

DOUGLAS COLLEGE

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY DISCUSSION PAPER

FEBRUARY 25, 2008

REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

The Vice President's Academic Council welcomes your comments on this discussion paper. Please consider the general direction of the discussion and provide feedback on the following five questions:

1. Are the proposed scholarly activity goals and initiatives appropriate?
2. Are additional goals and initiatives required?
3. Can you identify any clear priorities among the goals and initiatives?
4. Prior feedback states that faculty require time away from their teaching in order to engage in research and scholarly activity. Do you have any practical recommendations on how this change could be accomplished?
5. Do you have any other comments or feedback?

BACKGROUND

Both the College Strategic Plan, approved by the Board in 2007, and the Education Division Strategic Plan (2005-2008) call for the expansion of scholarly activity in the College and the development of a Scholarly Activity Strategic Plan during the 2007-2008 academic year. This plan will be incorporated in the College Academic Plan (2009-2012) and the Education Division Tactical Plan (2009-2012). It will build on input from the College community and on the activities, experience, successes, and resources already invested in this important aspect of ensuring excellent education.

The proposed goals and initiatives in this discussion paper have been developed through a review of research and scholarly activity at Douglas College, a review of the strategies and structures to support research and scholarly activity at other post-secondary institutions, and a review of Faculties' needs and potential directions as discussed by the Vice President's Academic Council (VPAC).

These goals and initiatives serve as a starting point for discussion. Your feedback will help inform further planning.

CURRENT POLICY

In 2005, the College approved the **Scholarly Activity Policy** that defines scholarly activity in the College and indicates that the College will *"promote and sustain scholarly activity that is consistent with the mission and strategic objectives of the College and linked to the discipline in which a faculty member is teaching."*

It further states:

Douglas College will support scholarly activity that is congruent with the Douglas College Research Ethics Policy, enhances the quality and reputation of its educational programs, and furthers the educational experiences of students by:

- 1. creating a scholarly environment that supports high quality programs and services;*
- 2. meeting the scholarly requirements for accreditation of programs;*
- 3. enabling faculty to participate actively in their scholarly communities;*
- 4. disseminating research knowledge to students, professional groups and the public;*
- 5. providing opportunities for student involvement in research and for students to evaluate research claims;*
- 6. Promoting scholarly activity associated with improving teaching and learning through the use of a peer review system to adjudicate and recommend allocation of earmarked College scholarly activity funds to scholarly activities that meet the funding criteria.*

Definition

Scholarly activity refers to the application of systematic approaches to the development of knowledge through intellectual inquiry and scholarly communication. It includes research, the dissemination of knowledge through such means as publications and presentations, and the application of new knowledge in professional practice and student learning. Scholarly activity also includes creative activities designed to further artistic endeavour.

Forms of Scholarly Activity

Scholarly activity can involve a variety of different activities some of which may fall outside the role and function of the College. Douglas College recognizes scholarly activities such as the following:

- a. conducting or participating in research studies;*
- b. obtaining additional educational or professional qualifications;*
- c. writing, translating, and publishing, especially in peer-refereed journals;*
- d. developing educational materials with wide application, including textbooks and online learning objects;*
- e. developing and presenting papers at scholarly and/or scientific conferences;*
- f. preparing scholarly documents to support program accreditation;*
- g. developing new educational programs or services;*
- h. developing non-traditional learning experiences for students based on a review of the literature and consultation with experts;*
- i. assisting students to develop papers for peer-referenced journals;*
- j. organizing and presenting at professional development activities, such as conferences and workshops;*

- k. *providing expertise as consultants to others, such as local businesses, government agencies, and community groups;*
- l. *producing original artistic creations for publication or presentation;*
- m. *synthesizing, interpreting and disseminating new knowledge to others, such as policy makers, decision-makers and the public.*

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Research and scholarly activity is now recognized as an on-going activity within the College. Some faculty have been involved in research-related activity for many years, but with limited formal recognition or support from the College. Many have received support from the College in the form of Faculty/Department-based in-kind support, professional development time and funding, or Education Leave to engage in significant research/scholarly activity.

As a result of the College's increased mandate to offer a broader range of credentials, and the requirement for faculty to be engaged in research and scholarship, the College has increased its focus on and support for scholarly activity through policy development and the introduction of the Scholarly Activity Fund. Since 2005 the College has achieved the following:

- Increased commitment to the Scholarly Activity Fund – to date 80 projects have been supported with \$150,000 in funding
- Established a College publication, *Concourse*, devoted to scholarly activity
- Established the half-time Scholarly Activity Coordinator position
- Committed to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through major Douglas Development activities, including the College being designated as one of the lead institutions in the Carnegie Academy on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning(CASTL) Institutional Leadership Theme Group (Liberal Education: Cross-Cutting Themes in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning)
- Initiated a Credential Completion Fund
- Introduced the concept of a Visiting Scholar position
- Created a Scholarly Commons space in the new David Lam campus expansion
- Included scholarly activity within Education Division and Faculty/Department Tactical Plans
- Committed to establish three new Centres of Excellence to support interdisciplinary community involvement and research: Centre for Health and Community Partnerships, Centre for Environmental Sustainability (incorporating the existing Institute of Urban Ecology), and Centre for International and Intercultural Study
- Developed research/scholarly activity links with other colleges, university colleges, universities, health agencies, and community agencies
- Planned a May 2008 national symposium focusing on community-based research

EXPANSION OF SUPPORT

The next steps in the expansion of support for scholarly activity at Douglas College may involve the following proposed goals and initiatives.

Proposed Goals

1. Enhance funding and establish supportive structures and processes
2. Develop a vibrant disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and scholarly activity culture
3. Increase internal and external communication and networking about research and scholarly activity
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of changes

Proposed Initiatives (2008-2011)

1. Enhance funding and establish supportive structures and processes

- Develop and implement a process and procedure to award sectional-equivalent releases for faculty engaging in research/scholarly activity
- Ensure that faculty receiving major external research grants are given priority for being awarded sectional releases to conduct the research
- Explore the potential to designate some scholarly activity funding to Faculties
- Seek external funding to support Researchers-in-Residence and/or Visiting Scholars
- Increase the Scholarly Activity Coordinator position time assignment to support increased activities
- Increase funding for Credential Completion
- Promote mechanisms to support faculty enrolled in doctoral studies
- Increase College support for faculty involvement in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and for the College to maintain its role as a leading institute in CASTL
- Continue the annual Celebration of Teaching and Learning event and explore the introduction of awards for outstanding achievements in research/scholarly activity
- Support PD activities to maintain and enhance the research skills of faculty
- Develop and approve policies on the development of Centres and Institutes, Visiting Scholars, and Researchers-in-Residence
- Develop a system of Research Mentors throughout the College, including the involvement of Faculty Emeriti
- Establish a College Centre for Research and Scholarly Activity after a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of R+SA initiatives and as capacity for research grows
- Provide a full range of support for faculty in accessing grants and grant management
- Meet the eligibility requirements for research grants from Tri-Council agencies: NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada), SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada), and CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research)
 - Develop and approve required policies

- Develop expectations for faculty to engage in research and provide the necessary support
- Provide basic facilities to conduct and support research
- Absorb the indirect costs of research supported by grants

2. Develop a vibrant disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and scholarly activity culture

- Establish Scholarly Commons areas on the New Westminster and David Lam
- Develop Faculty-based structures with consistent Divisional Terms of Reference
- Enhance student engagement in research and scholarly activities (for example, student research fairs, student/faculty research projects and publications, directed studies courses)
- Host annual academic conferences
- Promote collaborations within and outside the College
- Increase College support for faculty involvement in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the College's leadership role within CASTL
- Identify other appropriate activities through consultation with the College community

3. Increase internal and external communication and networking about research and scholarly activities

- Support two publications of *Concourse* in the academic year
- Introduce an in-house peer-reviewed journal to augment *Concourse*
- Develop and maintain a College website on research /scholarly activity
- Produce and disseminate a professional annual report
- Strengthen linkages with other post-secondary institutions, community agencies and other geographic and sectoral groups, and granting bodies
- Identify other appropriate activities through consultation with the College community

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of changes based on these initiatives and make further plans

- Develop criteria and evaluate annually for the first two years
- In 2011, conduct a full review of the growth of research and scholarly activity since 2005 and propose mechanisms to ensure the College's ability to continue to build capacity and to attract substantial research grants

Please provide feedback to Joy Holmwood, Special Projects Officer, Office of the Vice President Education (holmwoodj@douglas.bc.c).