

**PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS**

Summary Strategic Plan

2010 – 2015

## **Table of contents**

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD AND PRESIDENT	4
PREFACE	5
MISSION AND VALUES	6
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS	7
STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT	8
STRATEGIC GOALS	10
1. Seamless learner pathways	10
2. Superior teaching quality	11
3. Internationalization	12
4. Experiential learning	13
5. Student and employee engagement	14
6. Social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and financial accountability	15



*“It is axiomatic that we seek excellence in education: no lesser goal is worth the effort. Nevertheless, excellence in education is rare. It is to be found when carefully nurtured and cultivated; in the absence of a good environment it is easily choked out by the weeds of mediocrity. Excellence cannot be legislated; it cannot be purchased; it cannot be proclaimed; and it cannot be assigned. It can be sought and encouraged and rewarded, and this is the task in planning for higher education in British Columbia to seek, encourage, and reward excellence.”*

John B. Macdonald, [Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future](#). (1962)



## Message from the Board and President

**The 2010-2015 Strategic Plan is a continuation of our mission to enhance the skills, knowledge, and values of a diverse community of life-long learners in a rapidly changing society.**

During the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010, hundreds of stakeholders contributed their ideas and energy to this new plan through working groups, open forums, websites, and surveys. We listened to our employees. We listened to our students and alumni. We listened to our community partners and international partners. We met with provincial government policymakers. We asked three basic questions: What are we doing well? What can we do better? And what new initiatives should we consider to better meet your needs in the future?

Throughout this process of consultation, a deep pride was always close to the surface. Over the past 40 years, we have created positive change in the world by helping thousands of people succeed through learning. Along the way, Douglas College has become an integral part of the communities we serve and an important contributor to the economic vitality of the Lower Mainland.

Also apparent was confidence in the strengths that put Douglas College at the forefront of post-secondary education in BC today: our innovative programs and services; our understanding of learners' evolving needs; our excellent faculty and support staff; and our flourishing community partnerships.

Everyone understands that in order to maintain our leadership position, we must respond quickly to dramatic and challenging demographic, social, and economic changes in the communities we serve.

Yet with the perspective gained from the strategic planning process, we see that adapting to a changing environment is nothing new for us. We have every reason to be optimistic that our experience and our strengths equip us to meet the needs of tomorrow's learners and to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

This new Strategic Plan articulates the priority goals that will allow Douglas College to achieve its vision of becoming **the largest and most progressive baccalaureate degree-granting college in British Columbia**. These goals will be reflected in all levels of planning.

This Plan is dynamic and will be refreshed annually to keep it relevant. It is critical that we maintain communication and continue the dialogue. We look forward to everyone's continued active collaboration in the strategic planning process.

Scott McAlpine, President

Paul Wates, Board Chair

## Preface

Located in the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people, Douglas College was established 40 years ago to meet a particular set of societal needs, including increased access to post-secondary education. The College has succeeded wonderfully in meeting those needs. However, the external environment and society's needs have not remained static. In this new Strategic Plan, we honour our past while preparing to meet the changing needs of our students in the context of social, cultural, and economic change.

Participants in our strategic planning process – employees, students, community stakeholders and our international partners – expressed high esteem for Douglas College and high ambitions for its future within the BC College system.

Accordingly, our vision is bold: **Douglas College will be the largest and most progressive baccalaureate degree-granting college in British Columbia.**

From many constructive ideas and suggestions, a strong consensus emerged that in order to achieve this vision, Douglas College must be a leader in the BC post-secondary education and training system in the following areas:

- **Learner pathways**
- **Teaching quality**
- **Internationalization**
- **Experiential learning**
- **Student and employee engagement**
- **Social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and financial accountability**

Our achievements in these areas will be consistent with our Mission and Values.

In the following pages we outline the goals and strategies that will guide us through the next five years to achieve this vision.



# Mission and Values

## Mission Statement

At Douglas College, we commit to enhancing the skills, knowledge, and values of life-long learners in meeting their goals.

At Douglas College, we respond to diverse community needs in a rapidly changing society.

*(Mission Statement as adopted by the Douglas College Board, 1994)*

## Douglas College Values

These guiding principles shape the Douglas College learning community and govern our decision-making.

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We believe:

- that students are our primary focus.
- in fostering a dynamic, accessible and supportive teaching and learning environment that prizes excellence and innovation. We value creative and critical thinking and the will to challenge and be challenged.
- in honouring the contribution and worth of all individuals. We welcome diversity with its rich complexity and believe that all voices need to be heard.
- that it is our duty to be thoughtful and caring stewards of the personal, physical and fiscal resources entrusted to us. We practice social, environmental and community responsibility.
- that intellectual growth and exploration inspire well-rounded, responsible and contributing citizens. We invite everyone into the excitement and curiosity of learning.
- in the power of dreams and in the power of education to make them come true.

*(Values as adopted by the Douglas College Board, 2001)*

## Strategic Planning Process

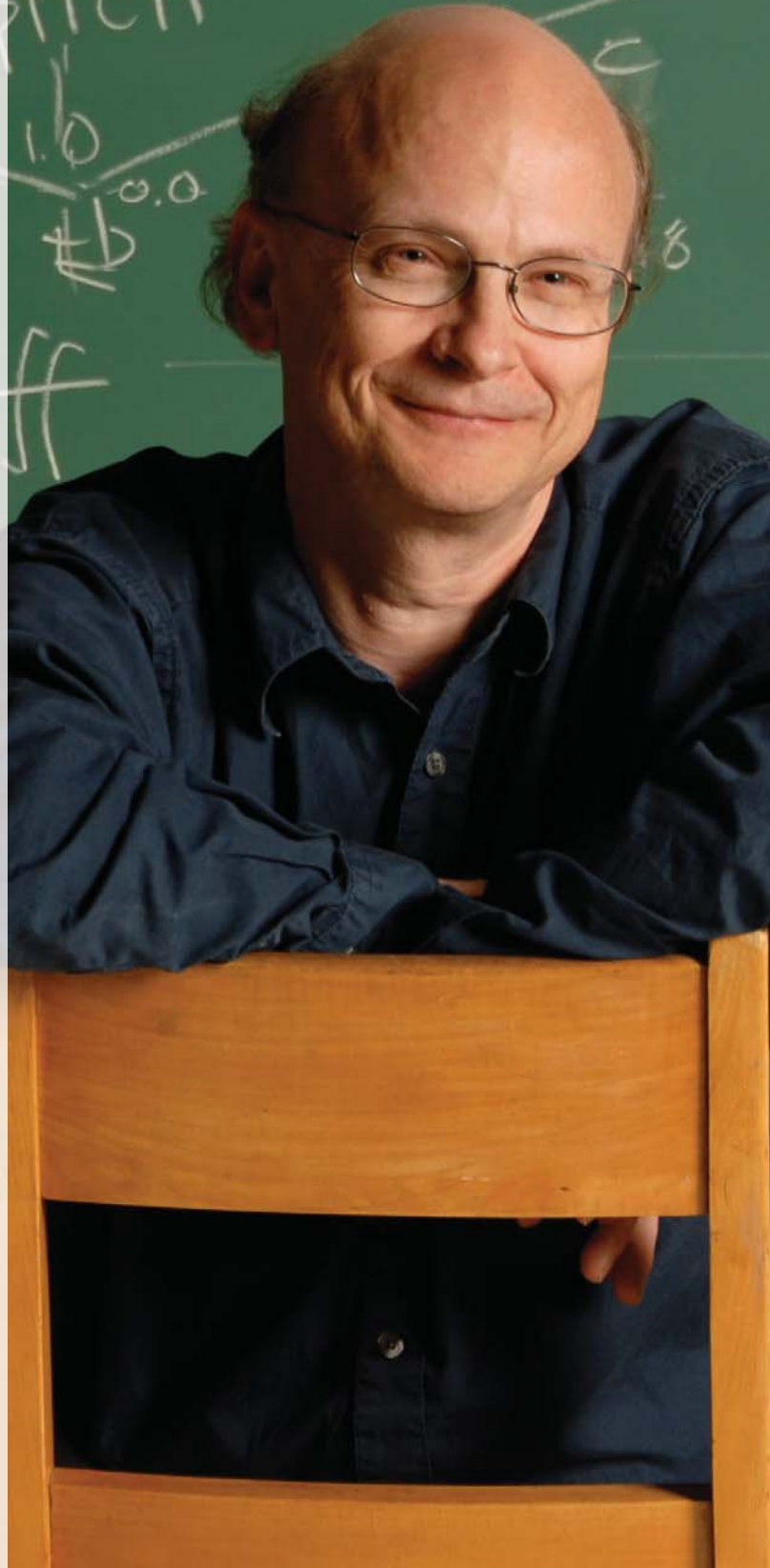
Through the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010, President Scott McAlpine, with support from a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, engaged in a thorough consultation process that involved:

- an employee survey that received 150 responses
- 14 employee discussion groups covering seven thematic questions
- three breakfast forums welcoming over 60 community partners
- a student survey that received 250 responses
- a student forum
- a Douglas College Board retreat
- a forum for Deans and Directors
- meetings with the College's Senior Management Team, Vice-President's Academic Council, and Education Council
- feedback from the Douglas College Foundation Board
- three employee "town-hall" forums on the draft Strategic Plan
- Education Council (EDCO) feedback

In addition, the President sought input from individual community stakeholders (MPs, MLAs, mayors, community leaders) and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, as well as our international partners.

To ensure an open, accessible, and transparent process, data and contextual material were posted online, with regular updates posted on the President's blog, which encouraged comments and discussion. Over 2,500 visits to the blog were recorded from January to April 2010.

There is strong consensus that Douglas College is, and should continue to be, recognized for our educational and training quality, our learner pathways, our community engagement, and our commitment to making a difference not only in the lives of our students but, increasingly, on a global scale. This input has been invaluable in formulating the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.



## Strategic Planning Context

**Douglas College needs to address dramatic changes in the post-secondary environment as well as the economy and society of British Columbia. Some key contextual factors are:**

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- BC's population will grow substantially over the next 25 years and the region served by Douglas will be the fastest growing in BC.
- Population growth will largely rely on immigration; we must respond to the needs of an ever-more-diverse population.
- BC's population is aging.
- At constant participation rates, there will be less demand overall for post-secondary seats in BC among traditional post-secondary participants (age 18-29) as this population is at, or near, its projected peak.
- Competition for younger students will heat up as their numbers decrease, and the increasing physical and virtual mobility of those students means that institutions' physical proximity will be less important to them.
- Over the past several years, Douglas has experienced significant growth in its flexible, shorter-term Continuing Education and Training Group offerings and there is potential for more growth as we continue to attract second-career and third-age (post-retirement) learners, many of whom seek professional skill options to supplement prior learning.
- The number of non-degree credentials (e.g., diplomas, associate degrees, citations) granted by Lower Mainland colleges and special purpose (non-research) universities is falling while the demand for degree credentials is growing substantially.

For Douglas College to be the largest baccalaureate degree-granting college in BC – as the demographics suggest we should be – we will need to respond to these challenges in much the same way as we responded to the challenges of accessibility to post-secondary education when we were formed 40 years ago. We must provide high-quality education and training to the people of BC, not only as a competitive strategy, but also because it is required to transform BC into a 'knowledge-based' economy and society.

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# STRATEGIC GOALS

## 1. Seamless learner pathways

Douglas College will be recognized for providing seamless learner pathways.

### Challenge

'Learner pathway' describes the route taken by an individual to achieve educational objectives. We need the pathways into, within, and beyond Douglas to be as good as the already excellent transition from high schools to post-secondary institutions - including Douglas.

Students need to gain entrance into Douglas without needing to repeat learning and they need access that is free of unnecessary barriers. This applies to students who need upgrading in order to meet competencies, as well as to students arriving with credentials and courses from other institutions; we must recognize that Douglas is a receiving institution. Within Douglas, students must be able to progress and ladder seamlessly. For example, from a certificate, students need the ability to ladder to a diploma, then to a degree. And we must improve transferability of our courses to other post-secondary institutions so that there is no loss of credit. Improving our pathways means adapting our curriculum, courses, programs and delivery times and means to meet students' needs - including 2nd-career and 3rd-age learners. This includes, where appropriate, internet and/or hybrid delivery.

### Core strategies

Douglas College will develop superior learner pathways and support students to make transitions as follows:

- Within the institution (between courses, programs, and credentials), minimizing loss of credit
- External to the College through seamless transfer of courses and credit to institutions in BC and beyond
- Into Douglas from other domestic and international institutions
- Douglas College will, within its ability, guarantee transfer of University Transfer courses to destination institutions
- Establishing a student placement office to assist graduating students in their job and career search



## 2. Superior teaching quality

Douglas College will be recognized for superior teaching quality.

### Challenge

The College's mandate is to be a teaching institution, and we know that classroom teaching (conventional or virtual) matters deeply to students.

For these reasons, the College will support ongoing professional development of our faculty in instructional methods and pedagogies that are appropriate to an increasingly diverse student body, and to the evolving modes of delivery.

The College will also support the ongoing professional development of instructors as excellent practitioners and as active contributors to their disciplines, recognizing that in order to be engaging in the classroom, instructors must also be engaged with their subject matter.

As a goal, superior teaching quality means supporting curriculum as well as pedagogy. Curriculum must be contemporary and second to none in its currency and quality.

### Core strategies

**Douglas will ensure excellence in program and course delivery by:**

- Conducting regular program reviews
- Evaluating all instruction and courses
- Enhancing employee professional development in pedagogy
- Enhancing faculty and student engagement in innovation and knowledge development
- Enhancing recognition of teaching excellence as well as of scholarly and professional achievements

**The College will respond to learner and labour market demand through:**

- Developing new programs/courses/pathways: bachelor's degrees, post-degree credentials, diplomas, certificates
- Developing new upgrading curriculum for professionals in the workforce
- Expanding shorter-term offerings through Continuing Education and The Training Group

**Douglas College will continue to adopt learning technologies, including:**

- Developing programs and/or pathways for online or hybrid delivery
- Enhancing employee professional development in technology use

### 3. Internationalization

Douglas College will be recognized for leadership in internationalization.

#### Challenge

Population growth in the Lower Mainland will dominantly be from international immigration. At the same time, it is important for Douglas College to educate students to face the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

For these reasons, internationalization is a key theme of our Strategic Plan.

The College has a strong tradition on which to build. We welcome a large number of international students annually; we have strong international partnerships; and we offer an increasing range of international experiences for students and faculty.

Moving forward, we will enrich our teaching, research, and services with international and intercultural dimensions.

As a goal, internationalization involves making international experiences available to all – students and employees alike – through courses, professional development, joint teaching arrangements, and exchanges. It also involves full participation and inclusion of all peoples through a welcoming and supportive environment, an appreciation of and respect for difference, and a willingness to include alternative perspectives and ways of knowing across the curriculum.

#### Core strategies

**Douglas will further internationalize its presence through:**

- Increasing the number of off-shore international students studying at Douglas
- Increasing the number of co-teaching arrangements with off-shore institutions
- Expanding international partnerships
- Ensuring off-shore field school/study abroad experiences are available to all students
- Increasing cross-cultural professional development and research opportunities for employees
- Piloting courses where the primary language of instruction is other than English

**Douglas will expand services to new Canadians through:**

- Developing pathways to help new Canadians who have prior learning access College credit programs
- Expanding community outreach collaborations





## 4. Experiential learning

Douglas College will be a leader in experiential learning.

### Challenge

Douglas College is a teaching institution with strong linkages to the community. These linkages result in practical learning opportunities at the local level, such as co-op programs, practicum placements, and service learning.

As well, experiential opportunities are increasingly being made available in international education through field schools.

These opportunities, combined with our hands-on approaches to learning that are provided by laboratory experiences, practical and case-learning activities, as well as research projects and extra-curricular campus life activities, position Douglas as a leader in experiential learning.

To achieve this goal, we need to make experiential learning opportunities available to all students.

### Core strategies

**Douglas College will expand experiential learning opportunities through:**

- Enhancing linkages with professional associations and accreditation bodies
- Expanding co-op programming and job placements
- Integrating “service learning” and research in more areas
- Developing applied and contract research capacity where students are engaged in the process



## 5. Student and employee engagement

Douglas College will be recognized for providing excellent employee and student engagement opportunities.

### Challenge

Douglas College is about people. In order to meet the education and training needs of students, we rely on our employees to commit to the vision, mission, and values of the institution.

Educational excellence depends on teaching as well as all the other services we offer to students, such as advising, athletics, orientation, and graduation. As the ethic of service excellence permeates all areas, it becomes a source of competitive advantage. And, increasingly, excellent service is a basic expectation of learners and community members.

Part of our commitment to service excellence involves creating an attractive workplace culture that helps us attract and retain great employees.

As a goal, engagement is about participating in College life, and involving everyone in developing a culture conducive to learning, service, and professional excellence.

### Core strategies

#### The College will model respectful and professional behaviour through:

- Establishing a code of conduct for employees and contractors
- Offering workshops on anti-bullying and harassment, and cross-cultural communication and internationalization, to all employees

#### The College will deliver excellent services through:

- Implementing regular service reviews, and employee performance reviews, with the goal of continuous improvement
- Continuing to implement the *Students First!* Plan
- Enhancing employee professional development in customer service
- Upgrading student gathering and work spaces

#### The College will provide superior opportunities for students to engage in achieving their academic, professional, and personal goals through:

- Expanding relationships with the Douglas Students' Union
- Establishing a community speakers series
- Developing a Douglas College Press and a Journal to feature student and faculty research and scholarly activity

## 6. Social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and financial accountability

Douglas College will be socially responsible, a respected environmental steward and financially accountable.

### Challenge

The College's socially responsible values include fostering an accessible learning environment for people of differing levels of ability – including underserved populations – and honoring the contribution and worth of all individuals. Our values are also reflected in our hiring practices and through service learning.

As the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development works toward the development of an Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Policy Framework, Douglas needs to align its plans for addressing education, skills, and training gaps.

Our values also include a duty to be thoughtful and caring stewards of the personal, physical, and fiscal resources entrusted to us.

As a goal, there is a clear expectation that the College must take a leadership role in social, environmental, and community responsibility. This includes being mindful of and seeking ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

### Core strategies

#### Douglas will expand offerings for under served groups including:

- Aboriginal learners
- “2nd-career”, “3rd-age” (post-retirement), and part-time learners
- Persons in under-served parts of the Douglas region

#### Douglas will model best practices in hiring decisions through:

- Adopting principles of employment equity
- Developing a Strategic Employee Recruitment plan

#### The College will demonstrate environmental stewardship through:

- Continuing to advocate for construction of the Evergreen Line to Coquitlam
- Expanding environmental programs and courses, and research and scholarly activity
- Adopting LEED gold or better standards for new facility construction

#### Douglas will ensure its commitment to financial accountability through:

- Producing financial forecasts for new course, program, and service plans; monitoring existing program and services costs; and finding efficiencies where possible
- Continually seeking ways to diversify revenue sources
- Developing a risk register and risk mitigation strategies

## Douglas College is named after Sir James Douglas

Born in Guyana in 1803, the son of a free Creole woman and a Scottish plantation owner, James Douglas was a motivated self starter who placed a high value on education. Overcoming many obstacles, he worked his way up in the Hudson's Bay Company and married Amelia Connolly, a Cree-Irish woman who became his life-long partner. At the height of his career, James Douglas moved into politics, becoming the first Governor of British Columbia. Today he is considered one of the province's founding fathers. Douglas College is proud to bear his name.

### More information

Strategic Planning website: [www.douglascollege.ca/strategic-planning](http://www.douglascollege.ca/strategic-planning)

- Complete operational version of the Strategic Plan
- Full Environmental Scan
- Summaries of input from employees, students and community partners
- Information about the planning process
- Related background information



#### CAMPUS LOCATIONS

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##### New Westminster Campus

700 Royal Avenue  
New Westminster, BC  
Canada V3M 5Z5

##### David Lam Campus

1250 Pinetree Way  
Coquitlam, BC  
Canada V3B 7X3

#### MAILING ADDRESS

Douglas College  
PO Box 2503  
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#### MAIN SWITCHBOARD

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