

Appendix D

Planning Context and Elaboration of Goals

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Introduction

Characteristics of Strategic Planning

A strategic plan describes at a general level what an organization will do differently to achieve its mission given conditions in the external environment. The more frequently the environment or the organization's mission change, the more frequently strategies have to be revised. As described in the comparison of strategic and organizational planning that appears in Appendix A, strategic plans are externally focused and value laden. They cross departmental and other organizational boundaries, accommodate uncertainty and are flexible.

As a result of public policy and of changing social and economic conditions, Douglas College faces a number of significant challenges and opportunities. This strategic plan is intended as a crisp and timely snapshot of the directions the College intends to pursue in this dynamic environment, a way of keeping the college community up-to-date and moving forward in a coordinated manner. Further work will be needed as new circumstances emerge and as the nature of the changing educational landscape becomes clearer.

This plan focuses on changes, on things that will be different at Douglas College. Most of the College's energy and resources will continue to be devoted to activities that are unchanged from the past, and hence which do not appear in the plan. These activities are, of course, still valuable to the institution.

College Values and Goals

Douglas College's values and goals statements address *why* it engages in certain activities. Various plans then explain *what* activities will be undertaken and *how* they will be accomplished. Whereas plans are updated frequently, educational value statements are changed only infrequently and with great care.

Nothing in this strategic plan is intended to change the College's values and goals (Appendix B). Rather, the plan addresses the question of what should be done to achieve them given the constraints and realities of a changing world.

Among other things, the College's Goal Statement describes the types of learners Douglas College seeks to serve. The Values Statement reflects the excellent teaching and learning environment that the College has achieved and prizes.

College Identity

Douglas College is a comprehensive community college that offers selected applied degrees and an extensive array of one and two-year credit programs in:

- Arts, Science and the Performing Arts
- Health and Human Services
- Commerce and Business Administration
- Student Development

It maintains strong and growing offerings in continuing education and contract training, as well as in international education.

Douglas College's primary responsibility is to serve the 600,000 residents living north of the Fraser River from Burnaby to Maple Ridge inclusive. In addition, it serves many students from elsewhere in the Lower Mainland, offers some programs that are distinctive or unique in the province, and is increasingly developing partnerships around the world. The College maintains a dynamic relationship with the communities it serves by developing and revising programs in response to community educational needs.

All of Douglas College's offerings are developed in the context of commitment to a liberal education and to the development of the whole person as a responsible citizen. The majority of its credit courses are transferable to university in preparation for further study, but it is also committed to providing access and college preparatory programming, and to preparing students to enter the workforce directly upon completion of their studies at Douglas College.

Douglas College assists individuals to make life changes, enabling learners to move from where they are to where they would like to be in terms of employment, further education, and participation in society as informed citizens. As a learning-centred institution, it seeks to play a transformational role in the lives of its students.

Historically, a distinctive strength of Douglas College has been providing access and support to students of all cultural, social, special needs and economic backgrounds. It will continue to strengthen access programming for students facing barriers, and generally to assist students from all segments of our community to access and succeed in their studies.

This strategic plan builds on this foundation, strengthening and extending it, but fundamentally reaffirming the historical direction and priorities of Douglas College.

Process Used to Develop this Plan

Douglas College prepared an *Interim Strategic Plan* in 2003 in response to its rapidly changing educational environment. Since then, considerable consultation and strategic thinking has resulted in the *Academic Plan* in 2005 and in the learning support services plan, *Students First!*, in 2006.

The next step in the planning process was to summarize the key messages of the *Academic Plan* and *Students First!*, to fill some gaps in the written record on such topics as the facilities planning done in support of the David Lam expansion, and to make this information accessible to the entire College community in a new college-wide *Strategic Plan*. The hope is that as priorities and rationales are communicated, all employees will be able to determine better how they can best contribute to achieving the College's goals and to helping shape the destiny of the institution.

This new document does not suggest new directions so much as compile recent thinking at the College into a "point of first contact" document that provides a comprehensive overview of priorities for the future. It extends and elaborates on a number of decisions that have already been taken and fills in gaps, but is not intended to be a vehicle for revisiting past decisions.

Because so much strategic planning had already occurred over the past few years, a different process was used to develop the *Strategic Plan* than has been used for previous college-wide strategic plans. Beginning in March 2006, the Institutional Research Office compiled a very rough first draft, working with divisions and administrators to identify key directions in each area.

May and June

A first draft was prepared and circulated through the College for review and feedback, including submission to Education Council for information. Three college-wide forums were held on environmental scanning, the academic signature, and feedback generally about the first draft.

September

The second draft was prepared over the summer and was formally submitted to the governance process for review and advice in the Fall. It was given to Education Council on September 18 and posted on the web to make it available to all employees.

October

A college-wide forum was held on October 13. The College Board reviewed the second draft, along with feedback from Education Council and from the college-wide forum, at its planning retreat on October 21.

November

A vision statement, derived by the Board from the draft Strategic Plan, and the plan summary were circulated for feedback from across the College. Ongoing minor revisions were made to the body of the plan, and the body was moved into a separate appendix.

March 2007

Following a final review by Education Council, the Board approved the plan.

Indicators of Goal Achievement

Strategic goals are more likely to be achieved if the College knows in advance what types of evidence it can use to assess the extent to which the goals have been implemented. Indicators have been built into this plan to assist with monitoring goals achievement. They are not absolute or comprehensive measures, but are triggers or starting points for further investigation if the indicator falls outside an acceptable range. Many indicators are quantitative because such measures are quick and convenient, but others are qualitative because not all relevant information can be expressed numerically. The question guiding the selection of indicators has been, “What will be the first ways by which the entire institution will know that we are achieving the goal?”

Environmental Scan

The current round of strategic planning began by reviewing the contextual data in Appendix C. During the planning process, additional information emerged from discussions and readings. The conclusion was that the following aspects of Douglas College’s environment are the most significant influences on what the College can and should do in the coming years.

External Environment

- The Ministry of Advanced Education’s review in 2006 of the BC postsecondary education system, *Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead*, has the potential to result in major changes.

- Enrolment demand is shifting and dropping in some areas. Some institutions are growing, but many are shrinking. Douglas College has experienced a significant decline over the past few years, although there are signs that the decline is abating.
- Competition among institutions, public as well as private, is growing. The addition of 25,000 new spaces over half a dozen years to the public postsecondary system has led to growing competition for students in certain programs and regions of the province.
- Curricular changes, especially introduction of applied degrees at colleges, are occurring at all postsecondary institution.
- The BC labour market is booming and skills shortages are projected. The extent to which young adults will be diverted from postsecondary education, whether temporarily or permanently, remains to be seen.

Internal Environment

- An aging workforce and the booming labour market bring issues of employee recruitment, retention and succession planning to the fore.
- As a commuter institution that is very accessible to part-time and open enrolment program students, some students have a somewhat fragmented and disengaged educational experience at Douglas College.
- Although the data remains anecdotal, some faculty perceive a qualitative change in the nature of students in terms of dropping academic preparation and motivation, yet a rising sense of entitlement.
- Employees have expressed a desire to enhance organizational climate and to facilitate cooperation across departmental boundaries.
- Employees and students alike are becoming more dependent on technology, presenting challenges for maintaining currency. Technological change presents a great many opportunities, but some fear that new technology may be applied indiscriminately.

Overarching Themes

Learning and Learners at the Centre

Douglas College is both a learning and a learner centred institution. As a learning institution, it seeks to play a transformative role in students' lives. Transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference through such processes as critical reflection to come to see the world in new ways. It involves a deep, structural shift in a person's basic premises of thought and feeling, one that dramatically and irreversibly alters his or her way of being.

As a learner-centred college, where its interactions with students are transactional in nature, the service goal is to remove barriers, providing a quick, friendly and convenient service that fosters an environment conducive to transformational learning. Douglas College seeks to deliver services in a developmentally appropriate manner that helps students become responsible, self-directed and self-sufficient individuals.

The College intends to strengthen the way in which its culture and environment focuses on learning. It uses the term 'learning-centred' as a signal that in addition to attending to the curriculum it delivers, the College also cares what learners comprehend, retain and are able to use

of the curriculum. Because the focus is on what students are learning, and not only on what instructors are transmitting, ongoing classroom feedback and assessment of student learning are needed to facilitate instructional and service adaptation during the learning process.

Differences in student learning preferences, life situations, and academic preparation affect how and what individual students learn. One size does not fit all, and Douglas College seeks to customize its interactions with individual students to the extent possible. It uses a growth and development philosophy, not a deficit or 'fix-it' approach, while maintaining rigorous educational standards. The developmental philosophy accepts individual students where they are and moves them forward. In defining educational excellence in terms of outcomes achieved and the change in students, and not in terms of what students bring with them upon admission, Douglas College affirms that all students are important and can learn. Douglas College is thus a learner-centred institution, as well as a learning-centred one.

Enriching Workplace Culture

Although students are its primary focus, Douglas College employees are its greatest resource. The comprehensive nature of this plan, and the changes it proposes, will require several cultural shifts at the College. Supporting and empowering our employees to make these changes will take time, training, creativity, and flexibility. Abundant communication with employees, especially regarding change, will be central to this support.

The renewed focus on students' experiences and on the academic signature will enhance the way the College deals with students. Although some components are new to certain areas of the College, other areas will encounter only minor adjustments. The desire is to have all parts of the College adopt a common philosophy.

The new cultural components will require the College to find new ways to empower employees to adapt to the new focus, standards and directions. Although significant responsibility lies within the formal leadership of the college, change leadership will be a personal responsibility of every faculty, staff and administrator at Douglas.

Professional development for all employee groups will encompass such topics as:

- Instructional Skill Workshops for new faculty and staff, curriculum development, and the assessment of student learning
- Scholarly activity, including the scholarship of teaching and learning
- Organizational development, leadership and change management
- Just-in-time technology training

A more vibrant and supportive workplace culture will help with recruiting and retaining employees as the word spreads that Douglas College is a good place to work.

Competitive Enrolment Environment

In only a few years, the BC postsecondary system has shifted from shortages of spaces for students to a surplus of seats in some institutions and fields of study. The Ministry of Advanced Education sets FTE enrolment targets for each institution, targets that generally increase each year and that the government takes very seriously.

There are thus two threads woven into the discussion of how Douglas College might best meet its enrolment targets:

- Responding to the softening and shifting enrolment demand
- Expansion of the capacity of the BC postsecondary system and, in particular, the provision of 1500 new FTEs for Douglas College over about a six year period

The competitive environment for recruiting students to public and private institutions reinforces the importance Douglas College places on meeting students educational needs effectively.

The shrinking public school enrolments and the high postsecondary transition rates suggest that the opportunity for enrolment growth among recent high school leavers in the Lower Mainland is limited. The College will work hard just to maintain its current number of recent high school leavers.

The greatest opportunities in the short term for increasing enrolment come from retaining existing Douglas College students for more courses and from non-credit offerings that generate registrations that count towards Ministry enrolment targets. Thoughtful curriculum development and best educational practice to promote student success are thus critical in today's competitive enrolment environment.

The addition of 1500 FTE student spaces represents a massive expansion for Douglas College, already evident in the construction of Phase II of the David Lam campus. The introduction of new credential programs for these 1500 new FTE students is a huge quantitative and qualitative change for the institution.

Goals

Content of Student Learning

Implement the Academic Signature

The Academic Signature outlined in the *Academic Plan* represents a common approach across Douglas College's wide range of credit offerings to promoting transformational change in students' lives. The distinctive character of the Douglas College teaching and learning environment will emerge from promoting development of core competencies that prepare students for further study, for the labour market and for responsible citizenship:

Inquiry

- Information Literacy
- Technological Literacy

Reasoning

- Quantitative Reasoning
- Analytical Reasoning

Communication

- Spoken Communication
- Written Communication
- Intercultural Communication

Citizenship

- Teamwork

- Social Responsibility

While the nine core competencies are not new, their intentional embedding across all College offerings, and the institution's willingness to be held accountable for their achievement, represents a new approach.

Four characteristics of the Douglas College teaching and learning environment will be integrated into every area of study:

- Breadth of Learning
Including interdisciplinary studies and a substantial general education component within all applied degree curricula.
- Learning Centred Instruction
Including utilization of varied learning modes and methods, as well as student-centred services.
- Opportunity to Apply Knowledge
Including the acquisition of abilities to apply knowledge as well as to acquire it.
- Academic Challenge
Including curricula grounded in research and theory.

Implementation of the Academic Signature is well underway, with the signature having been incorporated into the curriculum of all recently developed programs. A framework document defines the expected level of learning outcomes to be achieved for each competency and credential level. Program and course guideline templates have also been developed to identify clearly the core competencies and signature elements addressed within courses and credential programs.

The next phase of implementation will occur as existing programs are regularly reviewed and updated over the next three to five years (i.e. as part of the normal review and updating cycle.) In addition, a concerted effort will be made to publicize the Academic Signature to students, employers and the broader community. Once the Academic Signature has been embedded in all credit curriculum, annual follow-up studies of a cross-college sample of graduates will be used to gather feedback from graduates, faculty and employers about (a) their experiences relevant to the academic signature and (b) their perceptions of the relationships between signature elements, core competencies and other performance measures (e.g. academic performance, retention, and employment skills.) This information will be used to continually review and revise the core competencies and signature elements as appropriate.

While the commitment to embed the Academic Signature across all curriculum is specific to credit program offerings, it is expected that the Academic Signature and the framework document will also influence curriculum development in continuing education and contract training.

Progress indicators:

- Number of program and course outlines revised to explicitly incorporate signature elements*
- Results from learning centred and related questions in annual College and Institute Outcomes survey of former students*
- Reporting from annual review of Faculty tactical plans and advisory committee feedback*

Develop Curriculum and New Credential Programs

In addition to the ongoing, evolutionary developments that reflect best practice in curriculum design and pedagogy, the two major initiatives in the instructional area will be to:

- Infuse the academic signature throughout the curriculum (as discussed elsewhere in this plan)

- Develop new programs in response to the massive FTE growth that Douglas College will experience over the next five to ten years.

Douglas College is entering the third year of what will be at least a six year period during which the Ministry of Advanced Education will allocate 1500 additional FTE student spaces to Douglas College. In response to this provincial commitment to increasing the accessibility of postsecondary education for local residents, the College has nearly three dozen new program proposals in various stages of development, ranging from the concept phase through development to the implementation phase.

In choosing which of the wide array of community educational needs Douglas College is best able to meet, a number of strategies and considerations will continue to guide the identification of new programs to offer. These strategies include:

- Building on existing strengths and expertise, e.g. offering longer or shorter programs in an existing field of studies, or deriving curriculum from combining courses across program
- Selectively introducing new fields of study, e.g. adding more technology programs in the Faculty of Science and Technology
- Increasing the range and mix of credentials, from six-month citations through to four-year degrees
- Providing at least one baccalaureate degree, whether entirely offered by Douglas College or in collaboration with another institution, within each Faculty (except in Student Development where students are prepared to enter programs in other faculties)
- Enhancing student transfer and laddering options through partnerships with other institutions in BC and beyond. (Partnership is a key theme in degree programs, international education and contract training.)
- Ensuring implementation of a defined academic signature across all curriculum

The feasibility of many new programs will continue to be explored, recognizing that some ideas will not go beyond the concept stage. Once a proposal makes it past the feasibility stage, strategic development funds will be made available to support the introduction of new credential programs.

The specifics as to where new program proposals are in the development process, their size in terms of FTE enrolment and their target implementation date appear in the annual updates to *Academic Plan*, the MultiYear Plan that Douglas College submits annually to the Ministry of Advanced Education. The hope is to have as many as eight Douglas College bachelor degrees and four additional degrees offered in collaboration with other institutions by 2010.

The College's Strategic Development Fund provides resources for developing new programs. As more new programs come on stream, use of the fund will shift towards supporting program renewal through major revision and updating of existing offerings. The College's participation in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning will be another source of peer expertise to help faculty refine skills to enhance and renew existing course and program offerings.

The College will review models of centres of excellence currently in place, such as the Institute of Urban Ecology and the Centre for Health and Community Partnerships. The results of this review will determine the appropriate model for the establishment of three or four centres of excellence.

Progress indicators:

Number of new credentials and programs

Number of Faculties with at least one degree program

FTE enrolment in new programs each year

Number of joint programs with other postsecondary institutions

Means for Facilitating Learning

Improve Student Success and Persistence

A quarter of all credit students who come to Douglas College leave the institution having taken a total of five or fewer courses during their entire stay at the College. Sometimes this is a positive situation, with students having achieved all they wanted to accomplish at Douglas College, but sometimes it is an unsuccessful outcome. In terms of pedagogical coherence, maintaining enrolment levels, and fostering learning outside the classroom, numerous short stay students can be problematic.

A Douglas College task force articulated its definition of student success in 2002:

While this term can have multiple meanings, the Task Force understands “student success” as the achievement of educational goals by students’ completions of programs/courses to produce intended transitions to employment, further study, or other relevant outcomes at rates and levels that are accountable to stakeholders.

This strategic plan builds on the approaches that emerged from that task force.

Facilitating student success may or may not result in students being retained in more Douglas College courses, e.g. successful transfer students may leave Douglas College sooner rather than later because they have achieved the credits and grades necessary for university admission. The College’s focus will be more on helping students to persist in their studies in light of academic or personal challenges.

A central challenge for Douglas College over the next decade will be to foster students’ engagement in their program of studies and in the life of the College. With the changing psychodemographic characteristics of the new generation of students, and as larger numbers arrive either academically under-prepared or less committed to a program of studies, the College will take proactive steps such as implementing cohort programs to improve student success and persistence.

Foundation Experience

Whether “returning to learning” or coming fresh from high school, students arrive at college with varying degrees of academic readiness and clarity about their educational goals (and sometimes their views as to their readiness do not correspond with those of faculty). To ensure all its students possess a good foundation for subsequent studies, Douglas College will conceptualize a foundation experience that promotes:

- Integration into a community of faculty and students
- Creation and implementation of learning plans
- Development of general academic skills that are foundational for success in subsequent courses
- Successful completion of university level course work and employment-focused career programs
- Awareness of fundamental concepts related to knowledge and beliefs, and that the emphases vary among particular fields of inquiry.

The conceptual framework for enhancing students’ foundation experience has several dimensions:

- Coordinated Assessment and Advising
- Student Education Plan

- Office for New Students
- Foundations Programming, including *Connections*

A strategy of incentives will be used to engender students' engaged participation in the foundation experience. The goal is to encourage student excitement and commitment to learning how to learn.

A new academic foundations program, *Connections*, will consist of an interdisciplinary program leading to a credential for students taking open enrolment, university transfer courses. Voluntary and cohort-based, students will have the option of multiple pathways, providing them flexibility without an overwhelming number of course decisions to make.

For students who enter college-level programming via developmental education, the existing Child, Family and Community Studies/Developmental Studies Foundations and Pre-Business Foundations programs will be supplemented with English as A Second Language for Allied Health Foundations and other foundations programs such as pre-nursing.

Students of diverse second and first language backgrounds can be good candidates for support programs to improve their success and persistence. Along with strengthening oral English language and academic writing skills, attention will be devoted to ensuring students have quantitative skills appropriate to the students' intended field of studies.

A number of career-focused preparatory programs will be offered to specific target groups through Continuing Education and The Training Group. The programs will assist students to transition into further education or employment.

Student Engagement

Creating a welcoming and engaging environment where the student experience and learning are emphasized is paramount at Douglas College. This will begin at the point of first contact and in orientation sessions, and will continue throughout students' entire stay at Douglas College.

In addition to completing more courses successfully and persisting into subsequent courses, the learning of engaged students is better – what is sometimes termed “deep learning”. As a commuter college, Douglas College needs to pay explicit attention to the quality of student experiences outside the classroom, and not only those within classes, in order to foster engagement.

Efforts will be made to engage students at all levels:

- In the classroom, e.g. through collaborative projects, cohort groupings and orienting students to the discipline
- In service and administrative areas, e.g. through feedback from student advisory groups and surveys
- In campus life, e.g. concourse displays and student clubs that encourage commuter students to spend more time on campus

The points of first contact for many students are Continuing Education courses or The Training Group. Some of these students move on to take credit courses at Douglas College. In credit courses, particular attention in the classroom environment will be devoted to open enrolment students. Examples of the possibilities include:

- Learning communities
- Problem based learning
- Simulated environments

Instructors already inform their students about the expectations and commitments needed for students to succeed in individual courses. The College will pay more attention in the admissions and orientation stages to inform students about the demands of postsecondary education generally, the type and amount of preparation needed for independent learning, and the need for students to be engaged in their learning.

Other ways of engaging students include academic excellence streams, e.g. honours programs, that are directed towards challenging students who are already doing well. Particular attention will be paid to increasing the engagement of open enrolment students.

Various models of the Learning Commons approach have been suggested but no decisions have been taken about them. The intent is widely shared but, in addition to resource considerations, there are pedagogical issues concerning the extent to which learning support services should be centralized rather than dispersed throughout instructional areas. Discussion to identify what, if any, Learning Commons model would be appropriate for Douglas College, and the extent to which the College wishes to adopt it, will be fostered in the near future.

Assessment of Student Learning

Considerable attention has recently been paid to the assessment of entering students. The objective is to find an efficient process that saves students from having to take multiple placement tests and yet provides reliable and timely advice about each student's academic readiness and the first courses they should take at Douglas College.

The College will now focus on fostering best practice in the assessment of student learning within and across courses. It will support faculty professional development regarding the theory and techniques for the ongoing assessment of student learning.

Effective classroom assessment by instructors of their students' learning provides feedback to instructors for customizing their instruction to the needs of each class and for helping individual students to take more active responsibility for their learning. Many individuals and groups of faculty are already knowledgeable about the role of assessment in the learning paradigm. The goal in the coming years is to help institutionalize this knowledge so that it is a more intentional strategy of the College and so that progress is less reliant on the initiative of individuals.

Students' experiences outside the classroom also provide significant opportunities for learning. The extent and nature of this learning will also be assessed through such mechanisms as feedback from students and in assessments related to the academic signature.

Progress indicators:

Dates when Office for New Students established and various activities commenced

Number of students assessed with online assessment tools

Number of students completing credentials

Employee participation in professional development sessions related to the assessment of learning

Deliver Curriculum and Services More Flexibly

Douglas College has successfully delivered curriculum in a face-to-face mode that is dynamic and accommodates different learning styles. It wants to build on this base, providing students with additional options and flexibility that protects its existing strengths while meeting student needs.

Blended delivery, in varying proportions of face-to-face and technology-mediated delivery, is central to providing more flexibility to students. Some courses and programs will be delivered entirely online to particular student populations to overcome barriers of distance or time. Technology will also be used within classrooms and labs to enhance learning through such means as simulations. Yet another strategy is to deliver the same curriculum in different ways to different student groups, e.g. Dental Assisting's introduction of a summer, evening program to complement its winter, day program.

The College will implement and fine tune a student friendly timetable that allows for offerings over periods other than a standard semester, e.g. compressed offerings such as a fast track associate degree. New versions of the student information system and other technological enhancements will facilitate these different delivery methods.

As much as possible, students will be given more choice in how they access services, e.g. in-person, online, or by telephone. The goal is to recognize and accommodate the different types of services that are appropriate for different types of students. Online tutoring through the Learning Centre illustrates the increased choice that will be available for different student populations.

Progress indicators:

Dates when revisions made to timetable

Examples of innovations made in the previous year

Describe the Douglas College Student Experience

Building on the tenets of the Academic Signature and the College's Values and Goals statements, Douglas College will make explicit the experiences that students can expect within and outside the classroom to facilitate their learning. The rationale is two-fold:

- To help the College focus on the student experience in a comprehensive, integrated way when planning for the delivery of services, interacting with students and assessing institutional performance.
- To help current and prospective students perceive the distinctive educational advantages of enrolling at Douglas College.

By looking at the whole student and the multitude of College departments with which students interact each semester, the intent is to promote the perception and the reality that college attendance can be a valuable end in itself and not only a means to a job, a credential or some other utilitarian purpose. Douglas College's description of a normative student experience will reinforce its commitment to students and will provide a further basis for ensuring the College is living up to its commitments.

A relationship model will be an important component of the student experience. The relationship model entails both attitudes and actions. Examples of the actions that could be taken include:

- Staff and faculty training regarding the importance of a positive first contact with students
- The cohort model of grouping students so that students and instructors get to know each other
- Fostering meaningful relationships among students outside the classroom, coupled with student leadership development opportunities
- Writing procedures from an outcomes perspective, explaining the intent and rationale and not simply specifying the rules. To the extent possible, employees will be given more latitude, within clear parameters, to respond to student needs.
- Providing early notification to students who are at risk, much along the lines of the recent academic alert system, to supplement academic probation
- Developing service standards, e.g. response times, that reflect a relationship-based model of service delivery.

Building on the client focus already evident in many parts of the College, it will devote more explicit and systematic attention to how employees interact with students, as well as staying informed about the characteristics of its changing student population.

Progress indicators:

Date when the student experience is defined

Student Body

Manage Enrolment

A top priority for the College is to again achieve the annually increasing FTE enrolment target set by the Ministry. This will be challenging in the current BC postsecondary environment, but new rules that allow the counting of more contract and continuing education students will lessen the challenge.

The highly competitive market for students is expected to intensify and to require (1) paying significant attention to marketing and attracting students and (2) providing support structures to establish student satisfaction and affiliation with Douglas College. The College's enrolment strategy includes maintaining a strong foundation of first and second year programming, and positioning its degree offerings as a way of attracting more students to certificate and diploma programs.

The College will capitalize on its competitive advantages, namely:

- Location: the David Lam campus is the only college in its area, and New Westminster is centrally located in the Lower Mainland with good access via public transit
- Proven track record of successful educational outcomes and satisfied students
- High name recognition, and awareness of "lighthouse programs" among the general public
- Potential for collecting evidence of the efficacy of the Academic Signature to demonstrate that students are being equipped for the challenges of the new millennium.

Recent High School Leavers

Douglas College's enrolment base consists of recent high school leavers. Declining high school enrolment projections, already robust transition rates into postsecondary education and

competitive forces suggest that the College may not be able to increase this base substantially, but rather that it needs to ensure the base does not erode. More targeted and customized approaches to high schools will have to appear professional and exciting in the eyes of prospective students.

Older Adult Learners

Three quarters of Douglas College's credit students have been under age 25. There is considerable opportunity over the long term to expand into the "older adult learner market" but this is a challenging demographic to serve. These adults are selective about courses and delivery methods, and thus new offerings will have to be carefully designed. Continuing education and contract training have been the most effective avenues to date for Douglas College to serve the older adult population, and will increasingly be viewed by the College as a bridge between the general population and credit offerings. The goal is to further expand non-credit activities. In the medium terms, additional credit offerings will also be designed with adult learners in mind.

Student Retention

In the short term, the greatest opportunity for increasing FTE enrolment in credit programs is through existing students taking more courses at Douglas College, i.e. by increasing retention rates. With many short-stay students who take only a handful of courses, initiatives that promote educational best practice have the added benefits of helping the College meet its enrolment challenges.

Retention initiatives are something that are within the College's sphere of influence at both institutional and program/departmental levels (although some initiatives will prove to have more of an impact than others). Additional discussion of student retention appears in the section *Improve Student Success and Persistence*.

Recruitment and Marketing

A number of opportunities exist to strengthen student recruitment through better coordination. A recruitment function within the recently established Office for New Students will facilitate and coordinate existing efforts, supplementing departmental recruitment efforts in mutually supportive ways. The office will also be a means for implementing relationship goals as a point of first contact by making frequent and friendly contact with students before they start classes, and by directing students to appropriate service delivery departments..

Rather than a diffuse approach, strategic market analysis will be used to recruit the right type of applicant for each program. It will not be a case of closing the College to certain types of students, but rather of matching them to the right area of the College. In many respect, this approach simply extends college-wide what already occurs in some limited enrolment programs at Douglas College.

Marketing and recruiting students for non-credit offerings is a specialized function. It needs to be very responsive and coordinated with the activities of program-based marketing. Marketing for cost-recovery activities will remain decentralized and the Office for New Students will focus its efforts on providing infrastructure for recruiting credit students. Nevertheless, the College's non-credit offerings are often held in the community or within external community-based training and employment centres; these offsite facilities and programs represent marketing and promotional venues for the College.

Summary

In summary, the enrolment management strategy will be:

Short term:

- Retention of existing students in credit programs.
- Expansion of continuing education and contract training to serve additional segments of the community.

Long term:

- Development of credit programs and delivery methods targeted to adult populations.

Progress indicators:

Ratio of actual enrolment to target

Proportion of credit students completing five or more courses within two years of first enrolling

Expand International Education

Good quality education attracts and retains international students. Rising revenue is a desirable by-product of international education, but the focus will continue to be on student experiences wherein domestic and foreign students learn about each other's world, broadening their frames of reference and coming to respect diverse cultures.

The three aspects of international education at Douglas College will all be expanded and strengthened in the coming years:

- International students studying at Douglas College
 - Promote global awareness and intercultural competence of domestic students
 - Net revenue supports other College activities
 - Helps build Canada's relationship with other countries, i.e. international students are knowledgeable contacts after they return to their home country

Douglas College has met with greater success in recruiting international students from the middle class than from the upper class. In broadening its recruiting efforts from its historical base in Asia Pacific countries, it will concentrate on two regions where strong middle classes are developing:

- South Asia (India) and west towards the Middle East
- Three or four countries in Latin America, including Mexico and Brazil

It will also seek to establish strong affiliation agreements (such as those it already has in Korea, Japan, China and Thailand) to enhance its ability to recruit groups of international students, rather than just individuals.

- Douglas College students studying abroad
 - Currently a fledgling aspect of the College's operations
 - Includes service learning as well as practicum and classroom experiences

The number of Douglas College students studying abroad will remain modest, but the goal is to see the number growing steadily. The College will provide greater clarity about its expectations and the type of support it can provide in this area.

- Contracts and Partnerships
 - Net revenue supports other College activities
 - Professional development for Douglas College employees

International contracts and partnerships will continue to be educational in nature, building on the educational strengths of the College. Douglas College has established a good foundation in China and will continue to concentrate on this vibrant economy, but will also benefit from other opportunities as they arise.

Progress indicators:

Number of international students by country

Net revenues from international activity

Number of students graduating from international partnerships in China

Number of domestic Douglas College students studying abroad

Promote Continuing Education and Contract Training

Cost recovery and entrepreneurial activities enable Douglas College to serve new student populations, to develop new expertise and institutional capacity, and to generate small amounts of net revenue to support other worthy initiatives throughout the College. These activities provide first contact and inroads to the adult learner population identified as a target population within the enrolment management strategies.

The amount of postsecondary funding from federal and provincial sources outside the Ministry of Advanced Education is growing significantly. The College will aggressively pursue these contracts to enable it to reach new student markets, enabling it to expand into the community and reach underserved portions of the population. This is an area in which Douglas College has a competitive advantage in the BC college system and it sees this as an area in which it can thrive.

Now that more funding is available through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process in Ministries other than Advanced Education, Douglas College will bid on larger scale projects than it has in the past. The College recognizes that the various ministries issuing RFPs may seek solutions outside an academic approach, and yet see the value in the organizational strengths and overall learning culture that the College can bring to bear on these services.

The College will continue to focus on continuing professional education, providing courses that are often derived from existing curricula. It will increasingly concentrate on courses and sequences of courses that lead to a credential either from the College or from professional organizations and other external bodies. In some instances, continuing education courses will enable Douglas College graduates to top up their learning and fill gaps so that they become eligible for professional certification.

Progress indicators:

Gross and net revenue

FTE enrolment, both reportable and not reportable to the Ministry

Number and value of provincial and federal government contracts outside the Ministry of Advanced Education

Employees

Enhance Internal Collaboration, Coordination and Efficiency

Collaboration across the College is needed to achieve the educational and service goals implicit in a relationship model of interaction with students. No single technique will minimize internal silos, but such approaches as annual goal setting that involves all divisions to reduce territoriality and to enhance joint problem solving will be used. Training, performance improvement processes, and simply access to information and careful attention to communication needs will also be emphasized.

Douglas College will strengthen cross-college planning and collaboration to unify efforts and improve intra-college communications. Such objectives as coordinated assessment and advising, student educational plans, the office for new students, student recruitment, implementation of the academic signature and the flexible delivery of instruction all require significant cross-college collaboration to enhance joint problem solving at the operational co-ordinator/chair/mid-management level. An Educational Operations Forum, with membership consisting mainly of coordinators and mid managers, will be established to discuss the implementation of initiatives or issues.

Progress indicators:

Survey results of employee perceptions regarding collaboration and coordination

Date when mid-management operations committee established

Number of courses developed based on upper-level interdisciplinary curriculum committee recommendations

Expand Scholarly Activity

A key strategic direction is to gradually build the College's capacity to support faculty involved in applied scholarly activity that is oriented to the faculty member's teaching discipline, including interdisciplinary work, and which encourages student involvement. Increased financial and other support of scholarly activity will occur in the context of a teaching and learning institution.

The College will work over the next three to five years to meet granting agencies certification requirements so that faculty members are eligible to receive grants from external sources, especially from national research councils such as the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

The current scholarly activity group in MyDouglas will be replaced by a Douglas College website as the means to provide consolidated information resources for faculty to engage in scholarly activity. The website will provide the public face of scholarly activity at the College.

Complementing scholarly activity in the disciplines will be a focus on scholarly activity in other arenas:

- Scholarly teaching (teaching informed by research about best practice)
- Scholarship of teaching and learning (research into the effects of different teaching practices and into student learning.) Douglas College will be one of four institutions in the Carnegie Academy's Institutional Leadership program.

Progress indicators:

Funding level for scholarly activity coordinator and the scholarly activity fund.

Number of scholarly applications submitted and number internally funded

Number and amount of external grant funds obtained

Number of participants in scholarship of teaching and learning projects

Develop Human Resources

Students are Douglas College's first priority, but employees are its greatest resource. The skill, commitment and goodwill of its employees have made enormous contributions to the College and the communities it serves.

Individuals at Douglas College are dedicated and effective. The challenge is to help individuals feel supported and part of department-level and college-wide teams so that synergy can be built across groups. Without employees having a healthy work experience, it is difficult to have students feel that students are indeed being put first.

As Douglas College evolves, taking on more activities and growing in complexity, the administrative infrastructure to support effective and efficient operations will be correspondingly strengthened. The College will respect the time employees need for life outside of work and will encourage a healthy work/life balance.

Douglas College will experience significant change in human resources over the next decade as a result of both growth and retirements. A great deal of institutional memory and intelligence will be lost, but new hires will bring fresh ideas and approaches to the College.

The College's identification of the current and future employment needs will be anchored by a focus on organizational values and culture. The socialization and orientation of new employees will be designed to help them honour and value the traditions of Douglas College, while simultaneously empowering them to bring new perspectives and ways of doing things.

Succession Planning

- Provision of internal opportunities for cross-training, acting and temporary assignments, along with documentation of processes and knowledge that currently reside only in the heads of incumbents. The objectives are to groom potential successors, to build information redundancy, and to enrich the work experience of employees.
- Increased provision of development opportunities through coaching, mentoring and individual development plans
- Identification of core competencies and behaviours for performance management and employee development purposes, and then the development of tools to assist in assessing candidates with respect to core competencies and leadership potential

Employee Recruitment

- Market Douglas College as an employer of choice, focusing on working with local universities to present the College as a desirable place of employment for their graduate students
- Publicize the value of benefit plans in addition to salary

- Publicize the College's commitment to the growth and development of employees, presenting it as a place for lifelong learners to pursue a long term career
- Ensure qualifications and selection criteria for positions support diversity goals
- Determine and monitor what have proven to be the most successful and appropriate internal and external sources of talent for the College

Retention of Employees

- Improve the orientation and mentoring of all employees
- Increase publicity about professional development opportunities at the College, including funding sources
- Welcome and showcase research, scholarship, pedagogical innovation and other employee successes in workshops, publications, excellence awards and through other means both inside and outside the College
- Manage workloads through such means as more explicit setting of priorities and the appropriate delegating of tasks

Organizational Climate

- Ensure transparency and full communication with respect to the need for cultural change in order to achieve the goals established in *Students First!* and the *Academic Plan*
- Develop and encourage behaviours that contribute to a respectful workplace
- Provide opportunities for the sharing of best practices across departments and Faculties
- Encourage the participation of all employees in professional development activities, including opportunities for learning about organizational culture and the dynamics of change
- Value employees by consulting the people affected by a proposed initiative. When employee recommendations cannot be implemented, provide explanations.
- Use of as inclusive decision-making processes as are practical in order to facilitate the subsequent implementation of decisions
- Recognize and celebrate employee contributions and accomplishments

Progress indicators:

Registrations in new employee orientations

Registrations in Douglas Development professional development workshops for the above

Funding for employee wellness programs

Employee participation in mentoring programs

Number of, and attendance at, recognition events

Physical Resources and Facilities

Leverage Educational and Information Technology

The judicious and selective use of technology is a means for improving program and service delivery, reducing administrative burden and duplication of effort, and supporting employee and student communication. Computer technology changes rapidly, and thus the focus here is on responding to those changes. Nevertheless, the College recognizes that educational technology

encompasses all means by which course material is delivered or assessed, and not only computer technology.

The strategy for improving the delivery of electronic services is to leverage the technologies that the College already owns, e.g. WebCT, MyDouglas (Luminus) and Banner self-service for students, faculty and staff. In the instructional realm, the approach will be to enhance course delivery, e.g. through blended formats or electronic learning resources, but not to become a distance education institution. Technology will be used especially to enrich learning that occurs outside scheduled class time.

The province of BC has established a province-wide consortium of institutions offering online courses, BCcampus. It places a high priority on BCcampus and is devoting a corresponding level of resources to this initiative. Douglas College will focus on technological enhancements in response to its internal needs that simultaneously position the College to take advantage of this provincial initiative as appropriate. Douglas College's priorities in developing online courses will be such programs as those where:

- Douglas College has provincially or nationally distinctive expertise or curriculum
- Student populations are geographically dispersed or have needs for flexible instructional delivery, as is increasingly the case with continuing education and contract training clientele

As technology evolves and the latest technology becomes part of the daily life of students, the College will increase supports to employees to help them remain current. It will provide a standard array of software for common office and instructional tasks (e.g. Groupwise email, MS Word, PowerPoint, WebCT, and eventually the means to submit duplicating jobs digitally) and will provide training for employees to use the available tools effectively:

- Upgrade technology in classrooms, lecture theatres and labs to provide internet access and display and sound technology in all such learning spaces by 2010.
- Strive to equip all faculty, within the next three years, with either a college-standard PC or laptop computer, determined by individual faculty choice. The goal for contract faculty is to provide one work station for every two contract faculty, recognizing that office space constraints may affect the ratio and location of work stations in particular circumstances.
- Beginning early in July 2007, a short (3-4 hour) familiarization session (Level I) about the educational technology environment at Douglas College will be provided as part of the regular orientation program for all new faculty. This training will emphasize specific technology supports for teaching and learning, e.g. MyDouglas, Groupwise, WebCT, Smart Classrooms and educational technology support services.
- A more advanced Level II technology training will be provided for all current faculty members on both procedures and high-level pedagogical concepts (e.g. WebCT based instruction, My Douglas course and class management features, best practices, and advanced educational technology support). It is intended that all faculty will complete the Level II training during their accountable/PD time.

Data integration, using such techniques as data warehousing, data marts and business intelligence tools, will be a priority. Information obtained from decision-support vehicles will be made widely available in support of evidence-based, goal-oriented decision-making with explicit criteria. (Evidence-based decision-making does not mean waiting for the perfect data, but rather an attitude of seeking practical ways of collecting data and doing the best possible with information available.)

The effective use of technology will facilitate the provision of the information required for good decision-making. The increasing need to analyze data from a variety of sources, coupled with the convergence of technologies and the emergence of new technology, will enable the College to be more strategic and effective in planning, implementing and supporting operations..

Progress indicators:

Number of online and blended courses

Number of classrooms with LCD projectors and internet connections

Percentage of employees with computers

Number of faculty who have completed Level I and II training

Provide Facilities for Learning

The Ministry of Advanced Education is continuing to require colleges to fund a portion of any new facilities that the Ministry approves. Douglas College's capital reserve fund will have to be maintained and expanded for the foreseeable future to ensure its student body of the future can be adequately accommodated.

The expansion of the David Lam campus is well underway, with completion scheduled for Fall 2007. As all the Health Science programs, other than Dental Assisting, move from New Westminster to the new facility in Coquitlam, renovations of the vacated space in New Westminster will be completed in Summer 2008.

Although less well known by the college community, continuing education and The Training Group maintain vibrant storefront operations in Burnaby, Maple Ridge and Surrey. The goal is to expand storefront operations in malls and other locations as a means for the College to reach effectively into the community. Some off-site program centres will expand towards becoming community-based learning centres with multiple programs.

Looking beyond the medium term, the next step in accommodating Douglas College's growing student body will be construction of a facility adjacent to the New Westminster campus on the site of the former fire hall at 8th St and Royal Avenue. The College purchased this land in 2003, recognizing that its current New Westminster campus was at capacity and that provision needed to be made for future growth.

An assessment of the physical plant from a student life point of view will be conducted to determine cost effective ways of fostering desirable educational and social interactions. Such enhancements as more soft seating, banners or greenery in the concourse, and branding messages that reinforce college values, will all be evaluated. In addition to the usual cost considerations, however, floor space is in short supply at Douglas College and the College is constrained as to what it may be able to achieve.

Progress indicators:

Date when David Lam Campus expansion opens

Date when New Westminster renovations are complete

Listing of space/facility enhancements

Community Outreach

Strengthen External Relations

The external relations function includes:

- Ensuring that Douglas College springs immediately to mind whenever anyone in the communities it serves thinks of postsecondary education
- Making introductions and opening doors to help College personnel work effectively with external groups
- Assisting with College advocacy, especially in venues beyond the Ministry of Advanced Education
- Building relationships at all levels with the businesses, institutions, service organizations and individuals in the communities we serve

External relations' focus on personal relationships complements the mass awareness building and unidirectional publicity efforts of the Communications and Marketing Office.

The external relations priorities over the medium term are:

Connecting to the community, such as:

- Hosting external events on campus to bring key members of the community into contact with the College, primarily to build awareness, promote goodwill and lay the ground work for eventual funding
- Taking the skills and knowledge of Douglas College personnel into the community, for example as speakers at Chamber of Commerce breakfasts, both as a public service and to foster contacts that may lead to future partnerships

Strengthening organizational partnerships, such as:

- Partnering with other institutions on marketing and fundraising initiatives, such as the promotion of collaborative degrees
- Strengthening connections with community agencies that provide educational opportunities for Douglas College students, e.g. sites for practicum, service-learning, and for scholarly activity
- Expanding connections with local school districts and secondary schools, and with universities

Focusing efforts, such as:

- Shifting the Alumni Association's focus from former students to current ones, making contact with students while they are still enrolled, especially with students in limited enrolment or cohort programs
- Focusing awareness efforts on the TriCities communities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody in conjunction with the expansion of the David Lam campus

Finding new revenue sources, such as:

- Seeking a diversity of funding avenues not only for student aid but also for programs such as the planned Centre for Health and Community Partnership at David Lam
- Building support among the College's suppliers and contractors by working with departments as Facilities, Purchasing and CEIT

Progress indicators:

Number of steering committees with high schools and other postsecondary institutions

Number of advanced placement and joint activities arrangements

Number of Douglas College concurrent study offerings for secondary school students.

Number of endowments

Number of partnerships formed

Next Steps

Because strategic plans focus on *what* an organization intends to achieve in the long term, the next step in the planning process is typically medium term tactical planning that gives guidance as to *how* the strategic goals and directions will be achieved. Annual operational plans, such as budgets, provide specific details as to *who* will do the work each year and the *resources* that will be devoted to particular tasks.

The College does not intend to prepare a formal, single tactical plan to guide the implementation of this strategic plan. Rather, it will rely on tactical plans developed for the *Academic Plan*, *Students First!*, facilities planning, etc. in order to avoid the duplication of effort.

Because this strategic plan synthesizes a number of existing planning documents, significant tactical planning is already well in hand. An *Education Division Tactical Plan* was developed in 2005/06 to guide the implementation of the *Academic Plan*. Drawing upon tactical plans with each Faculty, it will be updated annually. Implementation plans for components of the Learning Support Services Plan, *Students First!*, have been developed and other tactical planning will be conducted in the coming months. The business plan in support of the David Lam campus expansion is already partially implemented with the start of construction and with the beginning of planning for the provision of support services for the expanded student population at that campus.

Unlike master planning, strategic planning is inherently flexible in nature and involves ongoing adjustments as new information emerges. This strategic plan identifies directions that Douglas College intends to take over the medium and long terms, recognizing that adjustments will occasionally be made and that while a number of implementation considerations have already been addressed, many more will be addressed in the next phases of the planning and evaluation cycle.

Summary of Actions

This plan presents a number of actions, some large and still nebulous, some small and specific. The following listing is intended as a convenient checklist only. It is not prioritized nor is it balanced in terms of the scope and impact of the actions.

Students and Learning

Academic Signature

- Use program and course guideline templates
- Review existing programs with respect to signature elements and competencies
- Publicize the Academic Signature
- Assess a cross-college sample of graduates

- Review and fine tune the Academic Signature

New Programs

- Evaluate all, and implement some, of the three dozen new program proposals

Program Renewal

- Shift use of the Strategic Development Fund over time

Foundation Experience

- Implement *Connections* program
- Establish partnerships involving developmental programs and other Faculties

Student Engagement

- Give explicit attention to promoting engagement, especially of students in open enrolment programs
- Determine position regarding a Learning Commons

Assessment of Student Learning

- Build on existing initiatives to institutionalize the ongoing assessment of the extent students are achieving learning outcomes

Curriculum and Service Delivery

- Use technology to provide students with more choice as to how they access services and courses

Interaction with Students

- Adopt a relationship model

Enrolment Management

- More targeted approaches to high schools
- Expand non-credit activities and use them more often as a bridge to credit programs
- Increase enrolment through greater student retention
- Strengthen student recruitment and transitions into College through coordination by the Office of New Students

International Education

- Expand recruitment efforts in South Asia and Latin America
- Promoted educational contracts

Continuing Education and Contract Training

- Pursue governmental contracts outside the Ministry of Advanced Education
- Concentrate on continuing professional education leading to credentials from Douglas College or from external bodies

Employees and the Workplace

Collaboration and Coordination

- Establish an Educational Operations Forum
- Increase training and access to information

Scholarly Activity

- Increase financial and other support
- Develop webpage to provide a consolidated listing of resources

- Complement scholarly activity in the disciplines with the scholarship of teaching and learning

Human Resources

- Emphasize succession planning
- Market Douglas College as an employer of choice and determine the most successful sources for recruiting employees
- Implement retention strategies
- Foster a healthy organizational climate

Technology and Facilities

Educational Technology

- Position the College to take advantage of BCcampus opportunities
- Increase the number of computers in offices and expand instructional hardware in classrooms to facilitate use of technology in the instructional process
- Provide introductory training as part of the orientation of all faculty
- Integrate data to provide better information for decision-making

Facilities

- Complete David Lam construction
- Continue contributing to the capital reserve fund
- Renovate portions of the New Westminster campus
- Use The Training Group and Continuing Education storefront operations more strategically
- Develop a long term expansion strategy for land adjacent to the New Westminster campus
- Give more attention to the educational implications of space outside the classroom

Community Outreach

External Relations

- Host more external events on campus
- Start the Alumni Association's contact with students while students are still enrolled
- Make skills and knowledge of Douglas College personnel more available to the community
- Strengthen connections with community agencies that host Douglas College students and with local school districts and universities