
Scott McAlpine

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NSERC ELIGIBILITY

Douglas College has recently been approved by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) as an institution eligible to authorize applications to NSERC and administer any funds awarded. As an institution that has successfully met all of NSERC's eligibility requirements, Douglas College researchers will now be able to participate as applicants in the Idea to Innovation (I2I) Program and as co-applicants in collaboration with university faculty on a number of research project grant programs, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements.

Achieving NSERC eligibility status is a very significant step for Douglas College and has involved the work of many people. It demonstrates the commitment the College has to research and scholarly activity (RSA) in support of students and their learning. Considerable growth has occurred in RSA over the last five years, in terms of policy and infrastructure development, College support, and RSA initiatives and outputs by College students and employees.

The College is now poised to be involved in funding opportunities sponsored by the Tri-Council, comprising NSERC, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Thanks to Joy Page, Director of the Centre for Faculty & Academic Development, for facilitating this process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

As part of the strategic planning process, seven questions have emerged for which a fuller discussion is warranted from a cross-section of employees. The following are intended to generate discussion which will help to focus our themed discussion group sessions running from January 18th through February 10th:

Learner Pathways:

Douglas College has entered into several educational partnership and transfer agreements with a number of post-secondary institutions. But we must ensure that learner pathways are not understood as University Transfer only. To what extent should Douglas strengthen its relationships with universities to enhance our University Transfer program? How can we make internal and external transfer pathways as open and clear as possible?

Research and Scholarly Activity:

Currently, many faculty members at Douglas College are engaged in scholarly activity including, but not limited to, the scholarship of teaching and learning, applied and pure research. Moreover, ACCC is actively engaged in seeking federal recognition and funding for College-based research. External funding for research is needed since our base funds must be allocated to instruction and instructional support. How does Douglas College strengthen research and scholarly capacity and engagement given the above?

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Aboriginal Initiatives:

Douglas College campuses and training centres are situated on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples. Douglas College currently has an office of Aboriginal Student Services, is moving toward having an Aboriginal gathering space, and, in some programs, has developed Aboriginal streams. What should Douglas College do to better meet the program and service needs of Indigenous learners?

Service Excellence:

Douglas College has articulated a commitment to service excellence. What does this mean to you and what steps are needed to fulfill this commitment?

Internationalization:

Driven by the need for training students with global competence, Canada and, more recently, British Columbia have started to emphasize the importance of internationalizing post-secondary institutions. Douglas College currently has considerable strength in its international education, including domestic student mobility programs (field schools and practicums), international opportunities for faculty members (overseas teaching, professional development and joint research and publications), recruitment and services for international students, and joint programs with off-shore institutions. To what extent is internationalization a key element of Douglas College and to what extent can it be? What would this involve and what does internationalization mean to you? Strategically, where should Douglas College go with internationalization?

Learning Technology:

Rates of participation in on-line and hybrid learning at Douglas College are lower than at many other BC post-secondary institutions. Given returning (2nd career) students, the adoption of on-line technologies both in the K-12 school system and in the under-30 generation, does on-line and hybrid learning represent an opportunity for Douglas College to expand its geographical reach and its ability to serve students? Where do we strategically want to go on this topic and what infrastructure changes are needed to facilitate that?

Community Responsiveness:

Douglas College has strong links to the community but the term community begs definition. What is the appropriate contemporary understanding of community and how should Douglas College better relate to community needs? Where do we strategically want to go on this topic and what infrastructure changes are needed to facilitate that?

The full themed discussion group schedule is posted on the Strategic Planning website, <http://www.douglas.bc.ca/about/presidents-office/strategic-planning/themed-discussion-group-schedule.html>. Employees are also encouraged to provide their thoughts and feedback via the President's Blog, <http://www.douglaspresident.com/>.

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INTERNATIONAL

Douglas College was in the first group of post-secondary institutes recently granted Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designation by the government of British Columbia, confirming Douglas College as a preferred destination institution for international students. EQA is a newly established quality assurance designation that identifies and promotes public and private post-secondary institutions that have met or exceeded government recognized quality assurance standards. The EQA trademark will allow Douglas College to market its high quality programs even more broadly around the world.

More than 100 domestic students at Douglas College will have various opportunities to study abroad. Faculty members and Centre for International Education have worked very closely to organize four field schools this summer to Belize, Wales, China and Mexico. At least 30 Canadian students will start their studies and practicum in our partner institutes/organizations in US, Uganda, Argentina, Sweden, Thailand, Japan, Korea and China in 2010.

I am pleased to report that enrolment numbers for international students in 2009/10 has reached a milestone of over 600 FTEs, which represents 30% more than our budgeted number and a 20% increase over last year. In addition, we have 1080 full-time students studying our financial management diploma/degree in our joint programs in China.

EVERGREEN LINE FUNDING REMAINS ELUSIVE

The new year has brought no change in the funding status of the Evergreen Line – Translink has not come up with the additional funding needed to start construction. The report on the series of Open Houses held in Fall 2009 is now available online at www.evergreenline.gov.bc.ca. Its main conclusions are that most people want the line built sooner rather than later, there needs to be a station at the western border of Port Moody, and there is a lack of parking along much of the line.

Work continues on the environmental impacts with the 1,000 plus page submission expected to be filed in the spring. Properties offered for sale along the proposed route are being bought by the Evergreen Project Office although until funding is secure there will obviously be no expropriations.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS ACCESS PROGRAM

The Training Group is proud to be offering our pilot program Employment Skills Access. ESA is a Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development initiative under the Canada/British Columbia Labour Market Agreement. ESA, provided through the Labour Market Consortium, is being delivered through 15 public post-secondary institutions across the province. This program is designed to provide access to short term, certificate skills training for unemployed individuals to assist them to meet the demands and shortages in the labour market, and to build career paths for long-term attachment to the labour market.