

OKANAGAN CHARTER
AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER
FOR HEALTH PROMOTING
UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

An outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health
Promoting Universities and Colleges / VII International Congress

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge this Charter was developed on the territory of the Okanagan Nation.

This land doesn't belong to us. This land belongs to seven generations down the road. I pray that the water that we drink the water that we swim in will be there for our great great great grandchildren. As well as all over the world. I pray that the land that we walk on the trees that we enjoy will be there for our generations to come. These things they all come together with health. Health of humans. Health of the animals. And health of the Mother Earth.

- Closing Prayer by Okanagan Nation Elder Grouse Barnes at the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges

This Charter should be cited as:
Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015).

A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION FOR HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

Health promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

SHARED ASPIRATIONS

Health promoting universities and colleges infuse health into everyday operations, business practices and academic mandates. By doing so, health promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, well-being, equity and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society.

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PURPOSE OF THE OKANAGAN CHARTER

The purpose of the Charter is threefold:

1. Guide and inspire action by providing a framework that reflects the latest concepts, processes and principles relevant to the Health Promoting Universities and Colleges movement, building upon advances since the 2005 Edmonton Charter.
2. Generate dialogue and research that expands local, regional, national and international networks and accelerates action on, o and between campuses.
3. Mobilize international, cross-sect91 Td ction on,.teo thi7(w)14(een)]TJ EMC /Span 4</MCID 70 >BDC 0.013 Tw 0.0

Four Presidents from the province of British Columbia begin the Charter signing (The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser Student Society, Okanagan College and UBCO Student Union) followed by Conference delegates from around the world.

THE UNIQUE ROLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education plays a central role in all aspects of the development of individuals, communities, societies and cultures – locally and globally.

Higher education has a unique opportunity and responsibility to provide transformative education, enhance the student voice, develop new knowledge and understanding, lead by example and advocate to decision-makers for the benefit of society. In the emergent knowledge society, higher education institutions are positioned to generate, share and implement knowledge and research findings to enhance health of citizens and communities both now and in the future.

A University or College is, by its very nature, an essential part of any systemic health promotion strategy, working collaboratively in trans-disciplinary and cross-sector ways. This Charter calls upon higher education institutions to incorporate health promotion values and principles into their mission, vision and strategic plans, and model and test approaches for the wider community and society.

AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The following framework provides two Calls to Action with key action areas and overall principles that to either guide the development of Health Promoting Universities and Colleges.

Call to Action 1: Embed health into all aspects of campus culture across the administration, operations and academic mandates

- 1.1 Embed health in all campus policies. Review, create and coordinate campus policies and practices with attention to health, well-being and sustainability so that all planning and decision-making takes account of and supports the flourishing of people, campuses, communities and our planet.
- 1.2 Create supportive campus environments. Enhance the campus environment as a living laboratory identifying opportunities to study and support health and well-being as well as sustainability and resilience in the built, natural, social, economic, cultural, academic or organizational and learning environments.
- 1.3 Generate thriving communities and a culture of well-being. Be proactive and intentional in creating empowered, connected and resilient campus communities that foster an ethic of care, compassion, collaboration and community action.
- 1.4 Support personal development. Develop and create opportunities to build student, staff and faculty resilience, competence, personal capacity and life-enhancing skills – and so support them to thrive and achieve their full potential and become engaged local and global citizens while respecting the environment.
- 1.5 Create or re-orient campus services. Coordinate and design campus services to support equitable access, enhance health and well-being, optimize human and ecosystem potential and promote a supportive or organizational culture.

The following are guiding principles for how to mobilize systemic and whole campus action¹⁰

- Use settings and whole system approaches
Use holistic settings and systems as the foci for inquiry and intervention, effectively drawing attention to the opportunities to create conditions for health in higher education. Set an example for health promotion action in other settings.
- Ensure comprehensive and campus-wide approaches
Develop and implement multiple interconnected strategies that focus on everyone in the campus community.
- Use participatory approaches and engage the voice of students and others
Set ambitious goals and allow for solutions and strategies to emerge through use of participatory approaches to engage broad, meaningful involvement from all stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, administrators and other decision makers. Set priorities and build multilevel commitments to action.
- Develop trans-disciplinary collaborations and cross-sector partnerships
Develop collaborations and partnerships across disciplines and sectors, both within the campus community and with other sectors.

- **Promote research, innovation and evidence-informed action**
Ensure that research and innovation contribute evidence to guide the formulation of health enhancing policies and practices, thereby strengthening health and sustainability in campus communities and wider society. Based on evidence, revise action over time.
- **Build on strengths**
Use an asset-based and salutogenic approach to recognize strengths, understand problems, celebrate successes and share lessons learned, creating opportunities for the continual enhancement of health and well-being on campus.
- **Value local and indigenous communities' contexts and priorities**
Advance health promotion through engagement and an informed understanding of local and indigenous communities' contexts and priorities, and consideration of vulnerable and transitioning populations' perspectives and experiences.
- **Act on an existing universal responsibility**
Act on the “right to health” enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure health promotion action embodies principles of social justice, equity dignity and respect for diversity while recognizing the interconnectedness between people’s health and health determinants, including social and economic systems and global ecological change.

The words local and indigenous are used with intention to recognize social and cultural diversity, inclusive of history, traditions, values and knowledge.

11. Transitioning populations refers to the local and global movement of people, including immigrants and refugees of war, political oppression, environmental changes and disasters.

This international Charter was an outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges¹² held on the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus in Kelowna, Canada on June 22-25. The Charter development process engaged researchers, practitioners, administrators, students and policy makers from 45 countries. The first draft of the Charter was based on input from 225 people through a pre-conference survey and expert interviews as well as a review of existing Charters and Declarations.

At the Conference, with the support of a writing team, 380 delegates critiqued and refined the Charter in a design lab and development sessions. Delegates were invited to bring forward into the Charter development ideas from the multiple plenaries and concurrent sessions that comprised the scientific program. On the final Conference day, higher education leaders and delegates, including network and organization representatives, signed a Pledge to bring the Charter back to their settings to inspire and catalyze further action.