narratives on how we make our way toward Interfaith Harmony. Submissions took the form of poetry, art, music, and other creative expressions, and were exhibited over the week at KPU's Richmond, B.C. and Surrey, B.C. campuses. These expressions were punctuated by a series of community engagement events, including:

- Feb. 6: [Pancakes for Peace](#)
- Feb 7: [Brown Bag and Beliefs - Israel and Palestine: Listening, Respect, and Dialogue toward Peace and Reconciliation](#)
- Feb 8: [Indonesian Gamelan Performance](#)
- Feb 8: [Closing ceremony](#)

Events

In addition to these campus activities, KPU partnered with the Surrey, B.C. Interfaith Council to co-host a 16-kilometre interfaith pilgrimage across the city on February 4. The pilgrimage led some two-dozen individuals from varying walks of life across the city, stopping along the way to pay respects at a number of sacred centres, including:

- Thien Ton Buddhist Temple
- Laxmi Narayana Hindu Mandir
- Surrey Jamea Muslim Masjid
- Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara

Following the pilgrimage, events at KPU kicked off with our inaugural presentation of Pancakes for Peace at the Richmond campus. This event saw over a dozen invited community faith leaders on campus for a free, open-floor pancake breakfast encouraging face-to-face dialogue between students, staff, faculty, and faith leaders. Faith leaders presented introductions on the initiatives their organizations were leading to further interfaith harmony across the community, followed by opportunities for attendees to mingle and chat one-on-one over a warm breakfast. This demonstration of respectful dialogue set the tone for the rest of the week.

The week progressed with a special presentation of the Multi-Faith Centre's "Brown Bag and Beliefs" speaker series on session Israel and Palestine: Listening, Respect, and Dialogue toward Peace and Reconciliation. This highly-engaging session was co-presented by Jennifer Roosma, one of KPU's Multi-Faith Centre chaplains and a member of the Tapestry Church, and Dena Nicolai, a community chaplain and refugee support mobilizer with the Christian Reformed Church in partnership with Immigrant

March 6, 2018

Services Society of B.C – Both Jennifer and Dena are experienced in reconciliation and dialogue initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians. The seminar attracted students and faculty from war-torn Muslim countries in the Middle East, with comments and questions relating to their desire to follow up with references to support groups for people affected by traumatic events in their countries of origin.

Events at KPU Richmond were brought to a close amid the sounds of an Indonesian gamelan performance by Sutrisno Hartana, a master of Javanese gamelan music, dance, and shadow puppets, and KPU student Lulu Sukaawati. Together, they combined traditional and digital instruments in a demonstration of harmony. A video of the performance can be seen at facebook.com/KPUMultifaith/videos/1654810144586369

UN World Interfaith Harmony Week at KPU culminated in a night of sing-alongs, speakers, and poetry. KPU and local community members comprised some 30 attendees, all of whom found themselves well fed courtesy of the Kwantlen Student Association (KSA) and the on-campus GrassRoots Café. For a sampling of the festivities, see this performance by KPU Multi-Faith Centre chaplain, Ethan Van Der Leek, and KSA events coordinator, Matt Hunt: facebook.com/KPUMultifaith/videos/1655084134558970

The KPU Multi-Faith Centre thanks the following individuals and organizations for their generosity and support over the course of the week in making World Interfaith Harmony Week at KPU possible:

- KPU President's Diversity and Equity Committee
- Kwantlen Student Association
- Sodexo Food Services
- GrassRoots Café
- Student volunteers
- City of Richmond
- Rabbi Adam Rubin – Beth Tikvah Synagogue
- Pastor Steven Liu – Richmond Pentecostal Church
- Dena Nicolai – Christian Reformed Church Chaplain and Refugee Support Mobilizer
- Ethan Vanderleek – Fleetwood Christian Reformed Church
- Rev. Christoph Reiners – Our Saviour Lutheran Church
- Mr. Chain Singh Batth – Nanak Niwas Gurdwara, India Cultural Centre, Richmond
- Edward Ken Wong – St Monica Parish R Catholic Church Community Interfaith Alliance Ministry
- Ian Bushfield – Executive Director of BC Humanists Association
- Edward Ken Wong – St. Monica Parish Roman Catholic Church, Community Interfaith Alliance Ministry
- Naomi Ben-Yehuda
- Rikta Malti Singh – Hindu Vedic Centre
- Bimla Singh – Hindu Vedic Centre
- Gary Roosma – Ministry to Seafarers
- Se-Youn Moon – Tapestry Church Richmond
- Sheik Murtaza Bachoo – Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre

Media Mentions

- [The Runner](#)
- [Surrey Now Leader](#)

March 6, 2018

Testimonials

"I think most people are excited about learning about their neighbours...We're living in a world of difference." – KPU Multi-Faith Centre chaplain, Ethan Vanderleek

"[We're making] peace in our little corner of the world...We're building bridges, we are trying to understand each other [and] recognizing we've got differences." – Interfaith Pilgrimage participant, Helen Davidson

"The practice of walking alongside someone else and engaging in a conversation is a way to a peaceful world...It's learning to be neighbours. It's important for events like this to remind us of how we make peace in the world." – Interfaith Pilgrimage participant, Dane Splinter

Photos



For more event photos, please visit:

facebook.com/pg/KPUMultifaith/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1675262109207839

Special Thanks

KPU's participation in UN World Interfaith Harmony Week would not have been possible without:

- Dr. Martin Shoemaker
- Ethan Vanderleek
- Jennifer Roosma
- Theresa Voorssluis
- Nick Bransford
- Lulu Sukaawati

And the entire KPU community for truly embodying the theme of *paths through peace*.