



**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL PURPOSE MEETING OF  
EDUCATION COUNCIL  
HELD THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010 AT 2:00 PM  
ROOM 5220 - NEW WESTMINSTER CAMPUS**

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**1. ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:**

Elizabeth McCausland  
Scott McAlpine (Ex-Officio)  
Deb Anderson  
Jan Carrie  
Gary Tennant  
Michael Phillips  
Don Valeri  
Dianne Hewitt  
Gerry Gramozis  
Kate Yoshitomi  
Ted James (Ex-Officio)  
Thor Borgford  
Catherine Carlson (Alternate)  
Jo-Anne Bilquist (Secretary)

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**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The Chair advised members to remove item 3 from the Agenda; the CFCS Program Requirements are undergoing further review before being presented to Council. The Chair indicated that members can still forward any comments or perspectives on the material that was distributed if they wish.

The Agenda was accepted as amended.

**3. CFCS – Program Requirements**

This item has been deferred.

#### **4. STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Chair invited members to offer feedback on the Strategic Plan, beginning with General Comments, and progressing through all 6 Goals, as set out in the Plan.

Council offered much feedback on all sections of the Strategic Plan.

The Chair commented that she was impressed with the amount of feedback brought by Council, and indicated that it is due to the fact that previous feedback provided to the Strategic Plan Group has been responded to, thus creating a positive process. Council agreed that they are comfortable with the Chair formulating formal advice from the meeting.

See attached document outlining Education Council Advice on the Strategic Plan to Douglas College Board.

S. McAlpine thanked Council for all the input. He indicated that the Strategic Planning Group will make amendments on the plan, based on feedback received, before it goes to the board in June. He added that on an annual basis, they will be revising elements of the Strategic Plan, and reporting out on progress on the various metrics. He conveyed thanks from SMT and the Strategic Planning Group.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by D. Valeri; Seconded by K. Yoshitomi**, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

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**Chair**

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**Secretary**

# Memorandum



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**DATE:** May 21, 2010  
**TO:** Douglas College Board  
**FROM:** Elizabeth McCausland, Education Council Chair  
**RE:** Education Council Advice on the Strategic Plan

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At a Special Meeting on May 20, 2010, Education Council discussed the draft Strategic Plan and formulated the following advice for the Board.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

Education Council members and their constituents feel that the strategic planning process was excellent. There have been many opportunities to give feedback, and it is clear from the release of multiple drafts of the plan that senior management is listening to and in many cases incorporating the feedback. We recognize that that responsiveness takes a lot of work, and appreciate it. I think that the lengthy and engaged discussion of the plan at Council's meeting is a result of this open process. It also means that some of the advice below will likely be reflected in the final draft of the plan the Board sees at its June meeting.

Council supports the major goals and directions of the strategic plan.

## **OPENING SECTIONS:**

People appreciated having the plan framed by the mission and values statements that should guide what we do.

Currently, the Preface lists 5 goals (with social responsibility as a general context), but these appear as 6 points in the Goals section. Also, some of the goals come with modifiers, while others do not. This list could be more parallel for clarity.

There was quite a bit of discussion about what being "the largest and most progressive baccalaureate degree-granting college" *means*. People would like to see some clearer measures (for example, large in what sense? Most FTEs? Most degrees?). Is largest something we are, or something we are becoming? While there is a good deal of demographic data in the prefatory section, there is not much context on who our students are today—how many are in university transfer, how many in closed programs, how many getting degrees—and what we're aiming for in the future.

"3<sup>rd</sup> age" is a jargon term that wasn't immediately clear to some readers, and could be confused with "2<sup>nd</sup> career." Moreover, most of the specifics in the plan, such as a focus on online learning and service provision, do not reflect the needs of these learners.

There are a number of vague superlatives here: superior, excellent, best. How will we measure these, and what happens if we are not "the best"?

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Council supported emphasizing our status as a baccalaureate-granting College, though we need to be clear that University or University College status is not on the table in future. In focusing on “pathways,” we do not want to emphasize pathways out to other institutions at the expense of our own 4-year degrees. The focus on scholarly activity is welcome and important for supporting expansion of baccalaureate degree programs.

## **GOAL 1: SEAMLESS PATHWAYS**

There could be more acknowledgement of the College’s historical mandate to provide access to post-secondary education in this section, as well as more discussion of the pathways into the College for high-school students. For many students, the pathway “out” of the college is to a career, not further education. While there’s reference to a placement office, perhaps this could be emphasized more.

Marketing and recruitment are important. We need to make pathways into the college known. People felt that efforts here could be more co-ordinated, and that marketing may need more resources. When a new program is developed, there is no “one-stop” place for faculty to go for help in marketing it and recruiting students (Communications and Marketing Office, Office for New Students, Advising, and Admissions could be more connected).

There was quite a bit of discussion on the point that “Douglas College will guarantee transfer of University Transfer courses.” While both faculty and Registrar’s Office staff support the importance of improving transfer, this isn’t something we can “guarantee” because it is not in our control. Because we have preparatory courses, some loss of credit may be inevitable when students transfer.

## **GOAL 2: SUPERIOR TEACHING**

There was extensive comment on this section. Much of it focused on the idea that there is a lot of “stick” and not as much “carrot” in the strategies. That is, there is an emphasis on self-improvement and faculty/course evaluation, but little on the context that will support and engage employees in this effort. In particular:

There is little recognition of teaching or service excellence, or of scholarly and professional achievements (a display case, celebration of a publication). The college has no teaching award.

While the plan mentions improving spaces for students and the community, it does not mention space for employees. Something as simple as having to share a faculty office can discourage lingering on campus and interacting with colleagues, as well as making it more difficult to support students outside of class. While we recognize the limitations on space and resources, these things do matter, and do affect the quality of our work.

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This section might pay more attention to the services and staff needed to support excellent teaching (for example, library resources, labs, technological support).

Many people recognize the necessity and value of teaching evaluation, but it needs to be a thorough and fair process, with meaningful measures. Will we look at student satisfaction? Student outcomes? A student member commented that students' views sometime after they complete a course or program may be more meaningful than their responses on an evaluation completed during the course.

Professional development, scholarly activity, and program development and review require time. It is important to consider workload issues.

## **GOAL 3: INTERNATIONALIZATION**

As we expand international experiences for students, such as field schools, we will need to create clear processes for developing the programs (selecting packages of courses), and selecting faculty and students to participate. It is important to guarantee that students and faculty participating in international and Canadian-based field schools or student exchanges get the same quality of education and support services they would on campus (for example access to library resources or counselling, currency of curriculum).

If the College is going to attract more international and recent immigrant students, and consider offering some courses in languages other than English, we must be able to provide support services in other languages as well. This will need to go further than the cross-cultural communication workshops referenced in the plan, though those are welcome.

The Learning Centre has had excellent experiences with international students as tutors, but it is difficult to hire them. The college should look at ways to support that.

We will need to consider how improving Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for off-shore credentials relates to the provincial ICES (International Credential Evaluation Services) offered through BCIT.

## **GOAL 4: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Students could be more engaged in recruitment and other ways of connecting the college to local school districts. Personal connections between high school and college students are an important source of information about the college.

Field schools (for example, in Anthropology and Archeology) sometimes work with BC Aboriginal communities. The role field schools can play in taking students into the local community to learn could be emphasized.

Some other institutions (VCC, Langara) have their names as part of a Skytrain station. This would be one way to connect Douglas to the New Westminster community.

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## GOAL 5: STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

By this point in the plan, a certain fatigue seems (understandably) to have set in, and the goals and strategies are not as well-developed. Engagement is important for student success and for mobilizing employees in support of the plan's goals. This section needs expansion.

Many engagement strategies are addressed elsewhere in the plan, and need to be referenced again here. Because the classroom is a major place we engage students, it might make sense to organize the document to make that link clearer. Many of the comments made on Goal 2 above apply to engagement as well.

What happens outside the classroom is important too. There needs to be more discussion of campus life initiatives here. How will we create the kind of dynamic physical and social environment that will engage students and make them want to be here? Like faculty, they tend to flee when not in class.

When the plan talks about service excellence, it focuses on review and evaluation; there also needs to be recognition of what we do well.

Research and scholarly activity can be a way to engage students and faculty in learning together.

Support services of various kinds are important for student engagement and retention. Learning Resources suggested development of a Learning Commons model that provides just-in-time academic supports to students in one physical space (reference desk, study skills, tutoring, media and technical help desk, counselling, academic advising).

If we are going to serve more "second career" learners, we will need to consider not just online support services, but evening and weekend service provision. Right now, students who access the college only on evenings and Saturdays have trouble getting to the Registrar's Office, Bookstore, etc. Security at these times is also important.

We need to develop better processes to help students in trouble (e.g. a student who is suicidal or threatened by someone). Often our provision of support is piecemeal and inconsistent. Faculty and staff want to help, but do not always know what to do, and finding answers can prove frustrating.

The comments about creating a positive and respectful environment are welcome. Again, we need to develop consistent remedies and processes for when bullying and harassment do occur. This isn't always the case.