

# Academic Plan

January 2005

## Appendices

- A. Douglas College Planning Framework
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*Appendix A*

# **Douglas College Planning Framework**

# Memorandum

**To:** Al Atkinson  
**From:** Bob Cowin (Institutional Research)  
**Date:** 7 June 2004  
**Subject:** Douglas College Planning Framework (FOR INFORMATION)

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Three charts are attached by way of context for the Academic Plan. The first, the “student learning at the centre” diagram is a way of reminding College employees:

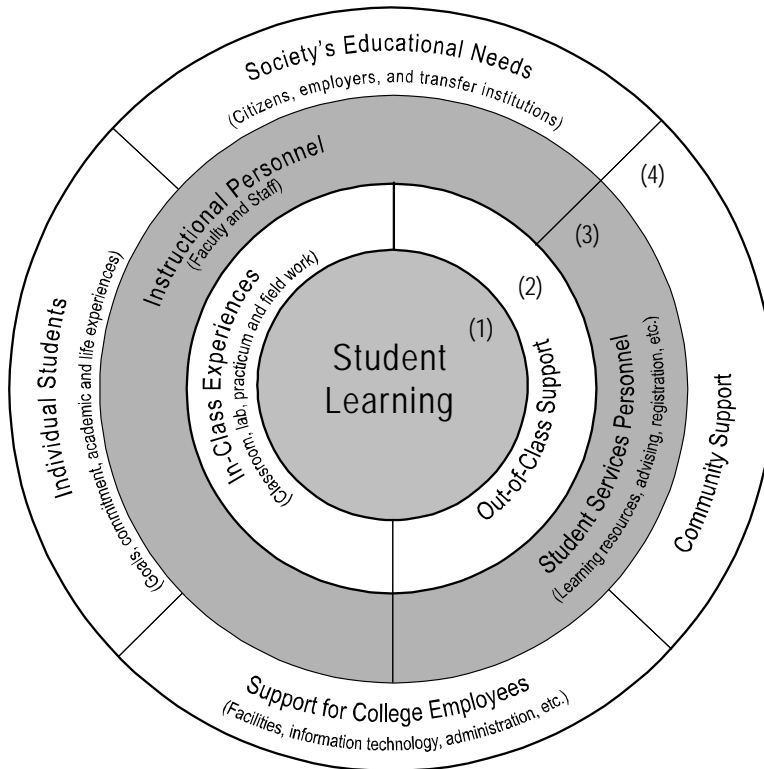
- As noted in the outermost ring, the College needs to be aware of and responsive to the society it serves.
- The Academic Plan is relevant to all employees, not only instructors, especially as student learning is also facilitated outside the classroom.

The second chart, the grid showing how various planning documents related to each other, has recently been updated. The Academic Plan 2005 replaces the Master Education Plan 1999 – 2005. This year’s new requirements from the Ministry, the Douglas College Service Plan and the Multi Year Enrolment Plan have also been added.

The third chart identifies the characteristics of strategic planning that distinguish it from other types of planning. The term, “strategic planning” is often used loosely and inconsistently, so I like to mention these characteristics at every opportunity.

Attach.

# Facilitating Student Learning



*Student learning is at the heart of Douglas College's mission.*

*(1) The amount and nature of student learning are affected by (2) intentional student experiences inside and outside the classroom that are provided or facilitated by College personnel.*

*(3) Instructional personnel interact with students both in-class and outside the class. Student services personnel provide support outside class to help students succeed in their courses. The amount and nature of the support college employees provide students is affected by (4):*

*- each individual student's situation*

*- society's expectations of educational institutions*

*- other supports and services available to students in the community*

*- the support the College is able to provide students and employees in terms of facilities, computers, and so on.*

Plans to facilitate student learning are made at various scales:

- Provincial
- College
- Faculty, department, and program
- Course

and over various timeframes with varying levels of specificity:

- Long term directions
- Medium term goals
- Short term objectives

The manner in which plans prepared at different scales and for different timeframes relate to each other is diagrammed on the following page.



## Comparison of Strategic and Organizational Planning

	STRATEGIC PLANNING	ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING
Purpose:	What to do	How to do it
Focus:	External (What are the community's educational needs and constraints?)	Internal (Which departments should do what?)
Timeframe:	All, but emphasizes medium to long term	1 year: Operational planning 3-5 years: Tactical planning
Scale:	Macro issues	Impact of macro issues on micro issues
Boundaries:	Crosses departmental and other boundaries	Tied to organizational units
Information Sources:	Collect expert opinion from across North America	Advice from local constituents/stakeholders
Nature of Information:	Uncertain Wide ranging Specified by environmental conditions Qualitative, value-laden, political	Certain Established, narrow focus Specified by organizational cycles Relatively rational and quantitative
Output:	Imprecise Alternatives and contingencies	Precise Linear development

*Appendix B*

# **Vision Paper**

## **A Path to the Future: College Vision and Academic Planning**

### **Our Compass to the Future**

It is essential that strategic planning result in actionable outcomes: a concrete plan and a clearly enunciated vision of the organization's future. Like the planning process, the components of the plan and vision are dynamic; and, as such are subject to a scheduled cycle of evaluation, clarification, and change. Implementation of the plan therefore, begins with a vision that reaches as far as possible into that future. This forward view may be three years, it may be five years, or, it may be twenty-five years. Each is possible and has been achieved by post secondary institutions in the past. Why not for Douglas College? Why not now?

It is critical that strategic decisions made today—both choices and “non-choices”—are made in the full knowledge that they are the legacy of tomorrow. Unexamined and uninformed “non-choices” represent default decisions unlikely to advance the best interests of the organization. In most respects, the future is within the organization's ability to innovate. The future is open.

### **Beginning the Process**

Each day, Douglas College steps further into the future...with neither long-term strategic plan nor renewed vision. Given the rapidly changing and uncertain, if not volatile, variables in the College's broad operating environment, this is a high-risk strategy. A realistic vision of the future--based upon analysis of the College's current state of affairs and positioning of these affairs relative to competition--will reduce those risks. Let's begin with some consideration of the current state of affairs as a means of determining vision.

#### **Author's Note:**

This paper is intended as a catalyst to discourse about the College's vision of its future. I hope that it will serve that purpose.

It is reasonable to assume that for 33 years the College has evolved relative to its original mandate and mission. And while that small College located on McBride holds nostalgic memories for many members of our community and colleagues, that College no longer exists. Those humble beginnings represent our history. They are the stuff of tradition and should be celebrated.

In the intervening years, the College has grown and matured; its educational services have diversified; and, its interests have expanded beyond local and regional to global. Accordingly, its academic reputation has grown at home and abroad. And its independence has grown with successive changes in provincial governments.

The most recent change of the latter type has significantly altered the College's educational mandate and mission. The College now joins the ranks of baccalaureate colleges that have emerged across Canada and the United States in the last decade. The key feature that has been a catalyst to the emergence of these colleges is the applied degree, described by many college leaders as the labour market currency of the future. The future has arrived.

### **The Facts Considered**

Clarity and decisiveness about the elements that are core or non-core to the College's future are just as essential as a clearly articulated vision and plan. Two key questions are: What are the Colleges core academic strengths; and, how can they be exploited to ensure a strong future for its beneficiaries? Failure to be decisive in identifying and building on core strengths will increase the risk of the College spreading its finite resources too thinly. The strategic effects of the College's vision and plan will be diluted.

The College's history, including its recent history, presents evidence that a high degree of clarity of purpose has been difficult to achieve. In part, this may result from the College being viewed as a 'comprehensive' community college, hence 'comprehensive' educational offerings and related services. Is this, however, consistent with the current profile of the College?

To the contrary, the College program profile when compared to other post secondary institutions in BC, excepting universities, is more specialized than any other college or

university college. Specifically, the program profile consists of Arts and Science; Business; Health and Human Service Programs; and, Developmental Education with emphasis on diploma/degree-oriented studies. While this focus was part of the original junior community college mandate and mission, additional emphasis on diploma studies being ‘laddered’ into degree programs began with enthusiasm in the early 1990s. Given the depth and breadth of specialization required to deliver four-year degrees, this profile and program history holds distinct strategic advantages.

It is important to note that the original mandate of the College brought with it the history of the junior community college, and this is the College’s distinct institutional ‘type’. In turn, this brought with it, in the form of lower division degree studies, certain core values from the traditional university and the land-grant university. Principally, there are two values of such fundamental importance that they cannot be overlooked in discussions of vision and strategic planning. They are free inquiry and critique based on collegiality i.e., shared responsibility.

These two ancient core values are the foundations of our commonly held beliefs about teaching and learning, the scholarship of teaching and learning, other scholarly pursuits including research, and service to the community. They are indelible and demonstrable characteristics derived from the Academy that must continue to be emphasized by the College.

### **Roads that cannot be Traveled**

The preceding references to the College’s past, its evolution, its current state, and all of the many implied details make it feasible to begin framing a brief and focused vision statement. And while the vision statement coalesces strategic choices, it also closes off avenues down which the College cannot travel for numerous and substantial reasons. Examination of institutional examples in Canada and the United States show that it is possible for community and junior community colleges to offer relevant and needed baccalaureate degrees while retaining the most valued characteristics of their origins including responsiveness to local communities and proximity to the marketplace. This is extremely important to understand.

There are many well-established models of post secondary institutions in the world. Some of these models can be adapted to the circumstances of these evolving colleges. New and innovative models can and may emerge. Plainly, the College must comprehend that which it cannot be in the future. For example, the College cannot aspire to be a traditional university and there are good reasons for this including the availability of resources and the needs of the community for an alternate type of institution that is much closer to the labour market, regional economic growth, and a different spectrum of educational requirements. The College also cannot aspire to be a university college in the BC tradition; an adaptation of a centuries-old model intended for quite a different purpose than the present BC context. Similarly, the College's roots are not embedded in technical or vocational education and, in this regard, it cannot attain the status of an institute of technology or a polytechnic.

If the College cannot be any of the preceding types of institutions, then what type of institution might it envision being in the future? That choice can be found in the College's current characteristics, its program profile, and its changed mandate and mission. To a significant extent, the future is embedded in the present that we experience every working day.

### **Vision Determined**

The College has submitted its first degree (a BSN) proposal to the Ministry of AVED and has expressed the intent to propose a second degree immediately (a BSPN). Work is well underway on this second degree. As a result of these initiatives, Douglas College will become the largest degree nursing institution in BC. This is a remarkable change. With the current program profile of other Faculties, additional, sustainable degree fields will be identified, proposed, approved, and undoubtedly implemented at sometime in the future. What does this indicate about the future?

On the basis of its changed mandate and mission, the College can reasonably adopt a vision of an institution that offers a range of articulated undergraduate programs; community services that range from continuing education to involvement in regional economic development; and, the type of scholarly outcomes normally associated with an institution dedicated to undergraduate teaching and degree education with an emphasis

on applied degrees. From informal training and education offerings, the educational continuum will span credentials such as certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, applied degrees, and post-degree diplomas. With the duration of programs being extended from one, two, and three years to four years, the College will adapt to longer planning and operational cycles. Such planning will contain a much greater focus on strategic alliances and the growth in strategic competition among post secondary institutions both public and private. The College will on the basis of necessity become strategically oriented and with an elevated sense of urgency.

This will introduce the need for related structural changes and the adoption of new perspectives about the investment of resources and the utilization of those resources.

This is likely to involve changes in programs and services.

It can be anticipated that the introduction of a new mandate and degree studies will bring a shift in College climate and culture. This will be pronounced among faculty, students and academic administration. Faculty retirements and replacement will magnify this change.

The current base of international education activities will support a much more extensive range of global activities that will benefit faculty, students, and the community. The recent acquisition of adjacent property will now permit the College to contemplate the development of commercial income property including residences for domestic and international students and visitors, all affecting the essence of campus life.

In this context, the College will become dependent on a substantially larger proportion of its income from non-governmental sources. The growth in its independent responsibilities will grow in proportion to the growth of these new income sources.

In an effort to demonstrate our collective ability to look forward and determine a long-term vision and assuming the on-schedule introduction of the BSN, four full degree cycles will carry the College to 2019. Choices by other Faculties to pursue sustainable degree offerings will further confirm the future described in this section.

The components are in place and, yes, the future is unfolding even as we address strategic planning.

NJM January 2004

*Appendix C*

# **Signature Paper**

## **For Discussion**

### **A SIGNATURE FOR DOUGLAS COLLEGE**

#### **ACADEMIC PROFILE:**

As part of the Strategic Academic Planning process, The Vice-President of Instruction's Academic Council (VPAC) has determined that an academic profile needs to be established in order to characterize Douglas College now and in the future. Having reviewed the literature, including external documents and such internal documents as recent proposals for Applied Degrees and "Skills, Knowledge, and Values of Life-Long Learners: A Working Document" (1999), we have recommended the following.

#### **General Academic Expectations:**

The academic blueprint of Douglas College should consist of those activities in which we can excel, now or in the future, and which will therefore define us to our community. In this respect, we would hope to be an institution that is characterized by the following general expectations.

1. Our dedication to academic excellence.
2. Our commitment to a learning-centred environment.
3. Our commitment to ensuring that all credentials include the skills, knowledge and abilities essential to students' further studies or work ("core competencies"):
  - independent learning and information literacy
  - communication (oral, written and interpersonal)
  - critical and creative thinking
  - teamwork
  - computational and technical skills
4. Our commitment to ensuring that all graduates have a genuine breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding across a variety of disciplinary fields.

#### **Specific Academic Signature:**

In addition to meeting the above general academic expectations, credentials at the College will include the following elements of the College's signature.

1. An emphasis on producing graduates who have the ability to apply knowledge as well as to acquire it (who are effective practitioners – that is, have the "ability to do rather than simply to know about") in order to increase the employability of students.
2. An emphasis on interdisciplinary programming in all credential fields.
3. An emphasis on ensuring that graduates have the self-awareness and requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to enable them to act in an ethical and socially responsible manner, thereby demonstrating their ability to be effective citizens of their community.
4. An emphasis on ensuring that graduates have an intercultural, international, and global perspective on the world in which they live.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EVIDENCE/ACTIONS:**

It is important to demonstrate the attainment of the goals that define our academic expectations and signature. This will be done by providing evidence or examples of activities and actions that exemplify these principles. For example:

### **General Academic Expectations:**

1. Academic Excellence
  - Adequate library holdings
  - Appropriate processes for adjudicating curricula
  - Appropriate academic standards for courses and programs
  - Appropriate hiring and evaluation procedures for faculty
  - Appropriate expectations of faculty with respect to scholarship and/or practice and currency in their fields
  - Appropriate processes for monitoring program standards
  - Enriched opportunities for students
  - Acknowledgment of faculty and student excellence
2. Learning-Centred Environment
  - Classes allow for individual contact with faculty
  - High quality services for students with special needs
  - A student-centred approach to recruitment, registration, orientation and advice - “the friendly college”
  - Student Success initiatives such as Foundation Semester programming
  - Balanced and varied learning modes and methods
3. “Core Competencies”
  - Clear statement of the knowledge, skills and abilities considered “core” to all credentials
  - Clear statement of courses or components of courses in each credential that address these competencies
4. Breadth and Depth
  - Appropriate balance of academic, developmental and applied programs and credentials
  - Commitment to a substantial general education component within all applied degree curricula
  - Provision of appropriate courses to enable students to transfer, for example to meet SFU Writing, Quantitative and Breadth requirements

### **Specific Academic Signature:**

1. Applied Skills and Abilities
  - A commitment to “hands on” training in labs, field environments, practicums, theatre settings, etc. - curricula and budgetary support
  - The use of such methodologies as “real-world assignments,” service learning, problem-based approaches or case studies
  - Expectations of students’ ability to demonstrate appropriate levels of applied skills and abilities within coursework
  - Where appropriate, assistance in making a transition to future work
  - Where appropriate, a commitment to seek verification of applied skills standards through external agencies, advisory boards and accreditation procedures
2. Interdisciplinary Studies
  - A clear statement of the purpose and benefits of interdisciplinary studies
  - A demonstration of compliance with this element of our signature in programming
3. Effective Citizenship

The incorporation within course guidelines of content that would enable students to:

  - Demonstrate a framework for and an appreciation of ethical decision making
  - Develop a broad understanding of economic, political and social justice issues that affect humanity and the environment
  - Live in a manner that promotes a more just and humane society within a sustainable environment
  - Engage with their community in a useful and socially responsible manner
4. Intercultural, International and Global Perspective
  - Active engagement in International Programs - student and faculty exchanges, instructional partnership, faculty scholarship.
  - International and inter-cultural character of programs and credentials
  - The fostering, through the curricula and through extra-curricular initiatives, of students’ awareness and appreciation of the intercultural, international or global context of their field of study

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES–RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In order to accomplish the goals and initiatives described above, we have recommended the following:

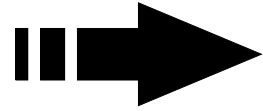
1. That a set of over-arching principles and specific signature elements be established for the delivery of instructional programs and credentials.

2. That effective ways and means of ensuring congruence with these general academic expectations and signature elements be established within the curricular approval process of the College.
3. That VPAC, in addition to reviewing degree proposals for strategic congruence and resource implications, also review proposals for the following requirements.
  - An obligation to ensure that the appropriate range of signature elements and general academic expectations are met within the curricula of the degree proposal.
  - An obligation to ensure that the breadth and depth requirements are met through a requirement that normally at least one third of the total program course credits within a degree proposal come from outside the central program curricula, ie. be “associate studies” or interdisciplinary courses. The selection of these courses needs to complement general program outcomes.
  - An obligation to ensure that appropriate consultation has taken place with interdisciplinary groups or “associate studies” disciplines before a final degree proposal is forwarded for approval. This could be accomplished by the inclusion of associate studies representatives on degree curriculum committees.
4. That an Interdisciplinary Program sub committee of Deans be established to encourage the development of interdisciplinary program and credentials. Further, to enable the development of such programs and credentials, we recommend that 20% of the Strategic Program Development Fund be set aside for this purpose, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation of the fund onward.

*Appendix D*

# **Learning First: Enhancing the Foundation Experience**

# Learning FIRST



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## Enhancing the Foundation Experience at Douglas College

*A discussion paper  
prepared by Ted James*

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*"It is critical that institutional leadership promotes activities that bring people together across campus together to envision an integrated notion of learning ... and develop processes for enacting this vision." (Engstrom & Tinto, 2000, p. 445)*

### **PURPOSE**

This document is intended to outline a way forward for Douglas College, primarily within open enrollment areas, to build on current strengths and to encourage innovation so that the learning experiences of new students can be enhanced in their first semester and first year of college.

The document is intended to provoke and promote discussion as part of the current development of a new strategic academic plan for Douglas College.

The document was generated at the request of the Enrollment Management Committee and the College President to explore how Douglas College could meet the following objectives:

- To enhance the learning experience of students in an urban, commuter college environment using proven strategies that improve student retention and success.
- To encourage students to make good educational plans and to take courses that build foundational academic skills early in their educational program.
- To strengthen the college's ability to attract enrollment of new students, by emphasizing the vitality of the academic foundation experience offered by Douglas College.

In addition, the document builds upon the recent recommendations of the Student Success Task Force (2003), particularly those contained in the proposal called *Enhancing Student Learning*.

## CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

In many ways Douglas College already provides a foundation experience for students and has done so since the college first opened:

- The university transfer program generally offers students the opportunity to acquire the courses and skills that build the foundation for transfer to complete a baccalaureate degree, and the associate degree route builds a foundation for breadth and depth in coursework.
- Douglas College offers a wide range of preparatory and developmental courses which provide an important route of access into post-secondary studies at Douglas College or elsewhere.
- The support services, workshops, and resources of the Academic Advisors, Library, Learning Centre, First Nation's Centre, Women's Centre, among others, also assist students to develop a strong foundation for success in their educational programs.

However, in several respects the foundation experience at Douglas College has shortcomings which undermine the effectiveness of programs and the outcomes achieved by students:

- Prospective students who need to develop academic skills often do not end up developing these skills them before tackling college level courses. Often students are unaware of what preparatory offerings are available, or do not understand the need to develop solid academic skills first, or over-estimate their current academic skills.
- Many students do not select early in their college careers the courses that develop or refine foundational skills in language competency, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. This is often particularly true for students with weak skills who understandably shy away from courses which they perceive as being difficult. As a result, for example, they may delay meeting their ENGL 130 requirement until the end of their program.
- Recent high school graduates can experience difficulty with the transition to college and may flounder to understand and meet the expectations of a more demanding academic environment. Although the College provides some courses and services designed to help smooth this transition, these offerings are often fragmented or under-utilized.
- While Douglas College has explored before strategies to help create an enhanced foundation experience for students – such as with adjunct courses and learning communities – these have usually proved difficult to coordinate and sustain.
- As a commuter institution without residences, Douglas College struggles to provide an enriched environment for “campus life”. As a result, many students have only a weak connection to the college outside of class and under-utilize the resources and activities available to them which could enhance their learning. Since students may rarely take classes in common with classmates, this reduces the opportunities for social integration and peer interaction.
- Many new students do not obtain the courses they want or need via the registration

system and may end up with schedules which are unsatisfying. This sours their first experience with college.

- To pay for their education and living expenses, many students work long hours in employment which may not be connected to their studies. Rather than enhancing their learning experience, such employment competes for attention.

These impediments are particularly apparent for students taking open enrollment courses. Indeed, the Student Success Task Force (2003) emphasized the differences compared to the cohort approach adopted in other program areas:

*At Douglas College, a clear difference is often evident between the contextual conditions of the learning experience provided to students in closed enrolment programs compared with those for students in open-enrollment areas. For example, students in closed programs attend classes together as a cohort of learners, developing peer relationships through shared experiences, and often being encouraged to form their own discussion or study groups. Furthermore, faculty in these programs have more interaction with the same students over time, becoming more familiar with individual student's learning needs, circumstances and progress. Curriculum from one course to the next within the program can be highly interrelated, and enrichment activities (such as speakers' forums) are often included within the programming in closed enrollment areas.... In contrast, the numerous students taking open-enrollment courses may struggle to make connections with peers, rarely taking common classes. They may also struggle to connect with instructors or intersect with their office hours. While Faculties do try to involve students – in department meetings, inter-disciplinary activities, and social events – the number of students affected can be small (p.37).*

### FOUNDATION EXPERIENCES ELSEWHERE

For some time, many colleges and universities in North America and beyond have focused attention upon re-vitalizing the foundation experience for their students.

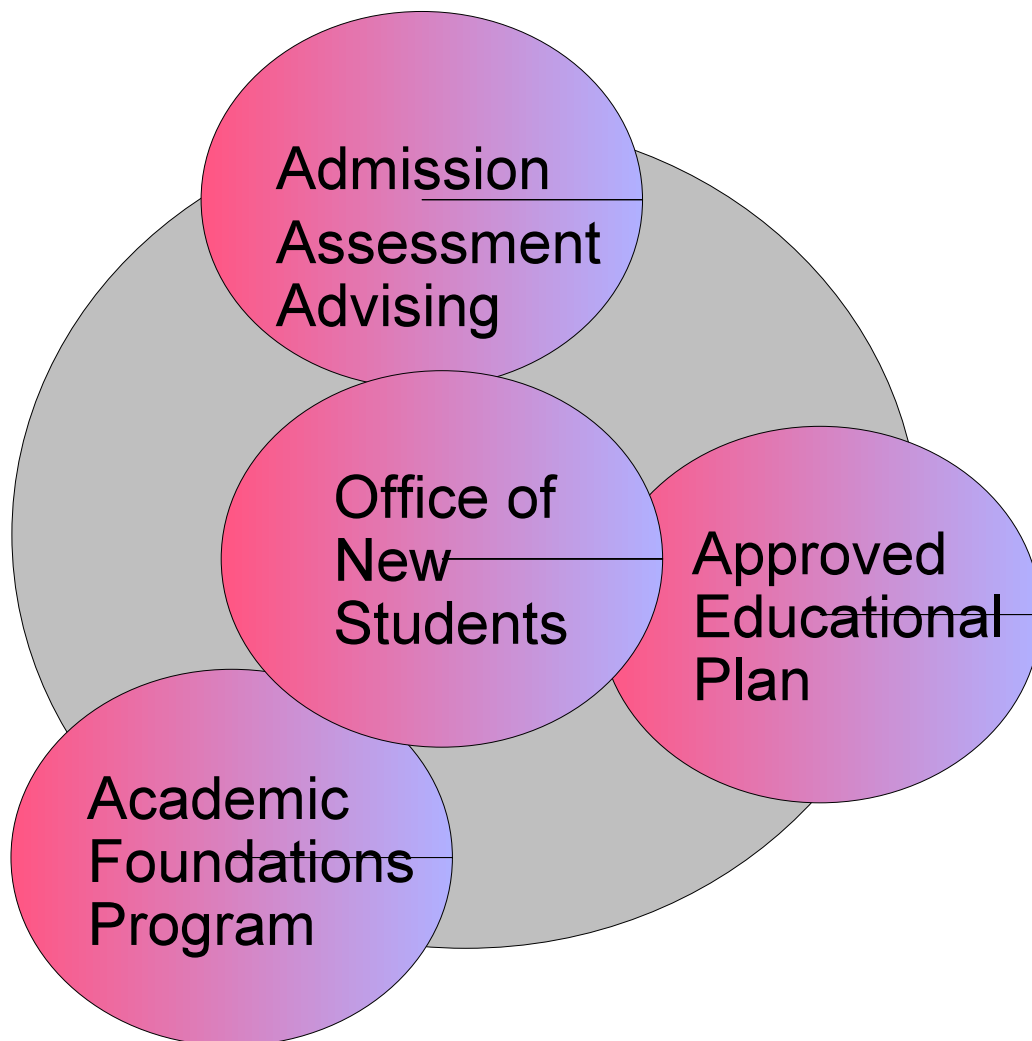
This has been part of a growing recognition of the following:

- The diversity of the student population is increasing – both qualitatively and quantitatively – reducing the currency of previous expectations about what experiences and heritages the student body has in common. (Coaldrake, 2001).
- Secondary schools have increasingly assumed a more social and vocational function in the maturation of students at the expense of academics, leading to a de-skilling of the basic academic skills with which students graduate to post-secondary institutions, especially at the community college level. (Willms & Flanagan, 2003).
- The traditional architecture and delivery systems of post-secondary education are becoming less relevant for a generation that values opportunities for active learning with more involvement in selecting sources of content. (Leigh Smith & McCann, 2001)
- As students assume a larger burden of the cost of their education they seek to re-coup

their investment via enhanced employment opportunities as an outcome of a college education. (Malatest et al. 2003)

- Without additional institutional effort, the gap between the study time and homework that is expected by faculty and the actual time-on-task expended by many new students will grow and have a deleterious effect on student success (Young, 2002).

In response, many institutions have sought to identify the intended outcomes of the first year experience for students to focus attention on ways in which that experience could be developed and strengthened. These key outcomes are summarized in Chart 1.



To enhance the foundation experience offered to students, many institutions have developed programs or strategies that seek to integrate, extend and fortify what is currently available. Some significant examples of these programs or strategies are:

**Vanier College, Quebec** [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/academics/explorations.html](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/academics/explorations.html)

A series of transitions programs generically called *Explorations* is offered specifically for students who have not yet satisfied the requirements for entry into regular diploma programs at the college. These are designed to assist different groups of students in the transition to college-level work:

*Explorations 1: General Studies Semester*

*Explorations 2: Qualifying Semester*

*Explorations 3: Access to Technologies or Science*

*Explorations 4: Access semester for Mature Students*

*Explorations 5: Pathways to Science*

**University of British Columbia, BC** <http://foundations.arts.ubc.ca/>

Arts Foundation is a comprehensive, integrated program for first year students in the Faculty of Arts. It provides exposure to a broad range of themes and experiences in the humanities and social sciences.

**Humber College, Ontario** [www.acaato.on.ca/new/swd/abstracts/harrison.pdf](http://www.acaato.on.ca/new/swd/abstracts/harrison.pdf)

As part of an institutional initiative to assess the needs of incoming students, the Freshman Integrated Tracking System (FITS) is a decision-system based on data provided by new students which indicates their need to connect to various student support services. The system produces a variety of reports about the self-appraised circumstances of new students.

**Alverno College, Wisconsin** [www.alverno.edu/about\\_alverno/ability\\_curriculum.html](http://www.alverno.edu/about_alverno/ability_curriculum.html)

Over several decades, student learning has been transformed around carefully defined and measured abilities. Alverno has developed an Ability-Based Curriculum for undergraduate studies, redefining education in terms of abilities needed for effectiveness in the worlds of work, family, and civic community. The distinctive feature of an ability-based approach is that the college makes explicit the expectation that students should be able to do something with what they know. The specific abilities identified by Alverno's faculty as central to its approach to liberal arts and professional education are:

*Communication*

*Analysis*

*Problem Solving*

*Valuing in Decision-Making*

*Social Interaction*

*Developing a Global Perspective*

*Effective Citizenship*

*Aesthetic Engagement*

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## Learning FIRST

**University of Central Florida** <http://aep.sdes.ucf.edu>

A comprehensive Academic Exploration Program exists to provide academic advising services and programs to new undergraduate students who have not declared or who are undecided about choosing a major, or who are considering changing majors. Services are offered by a dedicated office of First Year Transitions.

**Kwantlen University College** [www.kwantlen.ca/library/Services/FirstYearExperiencebasics.html](http://www.kwantlen.ca/library/Services/FirstYearExperiencebasics.html)

A Coordinator for the First Year Experience has been hired and initiatives are underway to develop and extend the First Year Experience for new students. For example, Library Basics is a series of library skills instruction tailored to new students and available on the Web.

Moreover, to support institutions in their enhancement of the foundation experience for students various organizations and agencies have flourished. Some examples of the largest are:

**National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience** [www.sc.edu/fye/](http://www.sc.edu/fye/)

The mission of this USA organization is to build and sustain a vibrant campus-based and international educational community committed to the success of first-year college students and all students in transition.

**Policy Center on the First Year of College** [www.brevard.edu/fyc](http://www.brevard.edu/fyc)

The Policy Center on the First Year of College has as its basic mission the improvement of the first college year through enhanced learning outcomes and the success of first-year students. A particular focus of the Policy Center is the development and dissemination of a range of first-year assessment procedures and tools that can be used to strengthen or confirm practices in the curriculum, the co-curriculum, and institutional policy.

**Learning Community Commons** <http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu>

The National Learning Communities project in the USA strives to strengthen curricular learning community efforts on individual campuses, as well as to foster more robust communities of learning community practice.

Tinto (2003) has emphasized the desired transformational characteristics of initiatives like these which seek to enhance the foundation experience for students and improve retention to second year:

*...retention programs should include initiatives that change the everyday academic experience of students, especially during the critical first year. This is especially urgent for commuter students since classrooms and laboratories are often the only places where commuters actively engage with faculty and students.*

*After more than a decade of research in this field, I am persuaded that the roots of successful student retention lie in better education during the first year ... unless students become keenly involved in higher learning from the first month, a considerable number of them will be reluctant to stay.*

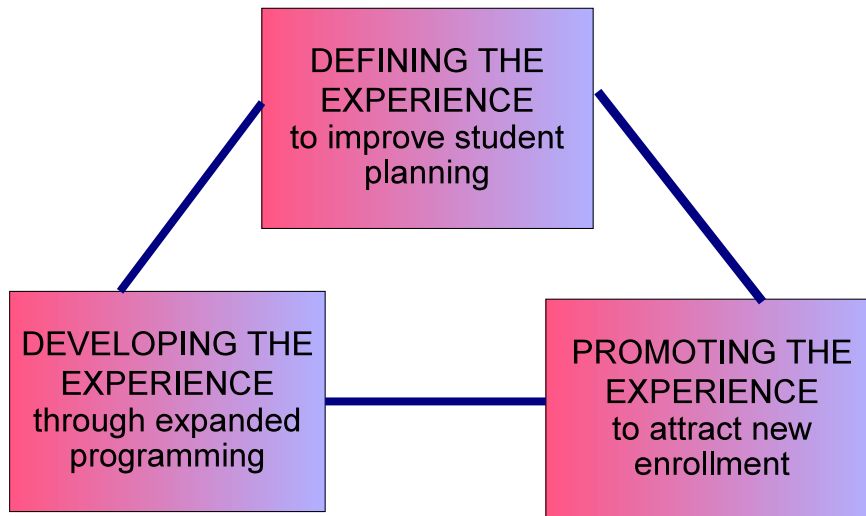
*Rather than merely tinkering at the margins of academic life, academic planners need to direct*

*their attention to a major reconstruction of the learning settings that mark campus life, especially during the foundational first year of college. The question they must ask is not what programs are needed to retain students, but how the learning settings of that year should be constructed so as to promote student education in that year and beyond.*

## ENHANCING OUR FOUNDATION EXPERIENCE

In response to the context which Douglas College faces, the following conceptual framework is suggested. It provides a research-grounded approach to accentuating the foundation experience at Douglas College based on three dimensions of action (see chart 2):

**Chart 2: Three Dimensions for Enhancing the Foundation Experience**



*Articulating a commitment to learning*

### 1. Improving Student Planning: Defining Our Foundation Experience

Douglas College should put more emphasis on helping students to choose courses wisely and to develop learning plans that can guide the building of foundational skills for academic success.

This can be achieved by examining ways:

- To develop an extended process of *orientating* new students to the expectations and opportunities of college.
- To develop a more coordinated and more comprehensive academic skills *assessment for new students*.
- To expand the process for *advising and guiding* new students with more involvement at the department level.

## **2.. Expanding the Menu: Developing Our Foundation Experience**

Douglas College should build upon existing offerings that provide a foundation experience for new students by considering what new strategies or programming could be developed, learning from best practices that have been successful at other post-secondary institutions, such as:

- Co-ordinated assessments
- Office for New Students
- Freshman tracking systems
- Learning communities
- Interdisciplinary programming
- Adjunct and supplemental learning
- Community service learning
- Faculty and student mentoring
- College foundations credential

## **3. Attracting Enrollment: Promoting Our Foundation Experience**

Douglas College can expect to face increasing competition, locally and further afield, for students. The college's new strategic academic plan and subsequent marketing plan should seek to position the college to handle increasing competition among other post-secondary institutions, particularly for new students in open enrollment areas. Within this competitive environment, Douglas College needs:

- To develop its competitive advantage for prospective students who seek or need a foundation experience in post-secondary education.

- To articulate the features of the programming at Douglas College which will ensure students encounter a first-rate foundational experience.
- To ensure that students who select to come to Douglas College as their institution of choice do receive the experience they are expecting.

*There's a college out there that's as unique as you are. At Alverno College our approach to learning stands miles apart from the crowd. You'll undergo an amazing transformation, becoming the person you always knew you could be.*

Alverno College advertisement

### **RE-CONSIDERING ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT**

Douglas College has recently implemented a change in its general admission policy which will require in fall 2004 all students to have demonstrated meeting a minimum language competency standard (or equivalent) or pursue skills upgrading to meet this standard. However, additional attention to the skills of incoming students may be necessary because:

- this standard only applies to language competency and does not address the other academic skills which students may need to possess to be successful.
- a variety of different language competency assessments are used across the college and some streamlining may be possible.
- access to skills assessment on-line is increasingly available at other institutions.

Enhanced skills assessment for new students may permit us to determine better who is at-risk of being academically unsuccessful and provide assistance earlier – or require students to address deficiencies and to make a sufficient commitment to their own learning.

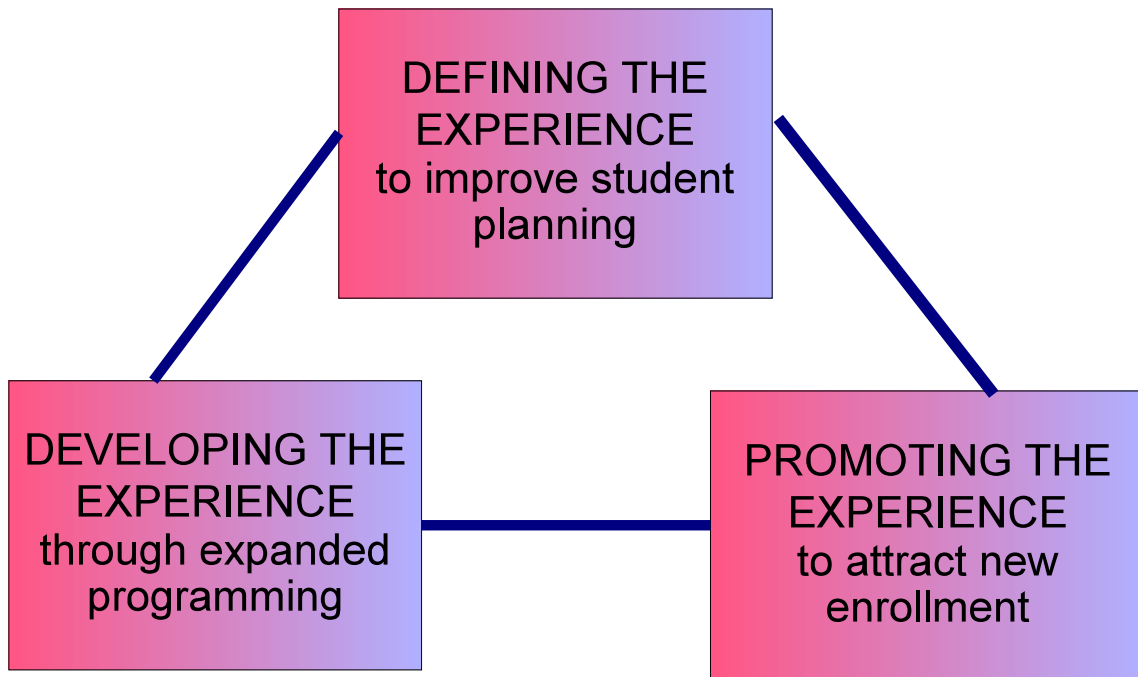
### **FEEDBACK**

Readers are encouraged to provide feedback to this document – and the direction outlined herein – to FEC/DEC members who can discuss the contents as part of the proposed college-wide dialogue on how to enhance the foundation experience for students at Douglas College as part of a new strategic academic plan.

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**Chart 2: Three Dimensions for Enhancing the Foundation Experience**



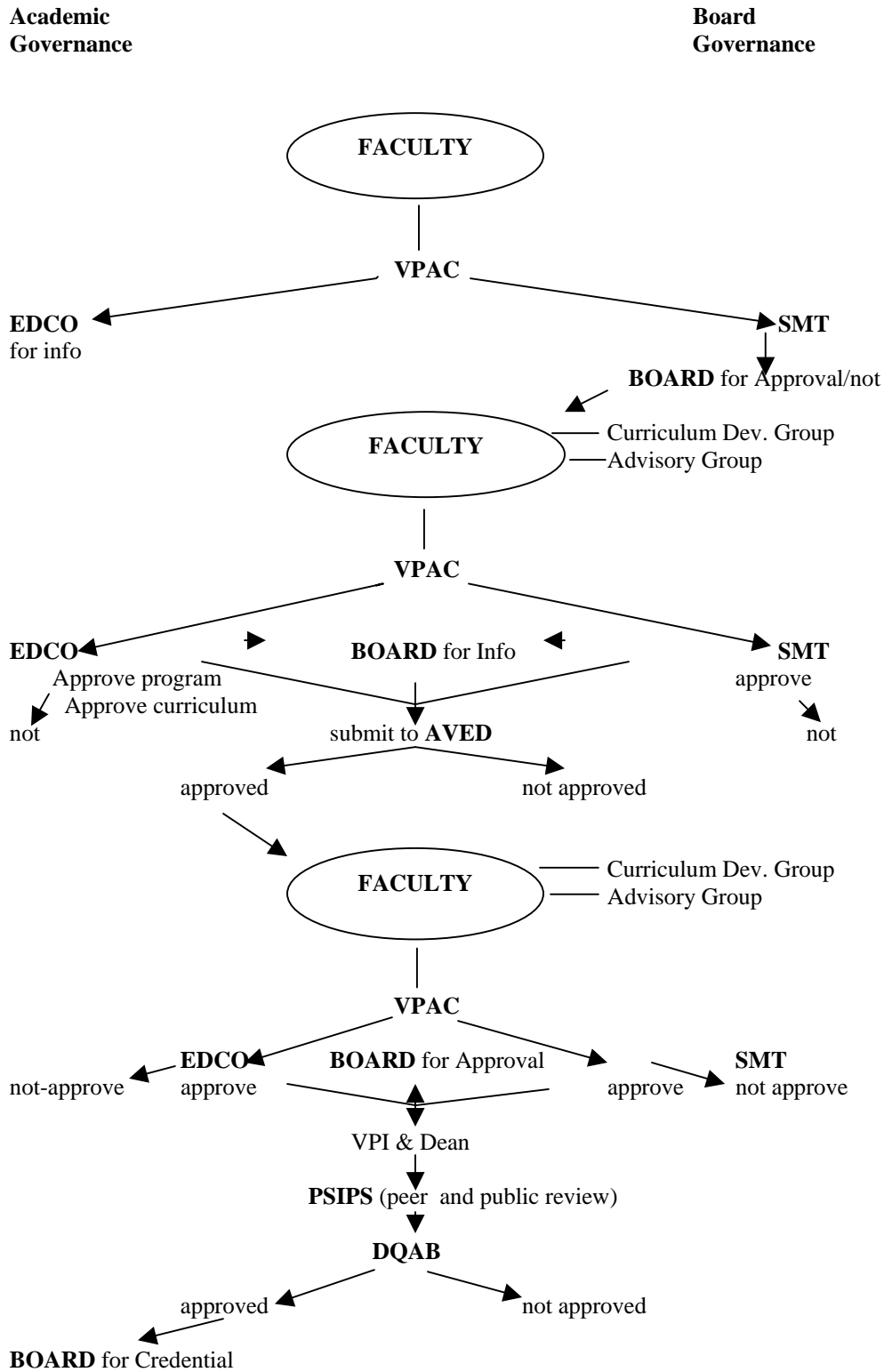
*Articulating a commitment to learning*

*Appendix E*

# **New Program Development Flow Charts**



# Degree Program Approval Process Within the Bicameral Governance System



**NOTE: PHASES II and III MAY BE COMBINED**

*Appendix F*

# **FTE Enrolment**

# Mutli Year Enrolment Plan, February 2005

## Douglas College FTE Enrolment

Enrolment grouped according the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) taxonomy for Ministry purposes.

Discipline and Credential	Actual FTEs	Projected FTEs						Growth
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
<b>Applied Sciences</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	351	321	321	321	321	321	321	-30
<b>Commerce and Administration</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	967	973	973	973	973	973	1003	
Undergraduate Degree				35	105	140	140	
Subtotal	967	973	973	1008	1078	1113	1143	176
<b>Developmental Programs</b>								
All levels ABE, ESL, ASE	938	938	962	987	987	1002	1049	111
<b>Education</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	125	130	130	130	130	130	130	5
<b>Health Sciences</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	905	935	935	935	935	935	935	
Undergraduate Degree			54	183	195	220	281	
Subtotal	905	935	989	1118	1130	1155	1216	311
<b>Fine/Performing Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	3113	3190	3205	3215	3292	3426	3535	
Undergraduate Degree			30	102	132	192	222	
Subtotal	3113	3190	3235	3317	3424	3618	3757	644
<b>Law</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	128	158	158	158	158	158	158	30
<b>Human Services (Including Social Work and Public Administration)</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	163	163	163	163	213	213	213	
Undergraduate Degree			12	30	60	102	132	
Subtotal	163	163	175	193	273	315	345	182
<b>Interdisciplinary and Others</b>								
Certificate, Diploma & Assoc Degree	180	180	186	198	210	210	210	
Undergraduate Degree				30	60	60	60	
Subtotal	180	180	186	228	270	270	270	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,870</b>	<b>6,988</b>	<b>7,129</b>	<b>7,460</b>	<b>7,771</b>	<b>8,082</b>	<b>8,389</b>	<b>1,519</b>