

Appendix C

Environmental Scan

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Enrolment Outlook, 2006

Credit Programs

Postsecondary enrolments are the product of three factors:

- **Demographics**
(“How many people are there?”)
The size of the population, frequently categorized by age group but sometimes also by such variables as socioeconomic status and ethnicity.
- **Participation and transition rates**
(“What proportion enrolls?”)
The proportion of each demographic group that typically enrolls in postsecondary education.
- **Retention rates**
(“How long do they stay?”)
Retention rates reflect the number of courses that students take once they enter postsecondary education. Sometimes retention rates are implicitly incorporated in the definition of a particular participation rate (e.g. $x\%$ of the 18 – 24 age group was enrolled in a college or university at the time of the 2001 census). In other instances, retention rates are clearly identified when transition rates are used (e.g. $y\%$ of the Gr 12 class transitions into a college or university within two years of graduation, staying for an average of two years of fulltime study.)

Each of these factors will be discussed in the context of Douglas College.

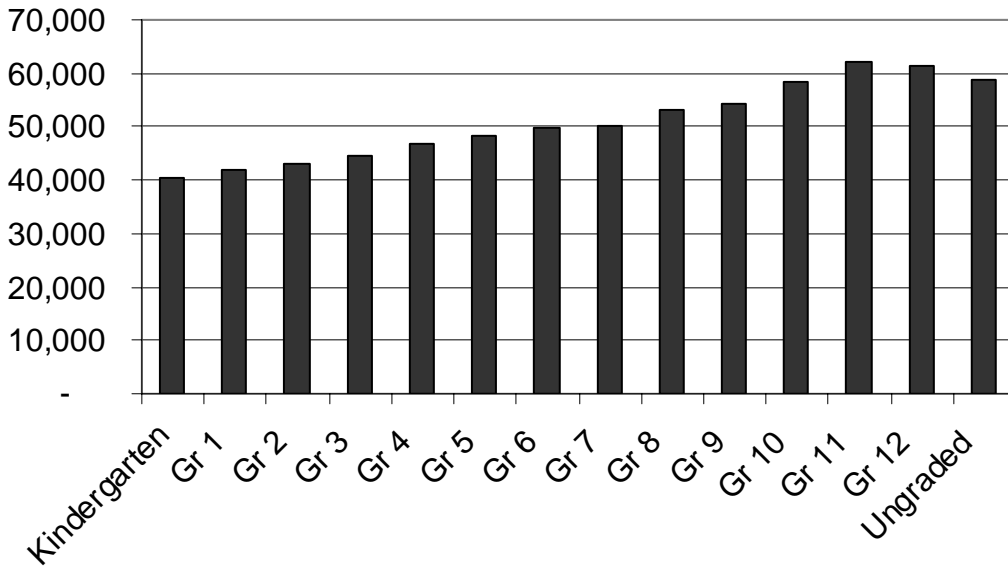
Demographics

Douglas College has historically served mainly recent high school leavers, e.g. 93% of applicants to open enrolment programs for Fall 2005 were age 20 or younger. (Limited enrolment programs tend to attract an older student body, but they enroll a much smaller number of FTE students than open enrolment areas.)

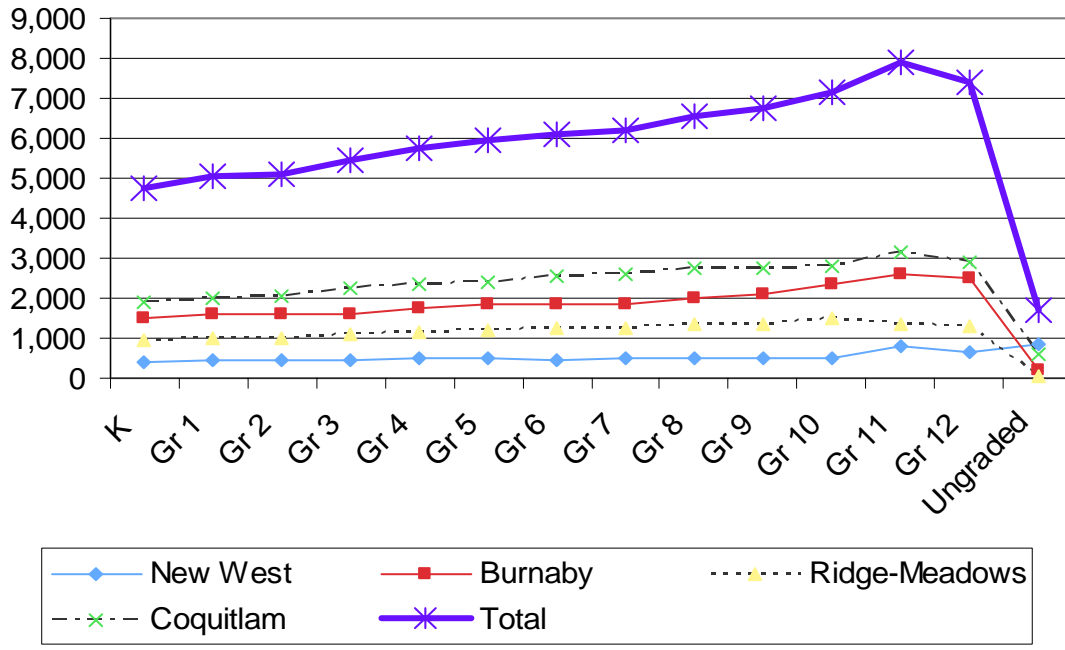
School Age Population

Provincially, this year’s enrolment in Grade 1 is only two thirds that of the Grade 12 class. A similar pattern is evident in the four school districts that constitute the Douglas College region, north of the Fraser River from Burnaby to Maple Ridge. Thus the current age structure of the youth population is not favourable for Douglas College enrolment as the echo baby boom has already passed through the K – 12 school system.

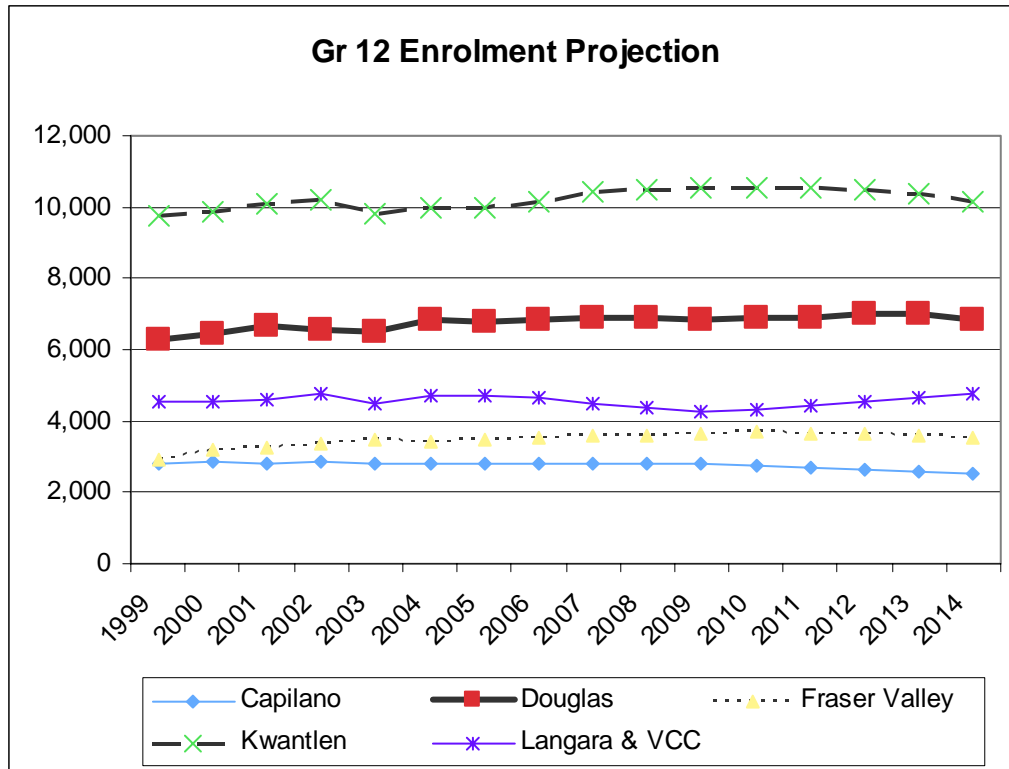
BC Headcount Enrolment, 2005/06



Douglas Region Enrolment by Grade, 2004/05



When projecting Grade 12 enrolments, interprovincial and international migration needs to be taken in to account – a much less exact science than moving students through grade levels, taking drop-out rates into account. With a booming economy, a net influx of migrants is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, resulting in the following forecast of Grade 12 enrolment for each college region in the Lower Mainland.



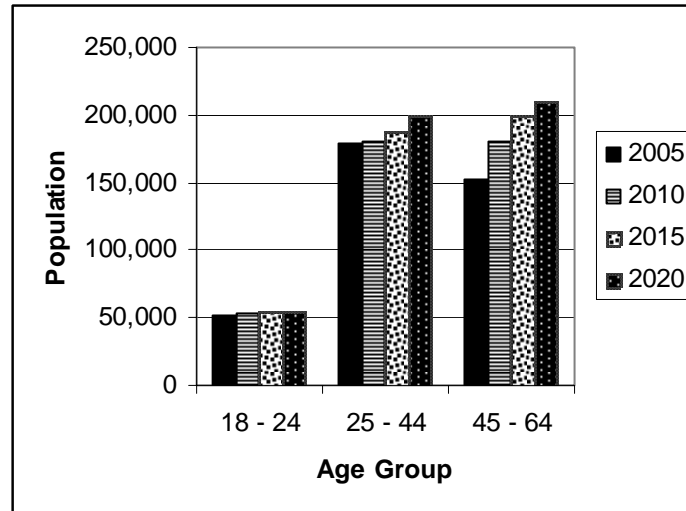
Ministry of Education projection, 2005

While Grade 12 enrolments in the Douglas region should hold steady for the next decade, other regions of the province will experience a decline. The short-term forecast is that provincial Grade 12 enrolment will decline about 5 percent over the next five or so years.

Adult Population

The Douglas region, Burnaby to Maple Ridge, is home to about 560,000 people. The population is projected to grow to 750,000 over the next two decades. This growth, however, will come mainly from older age groups than have traditionally enrolled at Douglas College. The 18- 24 age group will grow only marginally.

Douglas Region Population Projection By Selected Age Groups 2005 - 2020



Source: BC Stats, PEOPLE 30, May 2005

Participation and Transition Rates

Participation Rates

Participation rates are key indicators of access to postsecondary education and are central to projections of future postsecondary enrolment demand. In the short term, they have a greater impact on enrolment levels than do demographic changes because they can change more rapidly.

The concept of a participation rate is simple – the proportion of a population enrolled in postsecondary education – but the definitional details and obtaining the needed data can be complex and problematic. Furthermore, participation rates are influenced by a variety of supply and demand considerations, making it difficult to forecast changes in the rate. Definitions of the rate can vary considerably according to data availability and the purpose of the forecast. Participation rates are the most challenging aspect of enrolment forecasting.

The following excerpt comes from a report, *At Our Doors*, that Douglas College prepared in 2003 in collaboration with SFU, Kwantlen University College and the University College of the Fraser Valley.

Our discussion of participation rates begins at the international and national levels for two reasons. As the region of focus gets smaller, student migration becomes an important factor in calculating regional participation rates. This problem is especially acute in the Fraser Region because of the existence of a number of adjacent educational institutions. The second reason is that the comparative experiences of other jurisdictions are the best basis for anticipating future participation rates locally.

International

Long term historical trends in industrialized countries indicate that participation rates are rising. Do they give reason to believe that Canadian rates might level off in the next decade or continue to rise?

In the 1980s, OECD reported that Canada ranked second in the world, just after the USA, in the percentage of its citizens attending university. Canada's participation rate has continued to rise, but a number of other countries have risen at even faster rates and have over taken Canada. The result is that Canada's rate trails well behind the top ten nations. A higher participation rate is clearly feasible in Canada.

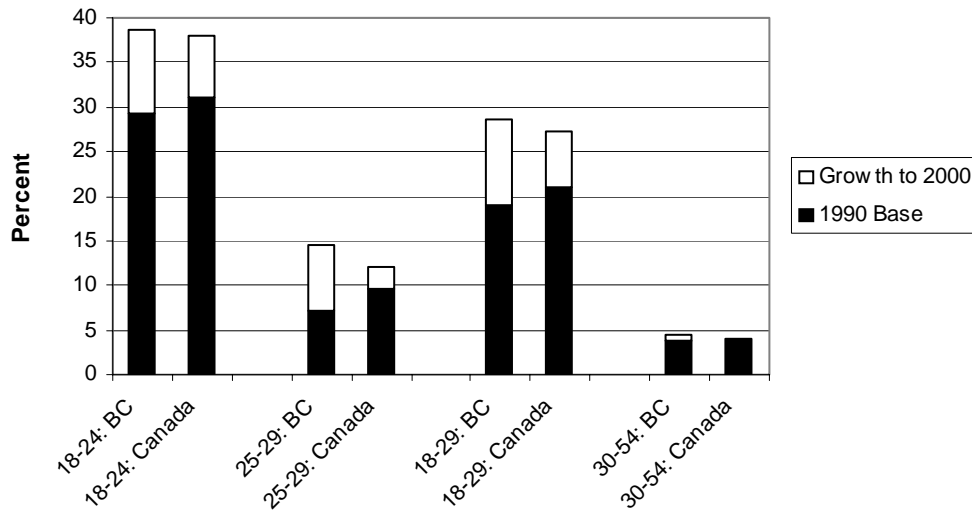
National

The national enrolment data Statistics Canada collects about colleges is of uneven quality and has historically classified enrolments in ways that have not reflected the structure of the BC college and institute system, e.g. treatment of university transfer students and part-time students. We have therefore turned to another Statistics Canada data set, the Labour Force Survey, in our review of interprovincial participation rates. This large-scale survey asks respondents whether they were participating in public or private postsecondary education at the time of the survey.

Two important findings emerge from the Labour Force Survey:

- *participation rates have risen over the past decade*
- *BC's participation rate has risen faster than the national average, resulting in British Columbia having achieved its 1990 goal of meeting the national average by 2000. (This is for the province as a whole. Different regions of BC having varying levels of access.)*

Participation Rates
Selected Age Groups



Data for graph above:

Age Group	BC		Canada
		%	%
18 - 24	1990	29.3	31.1
	2000	38.7	38.1
25 - 29	1990	7.2	9.5
	2000	14.6	12.1
18 - 29	1990	19.0	21.0
	2000	28.6	27.2
30 - 54	1990	3.7	4.1
	2000	4.4	4.1

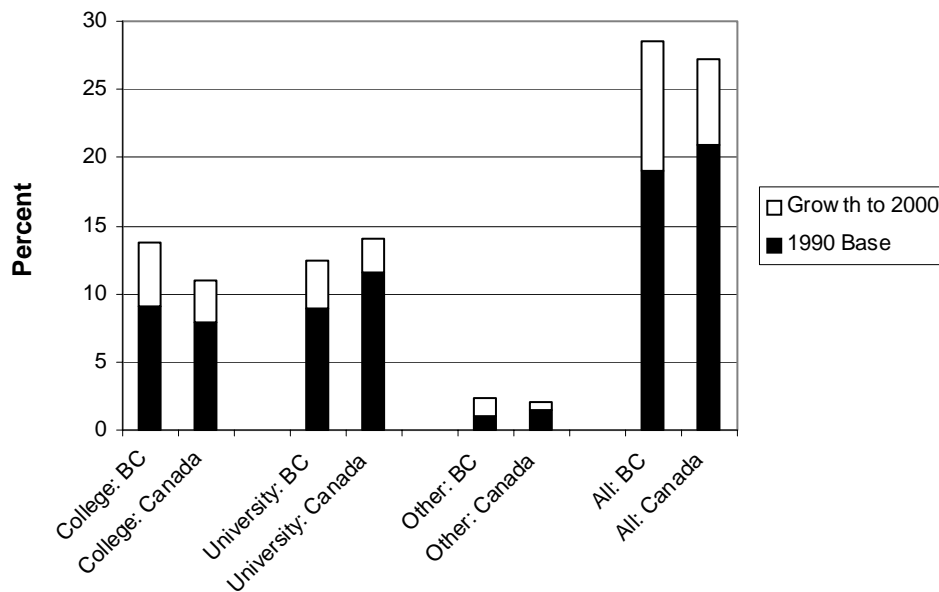
Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

This growth in participation rates is reflected in the educational attainment data collected in the census. The 1991 census found that 49 percent of Canadians aged 25 – 34 had some form of postsecondary education. In 2001, 61 percent had some postsecondary education, distributed as follows:

- 28% University*
- 21% College*
- 12% Trades credential*
- 61% All forms of postsecondary education (population aged 25 – 34)*

All postsecondary sectors – college, university and other – have shared in accommodating the rising rates of participation.

Participation Rates of Population Aged 18 - 29
By Postsecondary Sector



Data for graph above:

Sector	BC		Canada	
	Year	%	Year	%
College	1990	9.1	1990	7.9
	2000	13.8	2000	11.0
University	1990	8.9	1990	11.6
	2000	12.4	2000	14.1
Other	1990	1.0	1990	1.4
	2000	2.4	2000	2.1
All	1990	19.0	1990	21.0
	2000	28.6	2000	27.2

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

These national data do not necessarily mean that participation rates will continue to rise, but they certainly demonstrate that significant changes can occur in the span of a decade.

Grade 12 Transition Rate

Transition rates look at the number of students who enter postsecondary education from a particular source, not taking into account the number of courses in which they register nor duration of their enrolment.

Recent data from the provincial Student Transitions Project shows that half BC's Grade 12 graduates enter a public postsecondary institution in BC within a year of graduating from high school. Preliminary data from an STP study in process suggests that an additional 10 percent of the graduating class enter public BC postsecondary institutions one to two years after graduation.

Transition rates and postsecondary destinations have tremendous regional variation. Near the urban core, over three quarters of the high school graduates enter postsecondary education (even ignoring private institutions and out-of-province study where data are lacking.) This is double the rate in some school districts in more rural regions of the Lower Mainland.

Immediate Transition to BC Public Postsecondary Education Lower Mainland School Districts

School District	June 2003 Grads	Proportion Transitioning Immediately				Subtotal: To Douglas College	Number Entering Douglas
		To University	To College	Total			
33 Chilliwack	618	6%	35%	41%	1%	2	
34 Abbotsford	1,257	8%	40%	48%	0%	2	
75 Mission	353	5%	29%	34%	1%	2	
78 Fraser-Cascade	147	4%	42%	46%	0%	0	
35 Langley	1,353	13%	30%	43%	3%	18	
36 Surrey	3,819	16%	37%	53%	9%	183	
37 Delta	1,248	18%	39%	57%	8%	57	
38 Richmond	1,957	32%	42%	74%	1%	16	
39 Vancouver	4,165	33%	39%	72%	3%	78	
40 New Westminster	341	21%	37%	58%	27%	54	
41 Burnaby	1,786	34%	38%	72%	14%	194	
42 Maple Ridge	913	10%	33%	43%	21%	86	
43 Coquitlam	2,377	29%	33%	62%	33%	509	
44 North Vancouver	1,299	24%	40%	64%	1%	12	
45 West Vancouver	572	31%	29%	60%	1%	2	
Lower Mainland	22,205	23%	38%	61%	9%	1,215	
<i>All BC Public</i>	<i>40,173</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>1,373</i>	
<i>All BC Independent</i>	<i>3,546</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>51%</i>			
<i>All BC</i>	<i>43,719</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>52%</i>			

For most of the larger school districts in the Lower Mainland, opportunities to increase postsecondary enrolments through higher transition rates from secondary school appear limited. Rather, postsecondary institutions may find themselves struggling to maintain their share of the transitioning students in the face of increased competition.

Refinements to the gross transition rates reported above can be made for ethnic and socio-economic groups. The impact of financial barriers on the types of institution and fields of study students may choose enter is also significant. However, data has been lacking and is emerging only slowly.

Retention Rates

In a college that offers programs that are primarily two years in duration, one would expect roughly half the students at any given time to have earned less than 30 credits and half to have earned more than 30 credits. In the applied and limited enrolment programs at Douglas College, this is roughly the case. In the open enrolment, transfer areas, however, there are roughly two students with less than 30 credits for every one with more than 30 credits.

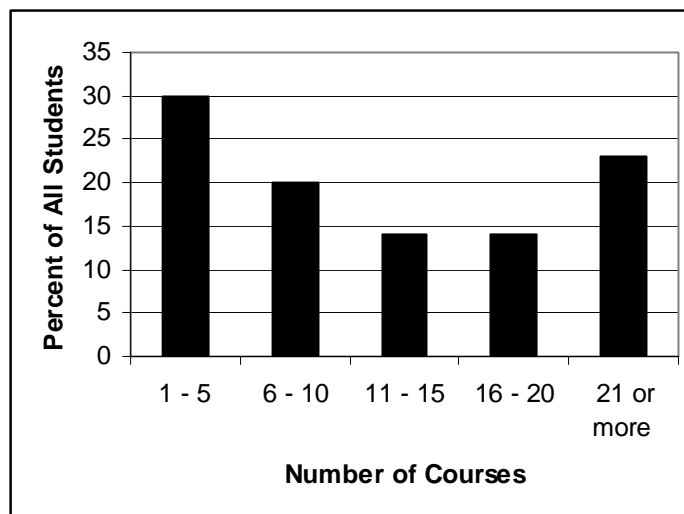
From a student educational point of view, the smaller proportion of open enrolment students studying at the second year level is not necessarily a bad thing. Douglas College works hard to make it easy for students to transfer into programs at other institutions. It welcomes students who are unsure of what they want to study and are therefore testing the waters, or who may come to take only a few specific courses. From an enrolment management point of view, however, the skewed enrolment distribution may represent a considerable opportunity. It's generally easier to encourage a return visit from an existing client than to generate a first visit from a new client.

A study conducted in 2003 looked at students who first entered Douglas College in Fall 1998 and then counted the total number of courses each had taken in the ensuing four years (to June 2002). College-wide, over one quarter of those students left the college having taken a total of five or fewer courses during their entire stay at Douglas College.

Within open enrolment areas, the study found variations by program in the proportion of students who left having taken five or fewer courses:

52%	of all General Studies students
39%	Business Management
34%	Science
33%	Commerce
31%	Arts
30%	Accounting
29%	Criminology

Total Number of Courses Ever Taken at Douglas College Students Admitted in Fall 1998, as of June 2002



Staffing restrictions in the Institutional Research Office have prevented an update of this study, but an analysis in 2005 found that close to 40 percent of the 2800 students new to Douglas College in Fall 2000 had earned a total of 15 or fewer credits as of Fall 2004. Unfortunately, no detail is available by program.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although Grade 12 enrolments will hold steady in the Douglas College region, they will decline in other regions of the province. Increased competition among postsecondary institutions for this population is probable. Growing enrolment demand at Douglas College from this age group is unlikely, especially given the relatively high transition rates that already exist from school districts clustered around the urban core.

The adult population is growing and their participation rates are much lower than those of recent high school leavers. Lifelong learning is indeed a reality and there are enrolment opportunities in the adult population for Douglas College, but this population is fussy. It tends to like non-traditional delivery methods (e.g. intensive, modular courses offered on evenings and weekends) that fit work schedules. It gravitates towards applied courses and may be more interested in completing specific courses than a full program of study. Historically, the continuing education and contract training areas of Douglas College have been more successful in attracting adult students than have credit offerings (although there are some notable exceptions in the credit area.)

The adult population is a large “market”, including many individuals who may want to complete only small amounts of course work and some who want complete programs only if they are delivered in convenient formats. In the long run, Douglas College needs to pay more attention to this population. In the short term, significant increases in serving the adult population may be difficult to achieve. Private institutions often target this population with focused courses and

customized schedules, although some public institutions, such BCIT, have also successfully attracted this type of student.

Given its low retention rates, the greatest opportunity for Douglas College to achieve its enrolment targets would appear to be in retaining existing students for longer periods of time. This is an area where supporting educational best practice, whether in the classroom or in service areas, would have the financial benefit of simultaneously helping the College meet its enrolment targets.

Increasing student retention typically involves a range of student success initiatives, from educational planning and advising to the selection of appropriate pedagogies for particular courses and populations. The introduction of post diploma offerings and guaranteed laddering into programs at other institutions may be part of the strategy, but the data suggest considerable attention needs to be devoted to students in their first semester at college.

In summary, enrolment levels can be maximized by:

- Working hard simply to maintain the current level of enrolment from high schools
- Planning for serving more of the adult population in the long term
- Focusing on increasing student retention in the short term

-Institutional Research
March 2006

Environmental Scan from *Students First!*

Scan conducted in 2005 in support of developing a learning support services plan

External Environment

Changing Learners

Diversity

Colleges in British Columbia have served a diverse student body ever since their inception from 1965 to 1975. The nature of that diversity, however, has changed over the years.

With the rapid growth of multicultural enrolment at Douglas College in the 1990's, Douglas needs to provide culturally appropriate services, service levels and delivery models.

A less obvious change, but important nonetheless, is the varying levels of academic preparation that students possess, e.g. mature, returning students who already hold credentials might be enrolled in the same class as recent high school leavers with a lacklustre academic record. With students distributed across the continuum of academic ability and preparation, colleges have traditionally focussed their distinctive contribution on the developmental end of the spectrum. Some American colleges, though, are finding that one size does not fit all and are paying more attention to honours programming. Rather than an "either/or" situation, they are seeking to provide a "both/and" experience.

Twixters

The term "twixter" refers to a distinct and separate stage of life that has emerged for some people in their mid to late twenties, a transitional period following adolescence and before entering adulthood. Twixters frequently live with their parents and much of their income is therefore discretionary, often spent on consumer goods and services. They tend to jump laterally between jobs until they find a job that at least gives them a sense of purpose because today's youth labour market may make it difficult to earn enough for them to live independently.

The transition into adulthood is not easy for many young people. Widely accepted cultural practices and initiations are less prevalent. Many adolescents do not expect a more secure or wealthier life than their parents, and they thus may not look forward to taking on the mantle of adulthood. In face of this adult world that may not be particularly welcoming, some youth try to stay kids as long as they can because they are uncertain how to navigate the adult world. They need judicious support and challenge in making the transition out of adolescence.

Parents are more present and actively engaged in more aspects of students' lives. They expect to be involved, especially when there are problems.

Attitudes

As a commuter college, many Douglas College students are not especially engaged with the College, nor feel it is important to be engaged, yet the literature shows student engagement to be a key influence on student success. It appears that the educational commitment of some students is

weak, and that today's generation is more interested in the path to self-actualization and less willing to defer gratification than in the past.

Attitudes to postsecondary education seem to be changing, e.g. entitlement philosophy and scepticism that everybody benefits from a college education. For a generation that has grown-up with computers and is technology savvy, email, real time-messaging and 24/7 service on the Internet are taken for granted and common in youth culture and will be expected of the College.

Service Delivery Models in Postsecondary Education

Expectations of potential and admitted students are changing as many expect similar service delivery or service approaches of private companies. Public sector organizations are increasingly expected to provide fast responses, along with flexible delivery that meets client needs. The trend is to "one-stop shopping" and a single point of first contact.

In postsecondary education, students have more options for obtaining services from other providers, both public and private. Online courses and textbook purchases, for example, allow students to piece together programs of study from more than one institution or provider. Many of these alternative services are available around the clock.

As mentioned later in the "Relationships" section of this *Plan*, service organizations are increasingly emphasizing relationship service models over transactional approaches. This is something the college must consider .

The increasing penetration of technology into the home permits many more students to engage in learning and to receive services that are not time and place bound. Wireless access to the Internet for students with laptop computers is increasingly common, including wireless access for locations within the Douglas College campus.

Enrolment Competition

Although Douglas College is located in a rapidly growing region of BC, the growth is stronger in the 25 – 29 age group than in the 18 –24 group that has been the source of the majority of Douglas College's credit students. Coupled with flat or declining Grade 12 enrolment around the province and 25,000 additional FTE spaces in the BC postsecondary system by 2010, Douglas College can no longer take for granted strong enrolment demand from recent high school leavers.

Several other factors suggest enrolment patterns in BC postsecondary education will become more competitive in the coming years:

- University GPA admission thresholds for both direct entry and transfers students will drop, e.g. in response to the provincial government's commitment to provide a university seat for every high school student with a 75 percent average in relevant courses. Colleges will have to demonstrate to prospective baccalaureate students the benefits of starting and persisting at college before transferring to university.
- Lower Mainland colleges are beginning to offer baccalaureate degrees in selected fields. How this will affect the propensity of students to transfer among institutions remains unknown.
- Industry certification in some fields, such as computing, is growing in importance relative to academic credentials.
- Private institutions are encouraged under provincial government policy and through student financial aid practices. With lower salary structures and the ability to add and drop programs rapidly, private institutions can quickly target niche markets.

- The growth of online education means that students are not constrained to taking courses from only local institutions. As online education becomes more dynamic and interactive, many of the disadvantages of traditional distance education are being mitigated.
- Douglas College's program mix is weighted towards academic and university transfer offerings. Government and industry are forecasting skill shortages in applied fields, particularly in the trades, as construction for the Olympics begins. Furthermore, as labour market conditions improve, the opportunity cost of lost income increases for students who spend time in classrooms.

Perhaps the largest uncertainty associated with enrolment forecasts concerns trends in the postsecondary participation rate. Participation in BC postsecondary education has risen steadily over time but remains below the level of some industrialized nations and regions. The need for lifelong learning remains undiminished, but opportunities for learning outside formal educational programs are also increasing. The recent softening of enrolment demand across BC raises the possibility that current participation rates, much less higher ones, should not simply be assumed.

Information Technology

Information is increasingly available anywhere and anytime through technologies such as the Internet, cell phones, wireless text messaging and personal digital assistants. Young postsecondary students have grown up with these technologies and expect the best to be available to them at educational institutions.

Information technology is changing youth culture, e.g. some students are better at typing than writing longhand. They are used to frequent, brief interaction with peers wherever they are. The extent to which technology is changing how students learn may be open to debate, but there is no doubt it is changing the types of students who arrive at college and that they require a good grounding in evaluative research skills and information literacy.

Labour Market

As BC's unemployment rate declines, the impact on Douglas College will be mixed. Students are better able to finance their education, but they may have less motivation to continue their education. Those who do enrol may be more interested in part-time studies.

One aspect of the changing labour market that is hard to predict concerns credentialism, both from academic institutions and from professional or industry associations. Along with a growing demand for credentials, there seems to be pressures at some levels to lower the standards for credentials (some evidence of this can be found in the private postsecondary sector.) On the other hand, some accreditation and professional bodies are seeking higher standards. It may be a delicate balance for Douglas College to maintain standards and yet be responsive to the needs of the labour market.

Finances

The outlook for public funding for Douglas College remains constrained, with no recognition of inflation and a provincially-mandated tuition cap likely to remain in effect. The announced funding for 1500 new FTE students, which are not guaranteed to be fully funded, may be provided more slowly than originally planned because college enrolment is currently dropping around Lower Mainland.

With limited resources, Douglas College cannot restrict itself to only adding new services to meet community and student needs. It will also have to change how it does things and to redeploy resources in more strategic activities.

With block funding to colleges, the provincial government no longer designates funds for services. In financially constrained times, short term expediency might be to cut some services and course sections rather than viewing them as long term investments essential to the achievement of strategic goals. With a tension between short term needs and long term goals, Douglas College's historical commitment to protecting service areas' share of the College budget cannot be taken for granted.

The cost of education to students is changing. Direct costs (tuition) have risen and now opportunity costs (foregone income in a more robust job market) are rising. Some institutions are starting to discount tuition in the hope that it will be a recruiting tool, e.g. reimburse tuition after student has completed a certain number of courses.

Internal Douglas Environment

Douglas College has a good track record in service areas, one which provides a strong foundation for future development.

Silos: Insufficient Coordination of Services

College employees understand the importance of coordinating services and generally work well together. Nevertheless, the College is organized vertically and structural barriers can impede communication across organizational boundaries. The result is that service areas sometimes find themselves in a reactive position due to lack of early warning or input into decision-making.

Another implication of the College structure is that there is not always a straight or seamless path for students in accessing services. Students sometimes perceive disjointedness in the different types of change processes that are occurring within individual departments. The result is that while dynamic change can occur locally, overall the College can appear static, bureaucratic and resistant to change.

Workforce Composition

With an aging workforce for which retirement is approaching and rising employment rates in the provincial economy, employee recruitment and retention issues are growing in importance.

Some departments could lose a great deal of knowledge and expertise in a short period due to retirements and employees obtaining new jobs elsewhere. Succession planning, mentorship programs and ways to honour the experience and maintain relationships with retired employees are attracting attention as ways of minimizing the losses due to employee turnover while benefiting from the revitalization opportunities that new employees bring.

Understanding Today's Students

As the diversity of today's student population changes so does the need for teaching, learning, support and services. Several emerging cultural, social and diversity issues are combining to produce unprecedented expectations. As expectations change the college will need to be able to

speak the language of students and to understand today's student subcultures. The College will need to give sufficient attention understanding diverse student need and assisting employees to be sensitive to them.

Service Standards

Service standards are both a way of determining a department's responsiveness to student and employee needs, and of managing expectations at what level of service might reasonably be provided. Some service areas have defined standards, but have not communicated them outside their area. Other areas have yet to develop standards.

The lack of widespread, public service standards makes it hard for the College to know the extent to which it is succeeding and where accountabilities lie.

Exit Transition

Transitions into and out of college are significant events in students' lives. For students exiting to further education, Douglas College does provide some assistance through academic advising to ease the transition. For students exiting to the labour market – and ultimately most students will seek a job – the assistance Douglas College provides is hit and miss. Some students in particular may bring a cultural expectation that postsecondary institutions will help them to find jobs.

Some limited enrolment, career programs are well connected to the labour market through practical and other off-campus activities, but the linkages may be quite informal. Other students at Douglas College receive only very limited labour market assistance.

The College needs to do cost/benefit analyses of the options for helping students exit to the labour market. The options could range from just helping students to define a career vision to more active assistance with job search. In some instances, it might just be a case of making explicit the informal assistance that is already provided.

BCIT External Environmental Scan

Excerpts from draft of March, 2006 Concerning Demographics and the Labour Market

Extensively edited by Institutional Research at Douglas College. (Nothing was added, but much detail some sections were removed.) Douglas College contributed funding towards the production of this scan.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

B.C. Population Statistics

Some major issues include:

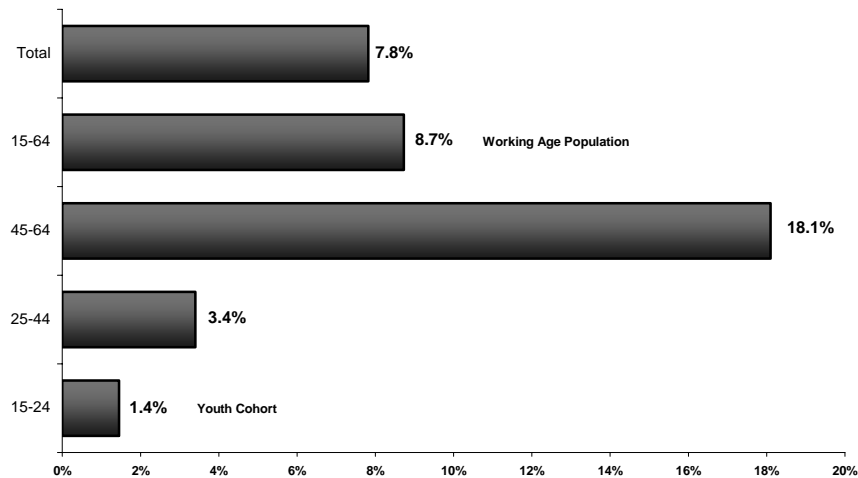
- Managing population growth that will put pressure on our urban communities, or environment and our government resources;
- Recognizing the changing ethnic make-up of the population and the need for better understanding of the values of cultural diversity;
- A health care system that must meet the needs of a growing and aging population; and
- Growing economic and income disparities between our province's regions and people.

The median age of British Columbians is 39.6 years and rising due to boomers being a large percentage of the population cohort, as well as an accompanying low birth rate.

The British Columbia population is getting larger and older. BC's southern regions of the province will likely see much higher growth rates than regions in the north. Both the Mainland-Southwest and Thompson Okanagan regions are expected to experience around 40% growth over the 2001 to 2031 period.

New population projections indicate that Canada's population is aging fast and the senior aged citizens (65 and over) will outnumber children (aged less than 15) in a decade. By 2031, the number of people aged 65 and over would range between 8.9 million and 9.4 million and the number of children would range between 4.8 million and 6.6 million.

Overall % Increase in BC Population Cohorts 2005-2011



Youth Population

The youth cohort, also known as the Millennial Generation, is currently of great interest. This generation entails those born in the early 1980s and are currently entering the post-secondary system. This cohort has unique characteristics. They are:

- Talented in technology
- Happy to work in teams
- Demanding of a secure environment
- Conventional in their thinking
- Close to their parents.

They also have strong career aspirations and feel that continuous learning is a way of life.¹

These observed characteristics are echoed by the Millennial cohort in British Columbia. According to the 2002 Youth in Transition Survey, the high school drop out rates in British Columbia were the lowest, with less than 1% of 17 year olds not attending high school. Drop out rates declined through the 1990s and preliminary data shows this trend is continuing in the current decade.

The results from this survey also show that 87% of high school completers (at the age of 17) aspired to attend college or university. Only 6 % of respondents wished to complete a vocational or trade program. This low percentage signals problems in supplying a skilled workforce for trades related jobs and industries. Only 81% of respondents felt they were "smart" enough to do well in university, compared to 90% in relation to their ability to succeed in college.

The parents of these respondents were also surveyed. For 88% of parents, it was very important to have their child continue their education after high school.²

¹ Howe, N. *Millennials go to College*. 2003. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Post-secondary institutions should consider the characteristics and opinions of the Millennial cohort and their parents in developing their recruitment program and service plans. This generation is very close to their parents, therefore parents must also be considered in the student recruitment strategy.

Youth in the Workforce

The pathways taken by youth once they complete their education and move into the workforce are diverse and individualized. Some enter into the workforce directly after graduation, some continue their studies, and others combine school with work. Other individuals delaying their entrance into post-secondary will return to school after having been in the workforce for several years.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there is a trend amongst the youth cohort to spend more time educating themselves and delaying their participation in the workforce. Once they do join the workforce, they switch between various part-time jobs before settling into full-time employment. This trend will directly impact Canada's ability to be economically competitive, especially in areas of industries experiencing labour shortages.

In January 2006, there were 22,000 added part-time jobs among youths. However, this was offset by a similar decline in full-time, leaving the year-over-year increase in youth employment at 2.1% or 51,000. More youths entered the labour market in January in search of work, pushing their unemployment rate up 0.5 percentage points to 12.4%.³

Labour market conditions for youth continue to improve, despite economic downturns. Youth employment is much more closely tied to sectors such as Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, which are sensitive to cyclic factors, and can be slow to recover, especially for the tourism sector. Despite these pressures, youth employment levels are on an upward trend, with 36,800 more jobs for youth in B.C. created since December 2001.⁴

Working Age Population

The Canadian labour force is aging and is projected to shrink in absolute size after 2016. This size reduction is due in part to three major trends:

1. The youth population are taking longer to complete their education and begin career employment.
2. Although retirement may be delayed for some, others are ending their careers earlier than 60.

² *Statistics Canada. In and out of high school: First results from the second cycle of the Youth in Transition Survey. Bushnik, Tracey, et.al. Ottawa: April 2004.*

³ *Labour Force Survey. Statistics Canada. Friday Feb 10, 2006 <<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Labour/LFS/lfs-en.htm>>*

⁴ *Summary of the B.C. Youth Labour Market. Ministry of Skills Development and Labour. British Columbia. January 7, 2005.*

3. Demographic aging and a low birth rate is causing the proportion of the working age population to become smaller over the next two decades.⁵

Boomer Population

According to Canadian Business Magazine, 80% of boomers say they plan to continue working after retirement, although they did not state specifically with their current employer or occupation. The 2004 Desjardins Financial Security survey says half of boomers surveyed fear they will not have the income to retire when they want.⁶

The population of the mature aged labour force age (45-54 years) went through a period of slow growth. In the last ten years, this growth has increased in part due to the entry of older baby boomers into this age group. As a result, the population is increasing. This will have repercussions on the labour force. Many people in this age group will be competing for a limited number of higher-level jobs.

According to Statistics Canada, the trend towards earlier retirement may be reversing. The median age of retirement for females increased from 59 to 60 between 1997 and 2001. During this same time period, the median age of retirement for men increased from 61 to 62.

This trend can be partially explained by the relaxation of mandatory retirement policies in the workplace, due to concerns of impending labour shortages. This could also be the reason behind Paul Martin's announcement in 2004 that retirement should not be mandatory until age 75. Also, with increasing life spans, early retirement may not be a viable option, hence keeping more people in the workforce.⁷

Labour Market

Industries Impacted by Retirement

With the retirement of many baby boomers, the majority of job openings during 2004-2008 will be due to the need to replace retired workers. In a decade, the Canadian labour market is expected to experience a shortage of up to one million workers. The most severe shortage will be among skilled and experienced trade professionals, technical workers and midmanagerial positions.

Ian Cullwick, the national leader of Deloitte's Human Capital practice, says that certain industries are at risk. "The predicted shortage is a talent shortage, rather than a labour shortage — it will affect selective industries and certain workforce

⁵ Cooke, Martin, McMullin, Julie Ann. *Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc. Labour Force Aging and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario*. London, ON, August 2004.

⁶ Cooke, Martin; McMullin, Julie Ann. *Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc. Labour Force Aging and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario*. London, ON, August 2004.

⁷ BC Stats. *BC Labour Force Participation Rate Model*. Schrier, Dan. B.C.: June 2000.

segments within those industries," he says. "It will only be specific skilled positions that will see shortages." The hardest hit will be oil and gas, utilities, government and some related sub sectors.⁸

The following are selected occupations where there will be large numbers of workers retiring by 2010⁹:

% age 45+	
Registered nurses	32.1%
Elementary school teachers	44.4%
Aircraft Electrical & Avionics Mechanics	47.8%
Industrial Electricians	44.4%
Telecommunications Installation & Repair	44.2%
Plumbers	28.4%
Steamfitters, Pipefitters & Sprinkler	35.3%
Welders and Soldering Machine Ops	34.3%
Millwrights & Industrial Mechanics	46.0%
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics	40.8%

Source: 1996 Census, tabulations by AVED, 2001

Using the Canadian workplace and Employee Survey data (1999), it was identified that the healthcare and education industries as being at significant risk of losing large proportions of their workforce due to retirement. Only 12 years separated the median age of education employees from their median age at retirement. Only 20 years separated that of healthcares. Forestry, mining, oil, gas and utilities also had a very low median retirement ages and older age structures. It is identified that managerial and professional occupations as the most vulnerable to baby boomer retirement and this was particularly the case in healthcare and education.¹⁰

Labour Market Challenges

A study entitled "Labour Force Ageing and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario" performed by the Canadian Policy Research Network, states that "although there is not strong evidence of economy-wide skill shortages, the aging of the labour force may interact with other factors to result in localized, industry-specific shortages. The age structure of some specific occupations and industries may put them at risk of experiencing skill shortages in the context of an older population." The study concluded by stating that "skill shortages are not so much a looming 'crisis' as a challenge that can be managed with careful planning by employers and policy makers."

The study identifies four key factors that affect skill shortages. They are the:

1. Age structure of the current work force,
2. Length of time required to train

⁸ *Understanding Human Capital Shortages in Canada. February 22, 2006. Deloitte and Touche LLP.*
<http://www.deloitte.com/dtt/article/0,1002,sid%253D3678%2526cid%253D104784,00.html>

⁹ *British Columbia. Ministry of Skills Development and Labour. "What evidence is there of a skills shortage today?" 2001*
<<http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/skills/what-evidence-is-there.htm>>.

¹⁰ *Cooke, Martin; McMullin, Julie Ann. Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc. Labour Force Aging and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario.*

3. Geographic mobility of workers
4. Working conditions that make it difficult to attract or retain workers.

The study states that shortages can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. *Quantitative* shortages exist when potential workers lack specific skills. *Qualitative* shortages occur when current workers in an occupation lack the skills required by employers in a changing environment.

According to a 2004 B.C. Stats Earnings and Employment report, there are three factors that could change projections of labour shortage:

1. An increase in the flow in of young workers to the labour market.
In times of labour shortage, the natural labour market mechanism of increased job openings and wages will encourage more young workers to participate in the workforce. This increased participation may result in the choice to delay postsecondary education.
2. Greater migration from other provinces and countries.
Traditionally, this has been a successful option for B.C. in meeting its labour needs as the province projects an attractive lifestyle option. However, Canada and other developed countries will also be facing labour shortages, meaning competition for new workers could be intense.
3. A rise in the average retirement age.
The shortfall created between those entering and leaving the workforce is projected at 8% of the workforce. Given the current size of the boomer workforce, an estimate of the impact of potential retirees postponing their retirement is an increase in the size of the labour force by 2 to 3% for each additional year worked.¹¹

Labour Market Forecast

Education will be the key factor in the employment forecast for the 2004-2008 periods. It is estimated that two-thirds of new jobs will require post secondary education for management positions. The highest rate of employment growth is expected to be in occupations that require post secondary education (annual average of 2.3%)

Within the **services producing sector**, the forecast over the short-term (2004-2008) indicated the strongest employment growth in:

- health occupations (3.5% annually) reflecting increased public spending for the provision of health care services.

It also shows employment growth in:

- the systems design and services industry (2.8% annually) due to the increase of use of computer technology
- and in professional services such as scientific, technical and advertising services (2.4% annually) reflecting a recovery in non-residential investment.

An improving budget situation in the public sector should help employment growth for:

¹¹ BC Stats. *Earnings and Employment Trends Jan/Feb 2004*. Kittredge, Anne. B.C.: April 5, 2004.

- social science, education and government service occupations (2.0% annually).

Employment gains should be modest in:

- finance, insurance and real estate industry

Within the **goods-producing sector**, employment growth is expected to be strong in areas such as mining (2.4% annually), electronic products (2.9% annually), and transportation equipment other than motor vehicles (2.7% annually). Employment is expected to decline in both forestry and fishing.¹²

In B.C., the industries forecast to 2011 to have the **greatest total job openings** due to retirements and new job creation are¹³:

- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Business Services
- Health
- Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Education
- Wholesale Trade
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
- Other Service Industries
- Personal and Household Services
- Public Administration
- Primary Goods

Services Sector

In B.C., the services sector accounts for 78% of total employment. In 2005, there were 1,631,200 people employed in this sector with a net increase of 1,400 since January 2004.¹⁴

Health Care

Nearly half of the people working in the health care industry are in health-related occupations. Within this group, nurses make up the biggest share of the total, followed by nursing aides and orderlies, lab and other health technicians, doctors and surgeons, and other health care professionals. Health and social services was the province's second biggest employer in 1999, with 197,600 employees. Hospitals employ just over a third of the people working in this industry. Hospital workers held 36% of the jobs. Doctor's and surgeons offices, medical labs, and offices of other health practitioners such as chiropractors, optometrists, and physiotherapists provided jobs for 19% of the work force. Nearly 45% of the people working in this industry were employed by other types of positions. This includes nursing

¹² *Looking-Ahead: A 10-year outlook for the Canadian Labour Market (2004-2013)*. July 25, 2005. <file:///C:/webcontent/port284/Backgrounder25July05-E.html>

¹³ *Where Will the Jobs Be? Employment Growth by Industry and Occupation to 2011*. Vol. 35, No. 07, July 22, 2003. Business Council of British Columbia. March 2, 2005 <<http://www.bcbc.com/download.asp?file=ecv35n07&type=pdf>>.

¹⁴ *BC/Yukon Region – Labour Force Survey*. January, 2005. <http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/en/bc/yk/59jwtc/lmi/lfs0105.shtml>.

homes and other institutions, home care services, daycares, or other similar establishments.

Analysts anticipate that the demand for health and social services will increase over time. The aging of the population is expected to continue to put pressure on the health care system. Employees will be in demand for this industry due to both the retiring workforce and the additional pressures on the system due to an elderly population.¹⁵

F.I.R.E – Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate

According to P. Cross of the Canadian Economic Observer, the real estate industry has an average job growth of 5.3% from 2004-2005. Business Services such as finance and insurance have experienced no change. Finance and real estate have been able to capitalize on a proliferation of new financial instruments therefore helping them to maintain a steady growth since the 1990s.¹⁶

According to B.C. Stats, the financial services industry is the largest in B.C. Banks, credit unions and other financial-services providers employ more than 160,000 people, which is six % of B.C.'s total workforce.¹⁷ The number of full time banking jobs across the country has increased by over 27% in the last decade. Hiring is "on the mind of most bankers" as baby boomers approach retirement in the midst of a booming industry.¹⁸

The real estate market in BC reached a level in 2005 that very few predicted, especially after the record-setting year in 2004. These unprecedented figures are an indication that the market is strong and the economy is vibrant. Looking ahead to another healthy year for 2006, the issue of affordability continues to be a primary concern, therefore, both the Credit Union Central of BC and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation predict a slightly more moderate real estate market for 2006.¹⁹

Trade

According to P. Cross of the Canadian Economic Observer, trade employment received a boost from wholesalers as international trade rebounded. Retail jobs were lifted by double digit gains in building materials, electronics and

¹⁵ *A Guide to the BC Economy and the Labour Market - Health and Social Services*
<http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/chap5/chap5-3.html>

¹⁶ *Cross, P, Feature Article – Emerging Patterns in the Labour Market: A Reversal from the 1990s. Canadian Economic Observer February 2006, Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 11-010.*

¹⁷ *Trends-2005 marks a banner year for Realtors. February 2006. The Bulletin, BC Real Estate Association. Vol. 29 No. 1.*
<http://www.bcrea.bc.ca/publications/2006-02.pdf>

¹⁸ *Banks Rush to Expand as Business in BC Grows. Tuesday, January 31, 2006. Vancouver Sun. F11.*

¹⁹ *Trends-2005 marks a banner year for Realtors. February 2006. The Bulletin, BC Real Estate Association. Vol. 29 No. 1.*
<http://www.bcrea.bc.ca/publications/2006-02.pdf>

appliance stores. Since 2000, employment in the trade industry has already exceeded its growth in the 90's due to greater gains in retail sales.²⁰

Education

The education industry typically accounts for about 6% of the province's GDP and about 7% of its workforce. As educational funding comes from the provincial government, periods of budgetary restraint have caused cut backs in educational funding therefore affecting the number of jobs and services offered at various school boards and port secondary institutions all over the province.

In 1999, the educational services industry employed 123,900 people in BC, most of which were employed at the elementary/secondary levels. Seventeen percent had jobs at universities, while 14% worked at other post-secondary institutions. Nine percent of the people with jobs in the industry worked at libraries, museums or in private educational facilities.

By 2008, employment in education is forecast to increase at the same rate as the number of jobs overall during the next few years, maintaining its share at 6.5%. However, its forecast that GDP growth won't be as strong as in other industries, and education's share of total GDP is expected to fall 0.6 percentage points to 5.6%.²¹

Film

B.C.'s film and television industry had seen two decades of strong growth up until 2003, when the industry spent a record \$1.405 billion in the province. During this time, employment in the sector reached 35,000 people. Even though a record amount was spent in 2003, there was an 18% reduction in production numbers, with a subsequent 25% reduction in 2004. The strong dollar and the current political climate in California are two reasons behind the industry's downturn. Action must be taken to attract production back to the province.²²

Figures on the employment supported by the film/TV industry in BC typically range from 30,000 to 42,000 depending on the level of production in each year. It is noted that roughly 62% of the quoted employment is indirect employment in industries supplying and servicing the film and television production industry rather than employment in the film/TV industry itself.

Over 13,000 FTE jobs are generated within the film/TV industry itself. In addition, the film/TV industry is estimated to generate a further 10,700 FTEs of employment in other industries supplying goods and services to the film/TV

²⁰ Cross, P, *Feature Article – Emerging Patterns in the Labour Market: A Reversal from the 1990s*. *Canadian Economic Observer* February 2006, Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 11-010.

²¹ *A Guide to the BC Economy and the Labour Market - Education* <<http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/chap5/chap5-7.html>>

²² Andrews, Marke, Penner, Derrick. "Currency concerns hit film industry." *Vancouver Sun* January 26, 2004. D8+.

industry, and through general spending in the economy by employees (known as indirect and induced impacts, respectively).²³

Tourism

In 1999, there were 106,800 people working in British Columbia's tourism sector. Approximately one in every 14 jobs in British Columbia is a result of tourist activity, making the tourism industry one of the largest employers in the province.

Within the tourism sector, the food and beverage service and accommodation industries account for just over half of all jobs. Wholesale and retail trade is the third largest employer, followed by the transportation and communication industries.

Tourism activity is susceptible to changes in the economic climate both within and outside British Columbia. There is no doubt that the "Asian flu" had a negative effect on the province's tourism sector, as did the recent slowdown in the provincial economy. If the economy here and abroad picks up speed, the performance of industries within the sector should improve, which will help ensure future growth in British Columbia's tourism sector.²⁴

Goods Sector

Construction

Overall construction grew by 2.7% in 2005. Trends for both the residential and non-residential side are expected to persist through in 2006 and 2007.²⁵ The growth rate in the industry is expected to decline after 2007, when construction related to the 2010 Olympic Games is completed. Credit Union Central's Economic Analysis of B.C. puts construction growth climbing to a peak of 9.3% in 2007 from 7.4% in 2005, before a sharp drop to 2.9% in 2008.²⁶

Forestry

More than 270,000 British Columbians, or 14% of the total workforce, are employed directly or indirectly by the forest industry. In Metro Vancouver alone, forestry accounts for over 120,000 direct and indirect jobs.²⁷

²³ *Final Report - Film and Television Industry Review*, InterVISTAS Consulting Inc. October 2005.
<http://www.ecdev.gov.bc.ca/reportspublications/FilmandTVIndustryReview.pdf>

²⁴ *A Guide to the BC Economy and the Labour Market - Education* <http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/chap5/chap5-7.html>

²⁵ *Sectoral Outlook. January 2006.. BMO Financial Group-Economics Department.* <http://www.bmo.com/economic>

²⁶ "Games building key to growth." *Vancouver Sun* February 9, 2005: D1.

²⁷ Hamilton, Gordon. "As B.C. forestry goes, so goes the economy." *Vancouver Sun* January 26, 2005: D5.

The industry is facing largely offsetting forces in the near term, with reductions in allowable tree harvesting in some areas of the country and stepped up logging to address the pine beetle infestation in BC. Overall the negative influences-which also include slowing demand in key markets and validation of pulp and paper mills- are expected to dominate the near future.²⁸

Mining

In 1999, there were 43,400 people working in the mining and mineral products industry. Just over a third (36%) of them were involved in resource extraction or exploration.

The oil and gas industry is forecast to remain Canada's top performer in the coming years, with increased output an average of 3.1% and projected real growth rates of more than 15% in 2006 and 12% in 2007. Mining outside of oil and gas led all industries with a 16% increase in jobs in 2005.²⁹

Overall this industry is forecast to reaccelerate to an average annual growth of 7% in 2006 and 2007.³⁰

Resource-Based Manufacturing

Manufacturing is one of B.C.'s largest economic sectors, supporting 206,000 direct and 200,000 indirect jobs, one fifth of the province's total employment. The industry accounts for 11.5% of the province's GDP. Forestry-related manufacturing accounts for 4.6% of this total.

Canada's manufacturing sector held its own quite respectably in 2005. There is an increased demand for Canadian manufactured goods over the next 2 years and overall performance in the sector is likely to experience growth rates of 2.5-2.8%.

Current challenges in this industry include increasing competition from China, higher business costs, difficulty in finding skilled workers, higher tax and regulatory costs, and shrinking margins due to a competitive global trading environment.³¹

High Tech Manufacturing

In 1999, there were 52,100 British Columbians who had jobs in high tech industries. Computer services are the biggest employer, with about a third of

²⁸ *Sectoral Outlook. January 2006.. BMO Financial Group-Economics Department.* <<http://www.bmo.com/economic>>

²⁹ *Cross, P, Feature Article – Emerging Patterns in the Labour Market: A Reversal from the 1990s. Canadian Economic Observer February 2006, Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 11-010.*

³⁰ *Sectoral Outlook. January 2006.. BMO Financial Group-Economics Department.* <http://www.bmo.com/economic>

³¹ *Simpson, Scott. "Mood upbeat despite challenges – Most manufacturers expect sales revenue to increase this year." Vancouver Sun January 26, 2005: D16.*

the work force. Engineering (29%) and technical (13%) services also account for a significant part of total employment in the sector. Of the remaining 25% of jobs, 6% are in medical and health labs and 19% are in various manufacturing industries.

It's unlikely that the rapid growth rates that have been observed in high tech industries can continue indefinitely, but to this point, the sector's rapid growth shows no sign of abating. It's reasonable to expect that the role of high tech in BC's economy will continue to expand over the next few years.³²

³² *A Guide to the BC Economy and the Labour Market - Education* <<http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/chap6/chap6-4.html>>

Changing Student Characteristics

Twixters

From *Students First!* scan

The term “twixter” refers to a distinct and separate stage of life that has emerged for some people in their mid to late twenties, a transitional period following adolescence and before entering adulthood. Twixters frequently live with their parents and much of their income is therefore discretionary, often spent on consumer goods and services. They tend to jump laterally between jobs until they find a job that at least gives them a sense of purpose because today’s youth labour market may make it difficult to earn enough for them to live independently.

The transition into adulthood is not easy for many young people. Widely accepted cultural practices and initiations are less prevalent. Many adolescents do not expect a more secure or wealthier life than their parents, and they thus may not look forward to taking on the mantle of adulthood. In face of this adult world that may not be particularly welcoming, some youth try to stay kids as long as they can because they are uncertain how to navigate the adult world. They need judicious support and challenge in making the transition out of adolescence.

Parents are more present and actively engaged in more aspects of students’ lives. They expect to be involved, especially when there are problems.

Boomerangers

Believe it or not, moving back home is now in

By Penelope Trunk, Globe Correspondent, 5/15/05
Boston Globe

In the list of what's hot and what's not, blowing all your money on an overpriced apartment is 'out' and sleeping on a twin bed at your parents' house is 'in.'

Bobby Jackson is a senior at Williams College. After graduating in June, he will move back to Washington, D.C., and look for a public relations job from the comfort of his parents' home. Jackson typifies the remarkable shift of intergenerational attitudes when he declares, "I love hanging out with my parents."

According to market research company Twentysomething Inc., 65 percent of college seniors expect to live with their parents after graduation. The job website MonsterTRAK reports that 50 percent of the class of 2003 still lives at home.

"Boomerangers" is what analysts call these twentysomethings and the consensus among researchers (who grew up in an era when moving back was a sign of failure) is that being a boomeranger is a strategically sound way to move toward independent life.

Neil Howe, author of "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation" says that moving back home is a way to avoid wasting a lot of time. According to Howe, when it comes to careers, "Boomerangers want to get it right the first time."

If you don't have to worry about paying rent, you have more flexibility to wait for the right job - and also to take a job that feels right but pays poorly. The rise of the prestigious but unpaid internship intersects perfectly with the rise of the boomeranger.

Today it's almost impossible to become self-sufficient on an entry-level salary, especially in coastal cities like Boston, where rents are skyrocketing. Barbara Mitchell, professor of sociology at Simon Fraser University and author of the upcoming book, "The Boomerang Age: Transition to Adulthood," says, "Most entry-level jobs won't be permanent or stable," so saving money is difficult. Twentysomethings have to manage the costs of rent, college loans, and insurance premiums all of which are rising faster than wages.

With these economic factors, it's hard for a boomeranger to leave again, and according to Mitchell, many underestimate the amount of time they'll be staying. Jackson, for example, estimates that, "Most entry-level jobs pay \$30,000, so I'll stay at home for six months and save \$10,000 to \$15,000." This plan would work only if he didn't buy clothes, go out with friends, or pay taxes.

And this is where the problems start. Boomerangers who think their time with mom and dad will last less than seven months are statistically delusional, and setting themselves up for emotional crisis. The typical stay is so long researchers don't count someone as a boomeranger until they've been home for four months. Elina Furman knows this problem first hand: She ended up living with her family until she was 29, and she does not describe the time as a constant joy ride. In fact, she says, after the initial thrill of college graduation and the return of home-cooked meals, boomerangers find themselves in the midst of crisis, usually financial or relationship-oriented, and suffering from feelings of isolation and loss of self-esteem.

As a veteran of boomerang life, Furman supplies methods for success in her book, "Boomerang Nation: How to Survive Living with Your Parents ... the Second Time Around." She recommends making changes to your childhood bedroom so it reflects who you are now. Otherwise, it becomes a "permanent purgatory" of high school trophies and reminders that you are not where you want to be.

Also, do your own laundry and cook for yourself, she says, because it's more empowering than reverting to living like a 17-year-old. Chapters on financial planning and exit strategies belie other dangerous pitfalls of boomerang life. And Furman warns, "The stigma is more than people realize." Older generations are often stuck in outdated attitudes about the transition to adulthood, and they ask grating questions like, "You live where?! At your age?! What's wrong with you?!"

But in fact, moving back home is probably the first step in the postboomer revolution of the workplace.

Expectations for work are higher than ever, it should be fulfilling, fun, and accommodating to a substantial personal life. The logical way to meet such revolutionary expectations is to start out on a revolutionary path.

So hold your head high, boomeranger, but don't leave your dirty dishes in the sink.

Penelope Trunk can be reached at penelope@penelopetrunk.com

NEETs

“Not in employment, education or training”

Stay-at-home young adults cause NEET concern in Asia

Jonathan Manthorpe. The Vancouver Sun. Vancouver, B.C.: Mar 13, 2006. pg. F.3

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When Confucian family values collide with a generation of young Asians steeped in a culture of inflated expectations, the result is often a NEET.

Economists and social scientists in the increasingly rich countries of Asia -- especially the Confucian heartlands of Japan, South Korea and China -- have noticed in recent years an alarming increase in the number of well-educated young adults who have no interest in finding work. Instead, these 15- to 34-year-olds are content to stay at home, supported by parents or older relatives who still uphold the Confucian principle that mutual succour is the essence of family life.

The phenomenon was first identified in Britain in the 1980s, when these young people were described as being "not in employment, education or training" -- hence NEET.

What makes these young people different from those who simply can't find work -- a problem in itself in Asia -- is that NEETs have lost interest in pursuing a career.

There are many reasons for this disenchantment. Some young adults are just burned out after years of the extraordinary pressure placed on them to obtain the best educational qualifications possible.

Others stride confidently into the job market, only to find there is nothing for them, or not at the level they have come to see as their entitlement.

They slip into lethargy, which, as times goes by, makes employers less and less interested in offering them jobs.

Japanese analysts began noticing the rise of this group in the 1990s, and since 2004 the government has included NEETs as a distinct group in its labour market statistics.

Most recently, the phenomenon has begun to appear in South Korea and China, where over 30 years of a strictly enforced one-child policy has made self-indulgence and unrealistic expectations among coddled "young emperors" a particular social phenomenon.

In all three countries, the number of NEETs is still relatively small, but the trends are being watched keenly.

Japan's population of nearly 128 million recently began to shrink in the face of increasing longevity of its people and a declining birth rate. Some social demographers expect the same imbalance to appear in both South Korea and China in coming years.

In that situation, having a significant population of unproductive and dependent young adults would be an added burden.

In Japan, the most recent government figures show that unemployment among 21- to 24-year-olds is about 10 per cent. About half of these young adults are classified as NEETs, although they make up only two per cent of the 33 million people in the 15- to 34- year-old age group.

Last month, the Korea Labour Institute said that in 2004 the number of NEETs among that country's 15- to 34-year-olds reached 1.21 million, about 8.4 per cent of the 14.5 million people in that age group.

Nam Jae-ryang, a researcher with the institute, is quoted by the Korea Times as saying that because of the tight job market, new graduates "usually spend 1.43 years before they find work, or take [additional] education or training programs. But about 30 per cent prefer to stay jobless."

There are no reliable figures for the number of NEETs in China. But at last year's meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an appointed advisory body, one member, Jiang Zhonglian, claimed the number of NEETs is now larger than the 27 million people listed officially as being unemployed.

Following up on Jiang's claims, Chinanews, an on-line Chinese magazine, interviewed Li Tianguo, a sociologist at the Chinese Institute of Labour Studies. He said a problem is that the country's education system is not good at preparing young people for the reality of the labour market.

A more caustic comment came from Sun Yunxiao, of the China Youth and Children Research Centre, who told the magazine that because of the new relative prosperity among urban families many young graduates from the one-child generation "do not view employment as such a pressing issue."

"They do not have a good sense of what they want to do with their lives, and their parents are loathed to let them have a rough time."

Educational Best Practice and Research

Best Practice in Undergraduate Education

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

By Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson

1987

These principles seem like good common sense, and they are -- because many teachers and students have experienced them and because research supports them. They rest on 50 years of research on the way teachers teach and students learn, how students work and play with one another, and how students and faculty talk to each other.

1. Encourages Contact Between Students and Faculty

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

2. Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

3. Encourages Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

4. Gives Prompt Feedback

Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

5. Emphasizes Time on Task

Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis of high performance for all.

6. Communicates High Expectations

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone -- for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves and make extra efforts.

7. Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

Teachers and students hold the main responsibility for improving undergraduate education. But they need a lot of help. College and university leaders, state and federal officials, and accrediting associations have the power to shape an environment that is favorable to good practice in higher education.

What qualities must this environment have?

- A strong sense of shared purposes.
- Concrete support from administrators and faculty leaders for those purposes.
- Adequate funding appropriate for the purposes.
- Policies and procedures consistent with the purposes.
- Continuing examination of how well the purposes are being achieved.

There is good evidence that such an environment can be created. When this happens, faculty members and administrators think of themselves as educators. Adequate resources are put into creating opportunities for faculty members, administrators, and students to celebrate and reflect on their shared purposes. Faculty members receive support and release time for appropriate professional development activities. Criteria for hiring and promoting faculty members, administrators, and staff support the institution's purposes. Advising is considered important. Departments, programs, and classes are small enough to allow faculty members and students to have a sense of community, to experience the value of their contributions, and to confront the consequences of their failures.

States, the federal government and accrediting associations affect the kind of environment that can develop on campuses in a variety of ways. The most important is through the allocation of financial support. States also influence good practice by encouraging sound planning, setting

priorities, mandating standards, and reviewing and approving programs. Regional and professional accrediting associations require self-study and peer review in making judgments about programs and institutions.

These sources of support and influence can encourage environments for good practice in undergraduate education by:

- setting policies that are consistent with good practice in undergraduate education,
- holding high expectations for institutional performance,
- keeping bureaucratic regulations to a minimum that is compatible with public accountability,
- allocating adequate funds for new undergraduate programs and the professional development of faculty members, administrators, and staff,
- encouraging employment of under-represented groups among administrators, faculty members, and student services professionals, and providing the support for programs, facilities, and financial aid necessary for good practice in undergraduate education.

Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs, 1996

In 1996 Paul Oliaro, President of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and Suzanne Gordon, President of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), initiated a joint association effort to draft *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs*. This final document is the result of the efforts of two groups of dedicated professionals, who developed the core content of the document, and numerous professional colleagues from around the country who aided in the revision and fine tuning of their work.

Student Affairs Commitments and Values

To be meaningful, principles of good practice for student affairs should be consistent with our core values which have been documented throughout the literature of the profession. Since 1937 when the American Council on Education published the first *Student Personnel Point of View*, our field has produced many documents about student affairs work. These works span seven decades, examining student affairs from different perspectives and for different purposes. They demonstrate our long-standing belief that higher education has a responsibility to develop citizens capable of contributing to the betterment of society. These documents affirm our conviction that higher education has a duty to help students reach their full potential.

Our beliefs about higher education serve as the foundation for our commitment to the development of "the whole person"; our collective professional values are derived from that commitment. Values evident across the history of student affairs work include an acceptance and appreciation of individual differences; lifelong learning; education for effective citizenship; student responsibility; ongoing assessment of learning and performance (students' and our own); pluralism and multiculturalism; ethical and reflective student affairs practice; supporting and meeting the needs of students as individuals and in groups; and freedom of expression with civility. Any statement of principles of good practice for student affairs must be consistent with our profession's values and must help us meet our founding commitments.

Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs

1. Good practice in student affairs engages students in active learning.

Active learning invites students to bring their life experiences into the learning process, reflect on their own and others' perspectives as they expand their viewpoints, and apply new understandings to their own lives. Good student affairs practice provides students with opportunities for experimentation through programs focused on engaging students in various learning experiences. These opportunities include experiential learning such as student government; collective decision making on educational issues; field-based learning such as internships; peer instruction; and structured group experiences such as community service, international study, and resident advising.

2. Good practice in student affairs helps students develop coherent values and ethical standards.

Good student affairs practice provides opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and student affairs educators to demonstrate the values that define a learning community. Effective learning communities are committed to justice, honesty, equality, civility, freedom, dignity, and responsible citizenship. Such communities challenge students to develop meaningful values for a life of learning. Standards espoused by student affairs divisions should reflect the values that bind the campus community to its educational mission.

3. Good practice in student affairs sets and communicates high expectations for learning.

Student learning is enhanced when expectations for student performance inside and outside the classroom are high, appropriate to students' abilities and aspirations, and consistent with the institution's mission and philosophy. Expectations should address the wide range of student behaviors associated with academic achievement, intellectual and psychosocial development, and individual and community responsibility. Good student affairs divisions systematically describe desired levels of performance to students as well as to practitioners and regularly assess whether their performances are consistent with institutional expectations.

4. Good practice in student affairs uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance.

Good practice in student affairs occurs when student affairs educators ask, "What are students learning from our programs and services, and how can their learning be enhanced?" Knowledge of and ability to analyze research about students and their learning are critical components of good student affairs practice. Student affairs educators who are skilled in using assessment methods acquire high-quality information; effective application of this information to practice results in programs and change strategies which improve institutional and student achievement.

5. *Good practice in student affairs uses resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals*

Effective student affairs divisions are responsible stewards of their institutions' financial and human resources. They use principles of organizational planning to create and improve learning environments throughout the campus that emphasize institutions' desired educational outcomes for students. Because the most important resources for learning are human resources, good student affairs divisions involve professionals who can translate into practice guiding theories and research from areas such as human development, learning and cognition, communication, leadership, and program design and implementation.

6. *Good practice in student affairs forges educational partnerships that advance student learning.*

Good student affairs practice initiates educational partnerships and develops structures that support collaboration. Partners for learning include students, faculty, academic administrators, staff, and others inside and outside the institution. Collaboration involves all aspects of the community in the development and implementation of institutional goals and reminds participants of their common commitment to students and their learning. Relationships forged across departments and divisions demonstrate a healthy institutional approach to learning by fostering inclusiveness, bringing multiple perspectives to bear on problems, and affirming shared educational values.

7. *Good practice in student affairs builds supportive and inclusive communities.*

Student learning occurs best in communities that value diversity, promote social responsibility, encourage discussion and debate, recognize accomplishments, and foster a sense of belonging among their members. Good student affairs practice cultivates supportive environments by encouraging connections between students, faculty, and student affairs practitioners. This interweaving of students' academic, interpersonal, and developmental experiences is a critical institutional role for student affairs.

Rigour of Secondary School Courses as a Predictor of Success

Chronicle of Higher Education
February 24, 2006 Vol LII, No 25, p. 1

Study Finds School-College 'Disconnect' in Curricula

Rigor of secondary courses is top indicator of success in higher education

By ERIC HOOVER

Back in 1992, Jack and John graduated from high school. Each went on to attend a four-year college. By their mid-20s, Jack had received a bachelor's degree, but John had not. Why did one succeed, but not the other?

An expansive set of potential answers appears in a new national report that examines the factors that helped Jack and thousands of his peers earn a postsecondary diploma.

The report, released last week by the U.S. Department of Education, says that the rigor of a student's high-school curriculum is the strongest indicator of whether he or she will earn a college degree, regardless of major. The "academic intensity" of students' high-school courses played a larger role than did their grades and standardized test scores, according to the report, "The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College."

With those findings come warnings that not all high schools offered adequate curricula, with minority students disproportionately affected, and that some high-school courses did not prepare students for the demands of lower-level college courses. "When virtually everyone," the report says, "expects to attend college, the serious curricular 'disconnect' between K-12 and postsecondary systems ... is even more fraught with hazards and ironies."

Based on a longitudinal study of a nationally representative cohort of students from the high-school class of 1992, the report says that among the students who had attended a four-year college at any time, 66 percent had earned a bachelor's degree by December 2000.

Many students, however, did not finish their undergraduate career where they had started them.

The study found that students are taking increasingly complex roads to a postsecondary degree, with nearly 60 percent having attended more than one institution and 35 percent having attended more than two. Twenty percent of those who started at one four-year college earned a bachelor's degree from another four-year college. Fifteen percent moved back and forth between community colleges and four-year institutions.

The growing mobility of students was not, in itself, a negative development, the report says: Formally transferring from a community college to a four-year college and transferring from one four-year college to another were both positively associated with degree completion. But meandering from one college to another, or "swirling," was not.

'Twists and Turns'

Several higher-education officials and professors said the study, which tracked students for eight-and-a-half years, provided a more complete picture of student success than other recent studies that looked only at the retention rates of particular institutions over shorter periods of time.

For instance, the new report includes data about community-college students who transferred to four-year colleges, 60 percent of whom earned bachelor's degrees, as well as the 20 percent of all bachelor's-degree recipients who transferred from one four-year institution to another.

"The report raises a whole new way of thinking about college completion," said Michael Kirst, a professor of education at Stanford University. "The metaphor we ought to use is that of a path, with twists and turns, and not the traditional metaphor of a pipeline, where you put oil in, and it flows out."

The study found that 90 percent of traditional-age students who had matriculated at one college remained in academe during the second academic year after they first enrolled — though they may have switched institutions or returned after the fall term of the second year.

Yet the report says a third of those students finished their first year with "low academic momentum," meaning that they had earned fewer than 20 credits toward a bachelor's or associate degree, had achieved a grade-point average in the lowest quintile, and had habitually withdrawn from or repeated courses.

Clifford Adelman, a senior research analyst at the Education Department and author of the report, said colleges should change policies that allow students to drop courses without penalty after the traditional drop-and-add period. Those policies, as well as those that allow students to repeat courses for no credit, "are killing your students, eating up your instructional budget, and creating untenable blockages in enrollment management," Mr. Adelman said.

Mr. Adelman also recommended that colleges publish examples of lower-level course assignments and examination questions in their promotional material and on their Web sites. Otherwise, he said, "the prospective student has no idea what to expect."

Eugene L. Anderson, associate director of the American Council on Education's Center for Policy Analysis, said the report likened the study's findings on the importance of high-quality secondary-school courses to college basketball teams playing tough schedules to prepare themselves for postseason.

"It's a strength-of-schedule type of thing," Mr. Anderson said. "You could take the easier stuff and earn higher grades, but in higher-level courses, students are learning more. What's most surprising in the report is that there is a limited availability of these courses, especially by race and socioeconomic status."

Going Forward

The report includes findings and recommendations in a number of areas, including:

Timing: When students enrolled was more important than where they went to college. Students who had not matriculated by the January after their high-school graduation saw their chances of earning a degree plummet.

Academic progress: Earning at least 20 credits by the end of the first year of college is a crucial benchmark, the report says. Among students who attended a four-year college and earned fewer credits, only 22 percent went on to earn bachelor's degrees.

Summer study: The report recommends that colleges expand the use of summer terms. More than 60 percent of students in the survey enrolled in summer classes, having "shattered the observance of the traditional academic calendar." Earning more than four credits during summer terms correlated positively to degree completion, particularly for black students.

Changing majors: Half the students who earned bachelor's degrees had changed their majors, but switching majors did not influence degree completion.

Dual enrollment: Earning some college credits while still in high school is positively associated with degree completion. "If traditional-age students entered college or community college with a minimum of six credits of 'real stuff,' not fluff," the report says, "their adaptation to the critical first year will not be short-circuited."

Sophomore year: "The second academic-calendar year offers students the opportunity to recapture any lack of momentum of the first," the report says. "In that respect, the second year may be even more important than the first."

Mathematics and science: The study found that taking math beyond Algebra 2 and three classes in laboratory science (biology, chemistry, and physics) in high school provided greater "academic momentum" than taking three classes in foreign languages and any Advanced Placement courses. The report also indicates that colleges should require all students, regardless of major, to take at least one math course.

Demographic background: Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were less likely to attend high schools that offered high-level courses. Latino students, for instance, were far less likely to attend schools that offered calculus or trigonometry than were white or Asian students.

Geographic mobility: Of the 58 percent of students who attended more than one college, 37 percent crossed state lines in the process.

"These findings can be very helpful in helping to shape public policy," said David A. Longanecker, executive director of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education. "Many folks may not like the implications of these findings, but they are the facts, and we ignore them at our peril."

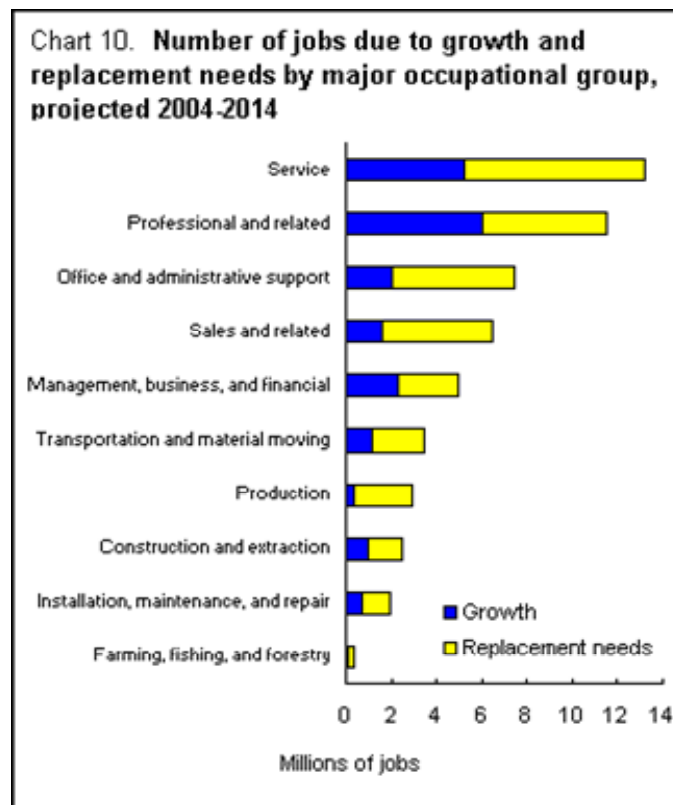
The report is a follow-up to "Answers in the Toolbox: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Completion," a 1999 report by Mr. Adelman that tracked the educational paths of students in the high-school class of 1982.

The new report is available on the Education Department's Web site (<http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisit/index.html>).

Labour Market

Total Job Openings

Job openings stem from both employment growth and replacement needs ([Chart 10](#)). Replacement needs arise as workers leave occupations. Some transfer to other occupations while others retire, return to school, or quit to assume household responsibilities. Replacement needs are projected to account for more than 60 percent of the approximately 55 million job openings between 2004 and 2014. Thus, even occupations projected to experience slower than average growth or to decline in employment still may offer many job openings.



Professional and related occupations are projected to grow faster and add more jobs than any other major occupational group, with 6 million new jobs by 2014. Three-fourths of the job growth in professional and related occupations is expected among computer and mathematical occupations; healthcare practitioners and technical occupations; and education, training, and library occupations. With 5.5 million job openings due to replacement needs, professional and related occupations are the only major group projected to generate more openings from job growth than from replacement needs.

Service occupations are projected to have the largest number of total job openings, 13.2 million, reflecting high replacement needs. A large number of replacements will

be necessary as young workers leave food preparation and service occupations. Replacement needs generally are greatest in the largest occupations and in those with relatively low pay or limited training requirements.

Office automation will significantly affect many individual office and administrative support occupations. Overall, these occupations are projected to grow more slowly than average, while some are projected to decline. Office and administrative support occupations are projected to create 7.5 million job openings over the 2004-14 period, ranking third behind service and professional and related occupations.

Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations are projected to have the fewest job openings, approximately 286,000. Because job growth is expected to be slow, and levels of retirement and job turnover high, more than 95 percent of these projected job openings are due to replacement needs.

Chart 8. Occupations with the largest numerical increases in employment, projected 2004-2014

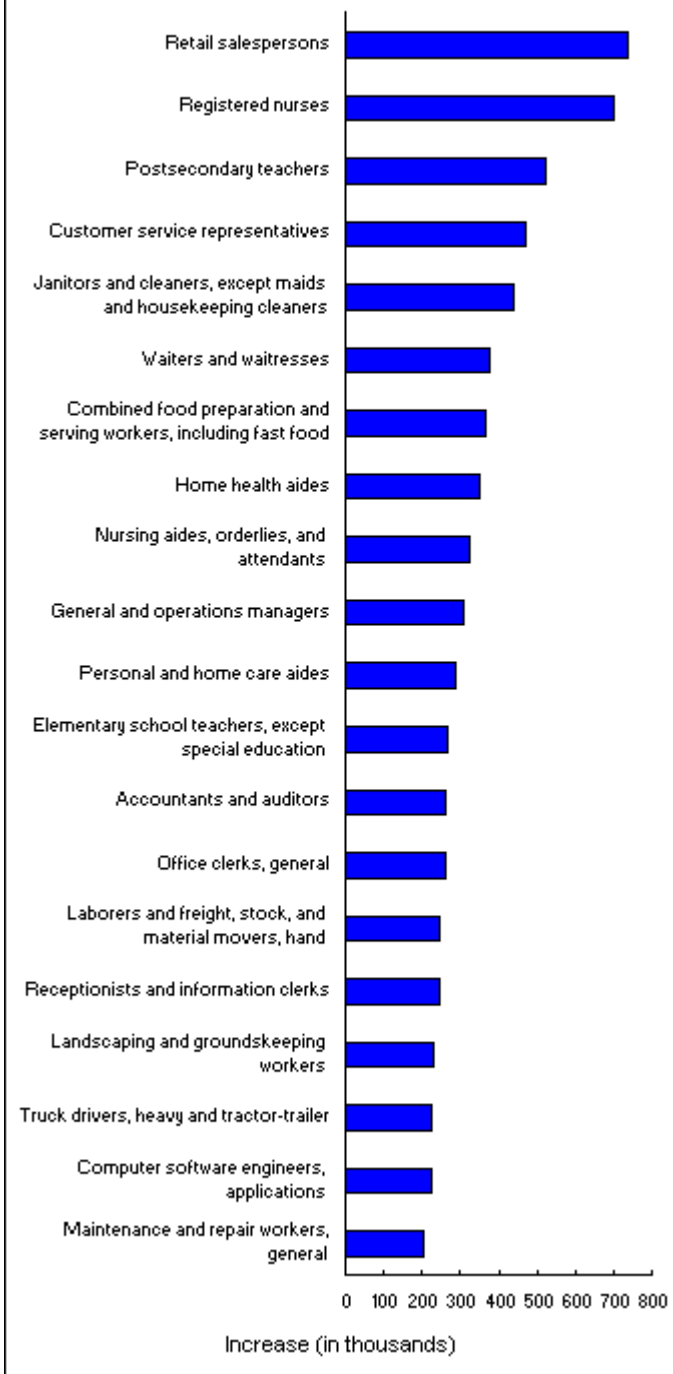
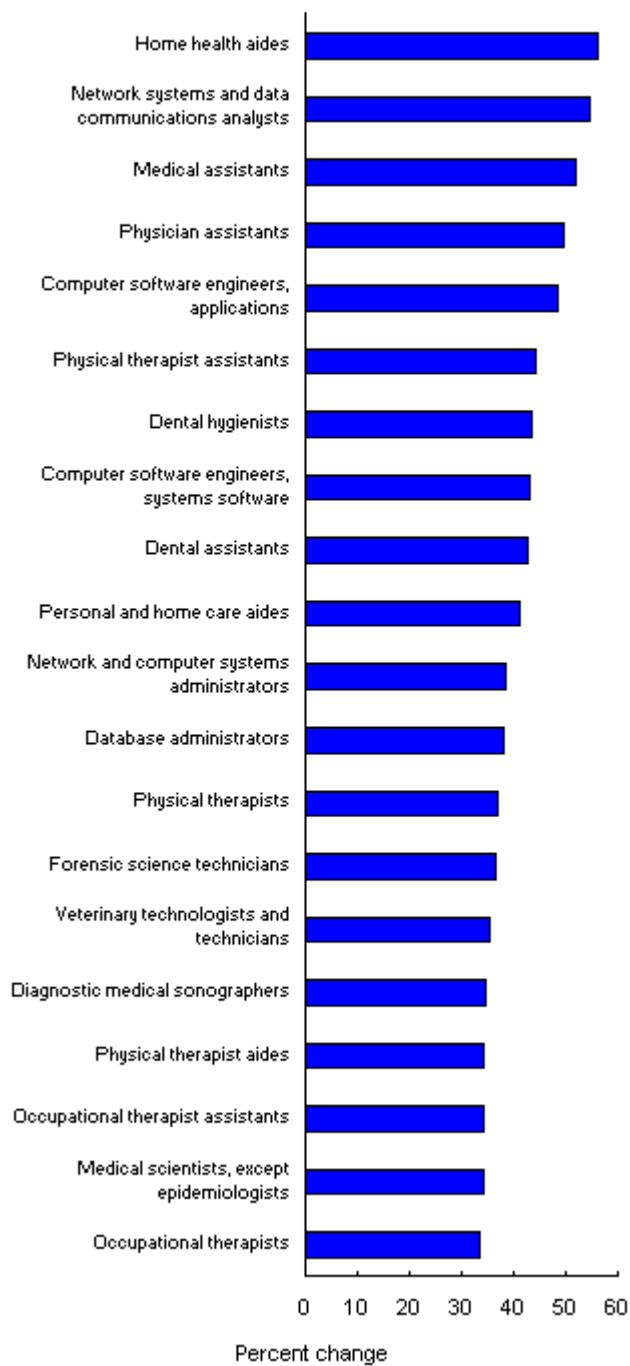


Chart 9. Job declines in occupations with the largest numerical decreases in employment, projected 2004-2014



Chart 7. Percent change in employment in occupations projected to grow fastest, 2004-2014



Ten Key Trends that will Shape the BC Economy through 2010

Business Council of BC: Policy Perspectives (vol 12, no. 4, July 2005)

1. Expanding role of First Nations in economic and business development
2. Greater economic involvement in the Asia-Pacific
“BC’s growing involvement in the Asia-Pacific region will also be reflected in the tourism and education sectors....BC has an opportunity to build on recent successes by positioning itself as one of the world’s most attractive places for foreign students to obtain further education and training. A growing number of BC public postsecondary institutions are targeting the lucrative market for international (mainly Asian) students. Private language schools in the lower mainland and other regions have also had considerable success in tapping the Asian market.”
3. More shortages of skilled workers amid a tightening labour market
4. Immigration increasingly influences the composition of the population and workforce
5. Stronger population growth
6. Energy assumes a higher profile in the provincial economy
7. Some improvements in store for BC’s productivity
8. A multi-year construction boom
9. BC’s high tech sector becomes a growth engine again
10. BC and Alberta step up cooperation and assume a more prominent place in the federation

Non University Education

Business Council of BC (October, 2003), *The Third Option: A First Choice. Rewarding Careers via Non-University Pathways*

“The purpose of this report is to help publicize the broad range of lucrative career opportunities that exist in British Columbia for those individuals who do not pursue a formal university education. This is an updated and expanded version of the original “The Third Option” published in September 2001. There are literally thousands of well-paying jobs and careers in high demand by BC employers that do not require a university degree, but do require some form of post-secondary education and training” (p.1)

“In the latest forecast, COPS BC Unique Scenario, prepared by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Human Resources Development Canada, 73 percent of all job openings in British Columbia between 2001 and 2011 will require some form of training beyond high school. However, only 29 percent of these openings will require a university degree, while 44 percent

will require other post-secondary training such as apprenticeship, a college diploma or other career-based training.

In reality, non-university career options have changed dramatically with technological advances over recent years. The occupational opportunities are more challenging, complex and rewarding than they have been in the past.” (p. 18)

Provincial Postsecondary Priorities

Key strategic issues identified by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education in its *2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan*

<http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/sp/ae/StrategicContext5.htm>

Enhancing access and capacity

In view of the projected growth in the prime post-secondary student population and the trend toward lifelong learning amongst the working age population, 25,000 new student spaces are being added to the system under the Strategic Investment Plan. Demand for post-secondary education and training spaces is expected to increase to the middle of the next decade in British Columbia. However, pressure on the post secondary system will vary across institutions. Recently, a number of colleges throughout British Columbia have experienced softening demand and are now operating at less than full capacity, while universities and institutes have generally experienced strong growth. The ministry will work with post secondary institutions to understand the causes of the softening demand, and to ensure that programming is relevant to the education and training needs of regions while still addressing provincial priorities. For instance, with a strong economy, individuals may be more likely to participate in the labour force than in post-secondary education.

Addressing labour market requirements

As the provincial unemployment rate has continued to decline and some sectors of the economy are operating at historically high levels, labour market pressures are being felt in some industries, occupations and particular regions of the province. While research does not suggest a “labour crisis,” there will be a significant challenge in ensuring the right mix of education and skills for existing jobs. The Ministry will monitor regional labour market conditions and make adjustments to education and training to meet labour needs as required, such as increasing access and opportunities for students to train in high demand fields, to prevent skilled labour shortages.

Advancing British Columbia’s research agenda

There is an increased interest in the output of university research and innovation, namely the intellectual property that can be further developed into products and processes with public and commercial applicability.² Research can provide economic benefits through the commercialization of basic and applied research, and through partnerships between post-secondary institutions and local industry. Research can also provide substantial social benefits, including better-informed public policy, new medical treatments, and an increased understanding of environmental issues. The valuable work initiated in post-secondary institutions in British Columbia will benefit not just British Columbians, but societies around the world.

Government has developed a well-coordinated and integrated approach to ensure high quality and efficiency in research and innovation and maximize the benefits from our research investments. As the Ministry responsible for research and technology, we will need to work with partners to address key challenges, including: finding mechanisms to fund research activities and infrastructure; supporting the supply and retention of highly qualified researchers; transferring new ideas and knowledge from the post-secondary sector into the public and commercial domains; and, supporting the research and innovation capacity in all regions of the province.

Improving affordability

The February 2005 Throne Speech stated that tuition fee increases would be limited to the rate of inflation, effective September 2005, to ensure post-secondary education is affordable to students and their families. In September 2005, British Columbia's tuition fees increased by two per cent, based on the 2004 British Columbia Consumer Price Index.

Student financial assistance is available to students at the post-secondary level attending public and designated private institutions. The Ministry will monitor student applications and default rates, and take action if required, to ensure student financial assistance programs are targeted to where need is greatest.

Supporting Aboriginal learners

The Aboriginal population is growing at a faster rate than the non-aboriginal population. It is now estimated that approximately five per cent of British Columbia's current population is Aboriginal — and this number keeps growing. Also, 50 per cent of the Aboriginal population is under 25 years of age. These are all significant statistics when considering British Columbia's future labour pool.

Progress has been made in recent years in terms of the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in British Columbia's public post-secondary system. Initiatives such as the Ministry's Aboriginal Special Projects Funding program, which assists public post-secondary institutions in promoting relevant, quality educational programs and support activities for Aboriginal learners have made inroads in this area. However, reports recently published by BC Stats indicate that only four out of ten Aboriginal people in British Columbia have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, compared to six out of ten non-aboriginal students, and that Aboriginal people are particularly underrepresented in terms of university level credentials. These gaps have significant social and economic implications for Aboriginal people and for the province as a whole, and in order to close the gaps, a different approach is needed. The Ministry has developed a proposed strategy to address the gaps in both participation and success, and will be consulting on the strategy in the coming months.

Improving Adult Literacy

The International Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey indicated that about one million British Columbians had low literacy levels that prevent them from understanding and using basic information (e.g., news stories and instruction manuals). Low levels of literacy directly impact a person's ability to improve their quality of life, earn sufficient income, partner in their children's education, and participate in leisure and recreational pursuits. In connection with

British Columbia's commitment to be the best educated and most literate jurisdiction on the continent, the Ministry will continue to look for ways to improve and expand adult literacy programs and services throughout the province. These programs, which include adult literacy programs and services delivered by community agencies in partnership with public post-secondary institutions, seek to raise the literacy levels of adult British Columbians, allowing them to fully participate in the economy and society.

Expanding international education opportunities

Currently, there are more than 25,000 international students enrolled in public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. The Ministry is committed to working together with post-secondary institutions and other government organizations towards the expansion of quality international education in the province. Doing so will encompass a broad range of activities, such as recruiting foreign students, enabling British Columbia students to study abroad, and exporting British Columbia curriculum and other educational services, as well as joint research. The benefits of international education are numerous. It enhances the educational experience for all students. The development of cross-cultural skills enhances future business and cultural development. International education is in itself an economic sector generating significant revenue. In the future, with potential skills shortages, international students are expected to help address labour market needs.