

# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025 DOUGLAS COLLEGE**

# INTRODUCTION

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How do you build on an incredibly successful strategic plan? Do you reinvent the wheel or tweak, tune and adjust? Or something in between?

In the final year of the institution's 2015-2020 strategic plan, Douglas College began by asking the community a simple question: Are we on track? The answer, uncovered through a series of college-wide surveys was a resounding yes. The College community broadly supported the direction the institution was heading. But it was also clear that the institution needed more. Having completed 97% of the initiatives in the previous plan, the community was eager to go further and make Douglas even better.

Guided by this early feedback, the College initiated a series of town-hall style forums to give Douglas an even greater sense of

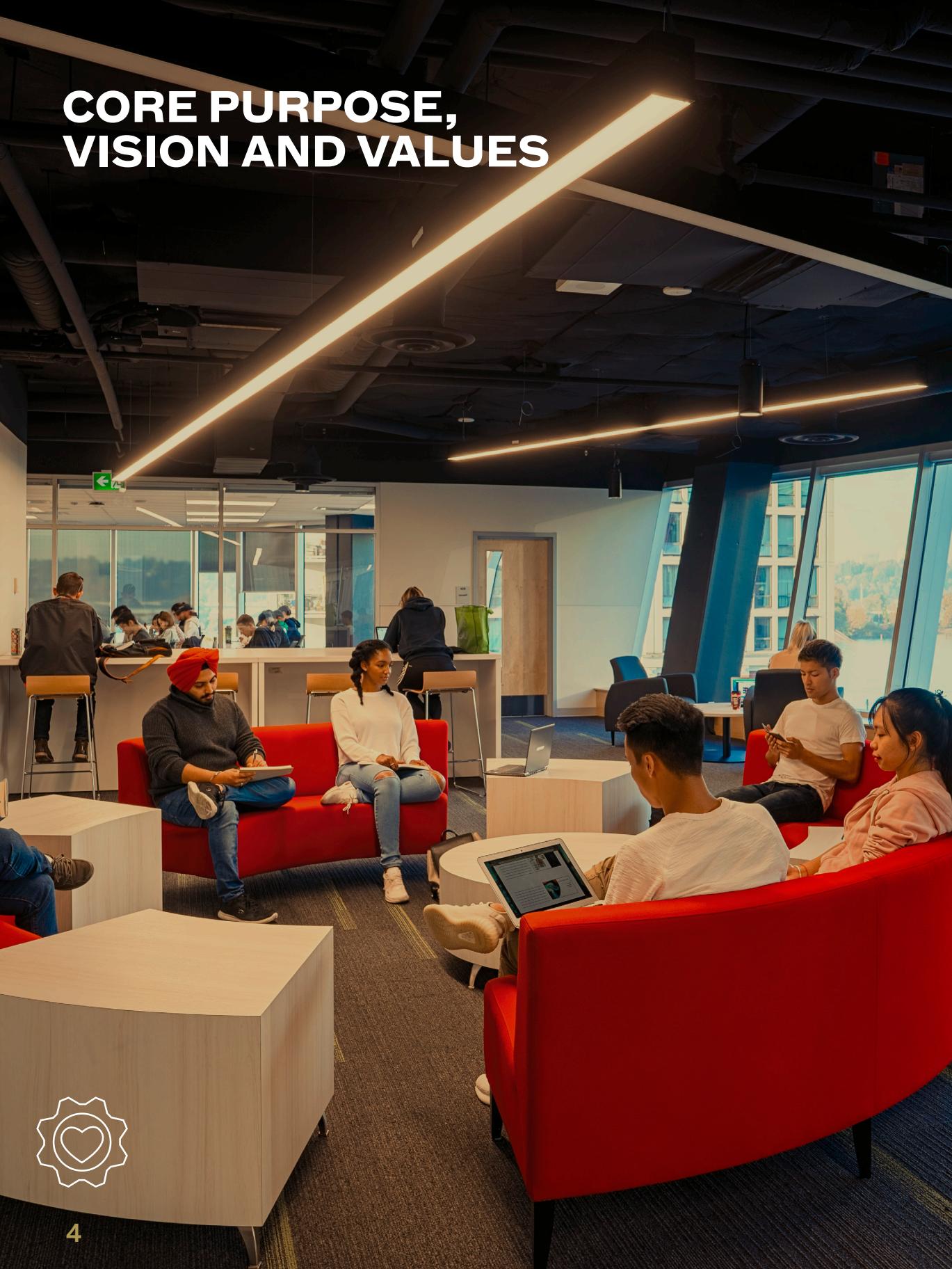
purpose and to push us to become the best we can be. That information was synthesized and distilled, then brought back to the community for further feedback. Through these sessions, it became clear that Douglas has a deeply inspiring core purpose, but the vision as laid out in the previous plan had been substantially accomplished. In today's fast-changing world, Douglas needed to have a more aspirational vision, with clearly articulated values, to reflect the Douglas ethos and help guide our work. Finally, we needed new objectives to keep us moving toward our goals, with defined initiatives to get us there.

This document will walk us through the new plan and showcase the key initiatives we plan to undertake to help us achieve our objectives and reach our goals for 2020-2025.

## ABOUT DOUGLAS

Founded in 1970, Douglas is the largest degree-granting college in BC, educating some 17,000 credit students (including 4,500 international students) and 8,000 non-credit students every year. Students can choose from 12 four-year degree programs, dozens of two-year career programs and hundreds of academic courses that transfer to universities across the country. Over 950 experienced, teaching-focused faculty bring both academic rigour and real-world experience to the classroom. Another 850 staff and administrators work together to create an inspiring, supportive and respectful environment. The College's unique combination of an applied and academic focus is reflected in the motto, "Do what you love. Be good at it."

# CORE PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES



Every strategic plan begins by posing three broad questions to define an institution and to envision its future state: What does it do? Where it is heading? And how will it conduct itself to get there? The answers help to inform the institution's core purpose, vision, and values, respectively.



## CORE PURPOSE

The beating heart of every institution is its core purpose. This is what we DO. Feedback from the community tells us that Douglas College's core purpose is clear and powerful. It remains unchanged from the 2015-2020 plan:

**WE INSPIRE OUR STUDENTS TO DO WHAT THEY LOVE AND BE GOOD AT IT, PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES THAT CHALLENGE AND ENLIGHTEN, AND OPEN DOORS TO LIVES OF PASSION AND PURPOSE.**





# VISION

Our vision is where we are going and how we know when we get there. From community feedback, the College's previous vision of combining the best aspects of an applied and academic experience continued to hold strong appeal. But it was also seen as a statement of what we have already achieved rather than as an aspirational goal for the future.

It was clear that there was a strong desire for a more compelling vision statement that reflected not just where the college was today, but the kind of institution we wanted to become, and the kind of student we wanted to graduate.

Feedback from surveys and town hall meetings suggested that Douglas's vision needed to reflect both the individual transformative benefits of an education, as well as touch on the societal benefits of a better educated population. After much reflection and discussion, a vision was crafted:

**TO GRADUATE RESILIENT GLOBAL CITIZENS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ADAPT, INNOVATE AND LEAD IN A CHANGING WORLD.**

This vision may lack the grandiose phraseology that finds its way into many strategic plans, which often claim to be the most of one thing, the absolute best at another thing or the world leader in something else, but it is very Douglas. It is true to who we are. It focuses on our students. And it looks toward an attainable, hopeful future. As one town hall participant noted: "Isn't this the kind of citizen – the kind of people – the world needs right now?"



# VALUES

While a vision directs an institution toward a future state, values are what define it. Sometimes overlooked, values play a key role in organizational culture. Values communicate what type of institution we are and how we work. As times and institutions change, it is important to update and reflect upon an institution's values. Last updated in 2010, feedback from the College indicated that it was time to renew ours.

Through a college-wide survey and town-hall forums, we were able to distill our values into five core areas:



## Honesty and Integrity

We do the right thing. We treat each other with fairness and respect, and we model ethical behaviour in our academic, interpersonal and administrative practices.



## Innovation and Creativity

We challenge ourselves. We strive for excellence in our academic programs, our teaching, our student and employee services, and our administration.



## Diversity and Inclusion

We embrace uniqueness. We recognize, celebrate and support the cultural, ethnic, religious, physical and individual diversity of our students and employees.



## Accountability and Sustainability

We take the long view. We uphold our responsibility as careful stewards of the financial, physical and environmental resources entrusted to us.



## Community and Relationships

We care. We support each other and our community partners in our role to cultivate resilient global citizens and to advance a more prosperous, just and fair society.

# THEMES, OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

With our core purpose reaffirmed, our vision updated and our values renewed, we were able to move on to the body of our strategic plan: the objectives that would help us attain our vision and the initiatives needed to get us there.

To help define our objectives, the first question we asked was, “What are the necessary conditions for us to achieve our vision?” After much discussion and reflection, these conditions became clear:

- That our students succeed in their educations and in their chosen careers.
- That our learning environments be responsive, adaptive, and forward looking.
- That our College culture is socially and environmentally responsible.
- That our institution is a healthy, modern, and effective place to work and to learn.

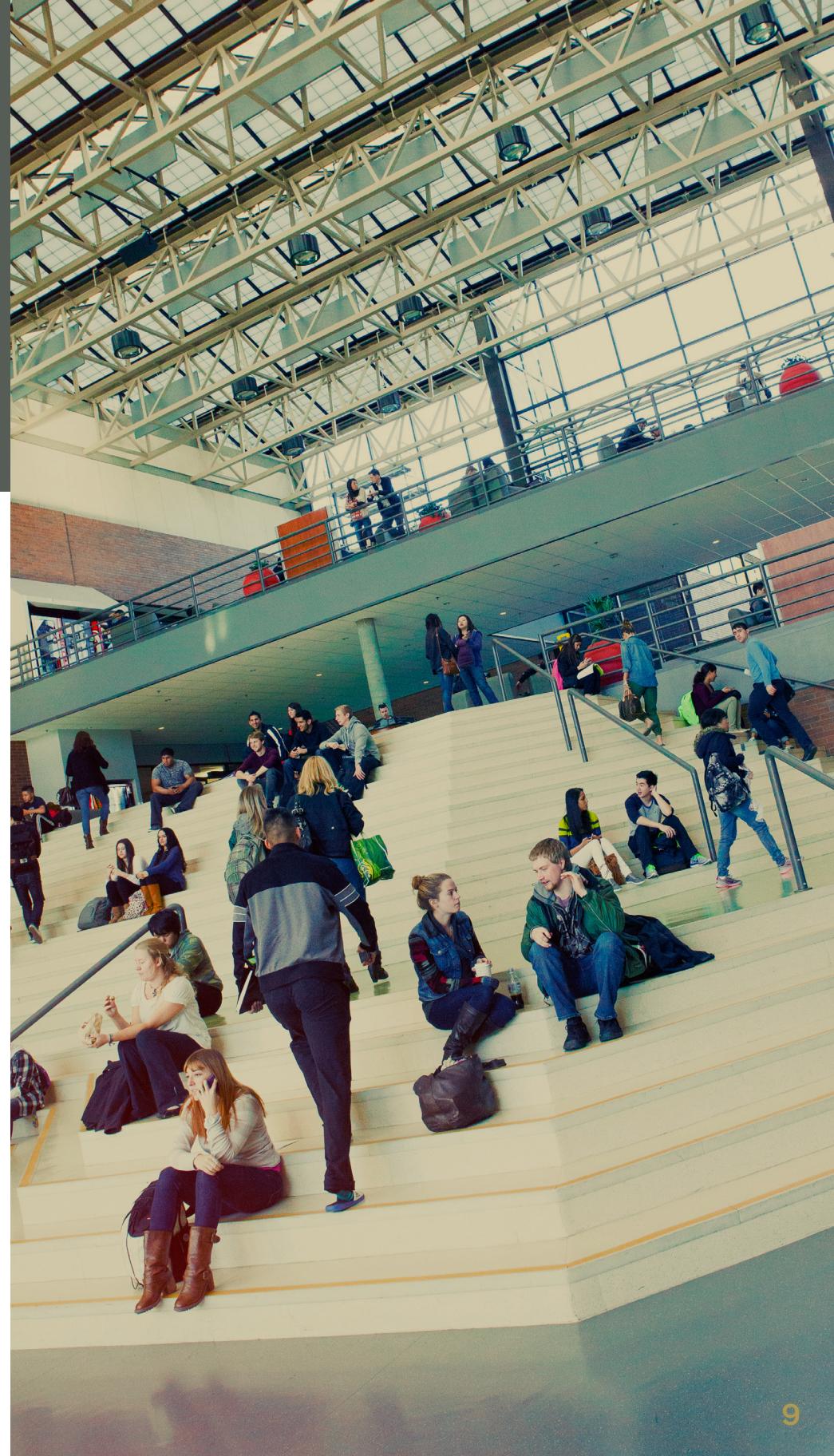


Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is divided into four key themes, each reflecting these broad conditions.

1. Successful Students
2. Responsive Learning
3. Social and Environmental Responsibility
4. Healthy and Effective Work and Learning Environments

These themes are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they significantly overlap, as illustrated above. Together, they will help us achieve our vision.

The following initiatives listed under each theme are designed to provide high-level overview as to the kind of steps that will be necessary to achieve our objectives. Some of the initiatives are more clearly defined than others. The details of each initiative will be refined through consultation and provided in a separate document, complete with targets and timelines for tracking.



# THEME 1

## SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Naturally, Douglas College wants to see our students succeed. We recognize that success comes in many forms (e.g., educational attainment, personal development, life goals, career advancement) and we considered what we could do to enhance existing mechanisms to help students achieve their goals. Two objectives emerged.

### OBJECTIVE 1.1

**Empower students to be active partners in their educational experiences.**

Initiatives under this theme will focus on helping students make the most out of their time at Douglas by providing a spectrum of educational opportunities inside and outside the classroom, by ensuring systems of support are effective, and by removing unnecessary barriers to progress.

### INITIATIVES

I. Design and implement integrated service models that improve student satisfaction and streamline processes. These changes will make it easier for students to get the information and services they need to progress in their studies.

II. Enhance participation in, availability of, and satisfaction for learning activities that have experiential/applied elements. As a result, more students will have more hands-on experiences to enhance their learning

III. Expand the availability of open educational resources (OER) at the College to improve affordability and learning outcomes. This will reduce textbook costs, making students' educations more affordable and accessible.

### OBJECTIVE 1.2

**Recognize and build on comprehensive student skills and competencies.**

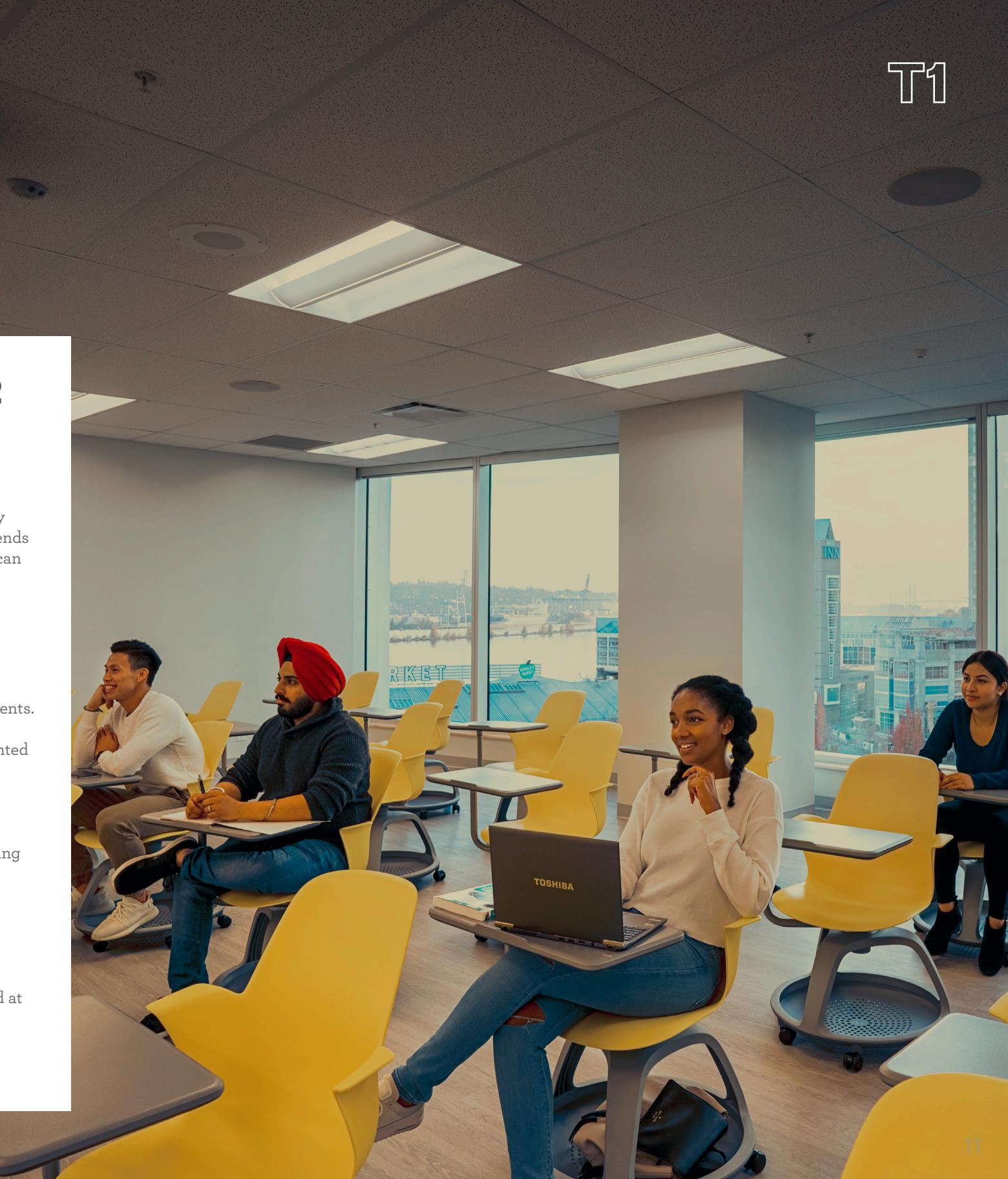
Initiatives under this objective will focus on the holistic educational experience, by recognizing that a college education extends beyond the classroom and that learning can take many forms.

### INITIATIVES

I. Develop ways to validate, record and recognize applied skills acquired by students. For example, by ensuring “soft skills” students acquire at Douglas are documented in a way that they can present to others.

II. Expand and enhance access to career-related skills training to improve employment prospects. For example, giving students more help with resume writing, public speaking, and preparing for job interviews.

III. Investigate and pilot new program opportunities. This may include adding programming styles not currently offered at Douglas, such as microcredentials.



# THEME 2 | RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

This theme focuses on the core College experience – the programs we teach and the learning environments in which we teach them. The two key objectives under this theme will help enhance the relevance and quality of programming, as well as improve campus physical spaces to create safe, healthy, and effective environments for students and all employee groups.

## OBJECTIVE 2.1

### Develop relevant and innovative programs.

Douglas College programs are already known for their quality and relevance. But it's vital to always be on the lookout for new programs and to explore new delivery methods. Initiatives under this objective will ensure the variety, quantity, and quality of programming at Douglas will continue to improve and keep pace with external demands.

## INITIATIVES

I. Design and offer educational programming that recognizes global competencies. This may include piloting a certificate program that could be embedded within a bachelor's degree.

II. Identify and initiate program renewal for targeted programs to increase relevance for students and employers. This may result in changes to program structures and learning outcomes, increasing students' opportunities for employment or further studies.

III. Review and optimize the number of credentials offered at the College consistent with student demand. The goal of this initiative is to remove credentials that are "on

the books" but are rarely awarded because they overlap with other credentials or have been superseded by newer options.

IV. Determine the optimal size and mix of programs offered at the College to inform strategic enrolment management practices. This work will help guide future growth of the College.

V. Conduct a comprehensive review of continuing education and contract training. This review will inform long-term plans to ensure programming is sustainable, achieves operational targets, and meets the needs of students in the community.

## OBJECTIVE 2.2

### Expand and renew facilities.

In 2020, Douglas College celebrates its 50th anniversary. That's quite a milestone, but it also means that some of our infrastructure has been serving us for decades. Although our facilities are well-maintained, growing student demand, changing service needs, and new technologies all continue to stretch College infrastructure to its limits. Initiatives under this objective will aim to grow and improve College facilities, as well as look to new opportunities to enhance the campus experience. Importantly, these initiatives will now have to be looked at through a new lens – pandemic responsiveness and mitigation – that will likely require long-term institutional flexibility.

## INITIATIVES

I. Build a new academic building to house new programs, accommodate growth in enrolments, and improve work and study spaces. The College already owns land adjacent to the existing campus in New Westminster, where the new building will be constructed.

II. Complete a business case for a student housing project that would enhance the campus community and qualify for government funding.

III. Modernize existing classroom, collaboration, public and employee spaces to a new college standard. This will make College spaces more functional, comfortable, and inspiring.

# THEME 3

## SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Expressions of care and concern for people and our planet are evident throughout Douglas College's institutional values. But it is not enough to care—we also have to act. The two objectives under this theme will help provide the guideposts needed to ensure that our actions align with our values and continue to push us towards a more just and sustainable future.

### OBJECTIVE 3.1

**Align practices and processes with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.**

Douglas College has long been a proud supporter and champion of our Indigenous students. With direction from provincial and federal governments, this support has been expanded to become a process of truth and reconciliation. Initiatives under this objective aim to create an increasingly welcoming campus environment for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff, to build bridges to Indigenous communities, and to support the creation of Indigenous curricula and professional development.



### INITIATIVES

I. Express Douglas College's commitment to Indigenization and reconciliation in ways that are tangible and visible to our communities, our students, our employees and visitors. Our campuses should highlight Indigenous art and our operations should demonstrate respect for Indigenous culture and history.

II. Deepen relationships with local First Nations in ways that serve their interests and needs, and the needs and interests of Indigenous students at Douglas College. E.g. Build and maintain bridges to Indigenous community groups.

III. Support departments to develop Indigenous and culturally relevant/informed offerings that reflect history and culture of Indigenous peoples. These efforts will nurture the variety and type of Indigenous-informed education we provide.

IV. Continuous professional development for faculty and staff on Indigenization, and continued development of employee resources.

### OBJECTIVE 3.2

**Contribute to sustainability goals through education, processes and practices.**

As a public post-secondary institution, Douglas College has a responsibility to provide environmental and social leadership. Initiatives under this objective will help demonstrably reduce the College's environmental impact and support educational programming that is socially and environmentally progressive.

### INITIATIVES

I. Design and implement a climate action strategy that commits to reducing carbon emissions, energy usage and waste, and enhances Douglas College's capacity to adapt to a changing climate.

II. Encourage the development of curriculum that is responsive to environmental and social needs. This may result in entirely new programs or new course offerings within existing programs.

III. Review and revise college policies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion, eliminate systemic biases, and support anti-racism initiatives.

# THEME 4

## HEALTHY AND EFFECTIVE WORK AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

For any organization to thrive, institutional health in all its forms must be a priority—a fact that was really brought home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Objectives in this theme will help align College values with College practices associated with health and wellness. This includes student and employee wellness, as well as long-term institutional viability.

### OBJECTIVE 4.1

**Develop practices and processes that promote long-term planning, professional development, mental wellness and adaptability.**

Initiatives under this objective will focus on strategic, structural, and process changes that will help create the necessary conditions for wellness. This includes long-term planning and preparation at a College-wide level, as well as strategies to address wellness at an individual level.

### INITIATIVES

- I. Create multi-year workforce plans for administrative units to guide employee recruitment, development, and succession planning. This will be done by every administrative unit to help the College plan for the future.
- II. Develop a College-wide mental wellness strategy for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This type of strategy will help the College gauge needs and develop appropriate plans.

### OBJECTIVE 4.2

**Modernize business processes and digital environments.**

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, digital transformation and adaptable business process were becoming necessary priorities for most institutions. The temporary shift to remote learning and working highlights how important the digital experience can be to the overall functioning and success of the College. Initiatives under this objective will focus on ensuring business practices are adaptive to changing institutional needs and digital experiences are optimized to provide the best user experiences for students and employees.

### INITIATIVES

- I. Optimize digital experiences across key touchpoints, including the College's website, mobile app, and enterprise systems. These changes will support all members of the College community by providing better user experiences.
- II. Formalize and expand strategic enrolment management practices. This will improve our ability to plan for growth, meet enrolment targets, and adjust to shifts in student demand for courses and programs. A cross-college committee will guide the process.
- III. Facilitate transition to a digital workplace and take steps toward smart campus systems. This may include creating tools and structures to enhance and improve work-from-home opportunities.
- IV. Create and support a cross-college digital transformation team to champion and accelerate the adoption of appropriate digital technologies and processes.

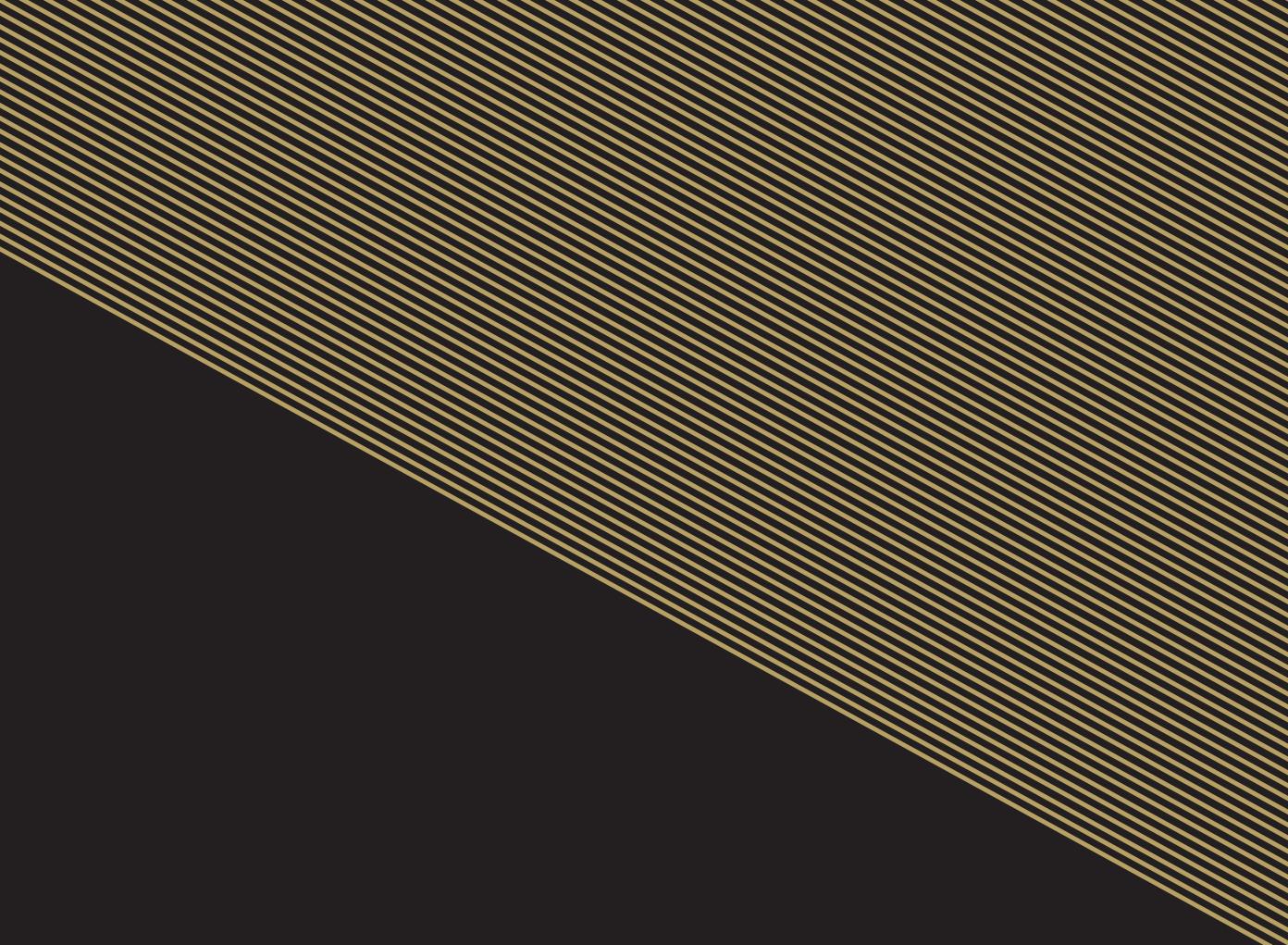
# DO WHAT YOU LOVE

## CONCLUSION

Traditionally in a strategic plan, this is the space where we would wrap things up with some high-level reiteration of the institution's goals or vision. But we would be remiss to do so without mentioning the context in which the final stages of the plan have come together. As of this writing, virtually all classes at Douglas are being conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of our employees are working from home. Our campuses are largely empty. Meanwhile, protests against continued systemic racism have erupted in major cities around the world.

Given these unprecedented circumstances, before we finalized this plan we had to ask ourselves some challenging questions: Is it enough? Does it reflect our values? And is our vision hopeful and helpful given the current global situation?

While the true test will come in five years as we reflect back on how the College has changed, we believe the foundations laid in this document are strong. From our academic programming, to our relationships in the community, to our technologies and facilities, to how we address social and environmental issues, this plan provides us with a framework to make Douglas College an even better institution. In fact, our vision – to graduate resilient global citizens with the knowledge and skills to adapt, innovate and lead in a changing world – seems even more prescient now, and more important than ever.



# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **2020-2025**

**DOUGLAS COLLEGE**