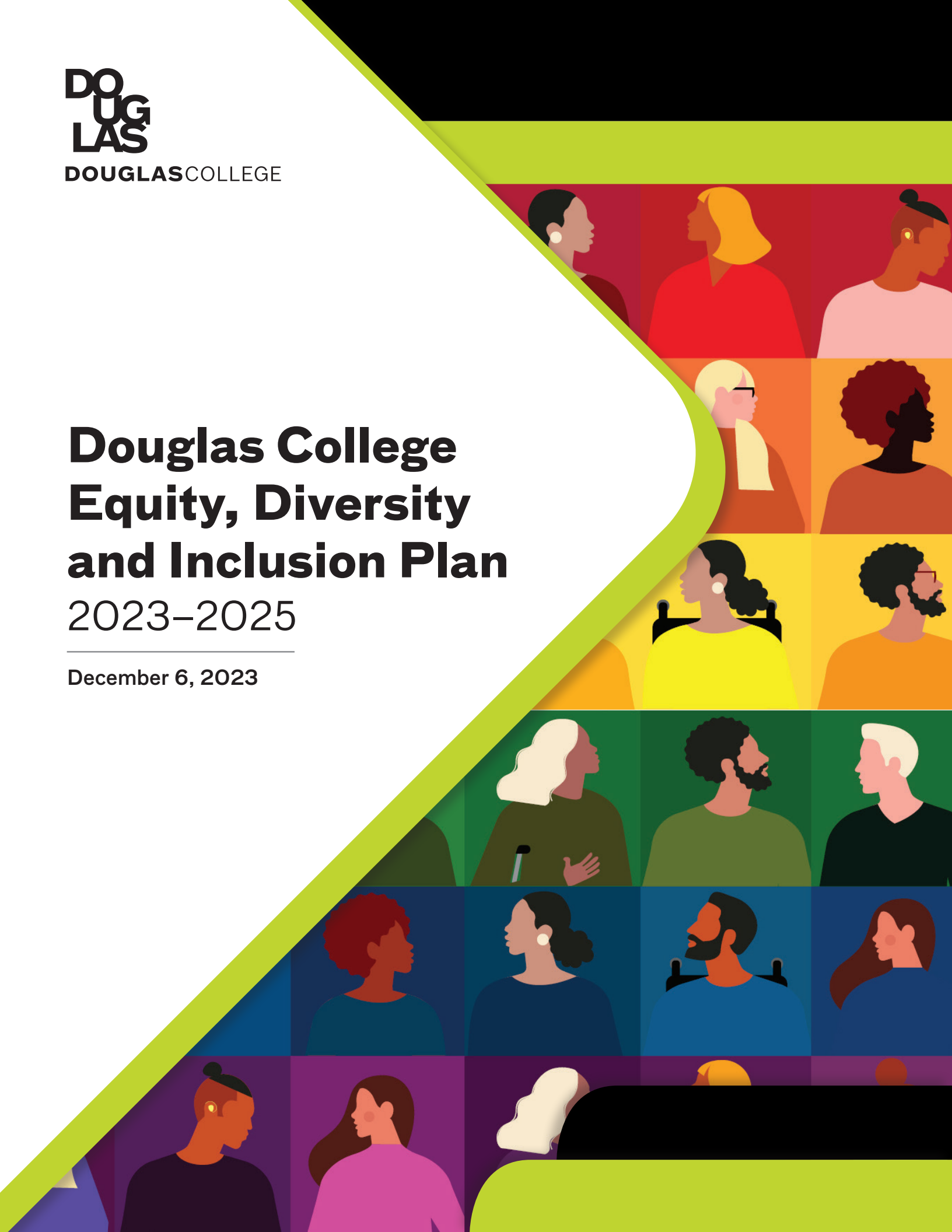




DOUGLAS COLLEGE

# Douglas College Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2023–2025

December 6, 2023



## Territorial acknowledgement

Douglas College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are located on the unceded traditional and ancestral lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the q̓íćəy̓ (Katzie), q̓ʷa:ńł'əń (Kwantlen), k̓wíkʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), x̓ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and q̓iqéy̓t (Qayqayt) First Nations.



## Introduction

Welcome to the first Douglas College Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan. We are pleased and proud to bring this document to the College community.

Striving to create a culture that is welcoming and inclusive is not new for the College. As you'll see in the following pages, as a socially responsive institution that reflects the values, attitudes and priorities of our communities, Douglas has a history of supporting and promoting inclusion.

What is new is the urgency of this work, the strength of the commitment to inclusion that is evident all around us, and our own intentionality. From the deep embrace of Indigenization and reconciliation efforts throughout our society, to the centering of LGBTQ2S+ and BIPOC experiences and voices in curriculum and in the classroom, to the recent proclamation in our province of the Accessible BC Act – designed to ensure that public sector organizations identify and remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities – we are living in a time when social justice and inclusion matter more than ever. Douglas College reflects, embraces and seeks to further these goals.

Equity, diversity and inclusion – or EDI – is central to Douglas College's values. These values inform the [2020–2025 Strategic Plan](#), a plan that highlights the importance of inclusion and social responsibility in all areas of College campuses, programs and services. As a community of people who work, play and learn together, we also embrace uniqueness, and “recognize, celebrate and support the cultural, ethnic, religious, physical and individual diversity of our students and employees.”<sup>1</sup>

Through this EDI Plan, the EDI Steering Committee has laid out a pathway for bringing these values to the fore in all that we do. In the months to come, all College employees will be invited to contribute input that will inform the committee's recommendations for establishing priorities and initiatives. These initiatives will move us toward our goal: to foster an equitable, accessible, diverse and inclusive campus where all people feel a sense of belonging.

We invite you to join us on this journey.



**Dr. Kathy Denton**  
President and CEO  
Douglas College



**Sherry Chin-Shue**  
Associate Vice President  
Human Resources

---

<sup>1</sup> See [Core purpose, vision & values](#)

## Foundations

This plan reflects Douglas College's commitment to EDI, building as it does on an array of related initiatives undertaken (in many cases, completed) over the past decade, as we have learned and deepened our understanding of what is needed for any organization to be fully inclusive.

The work to date has been incremental and sometimes piecemeal. We have responded to specific areas of need at various times – for example, by providing policies in support of accommodations in the workplace, by adding support services to students with diverse needs, and by encouraging and supporting internationalization of curriculum and programming. These were all important steps on the College's journey to being a socially responsible and welcoming place to study, play and work.

Before outlining the themes of the plan, we should reflect on these foundations by recognizing many of the initiatives launched and milestones reached so far along this journey:

- In 2014, the College began partnering with the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#), an organization that focuses on practical solutions for other organizations seeking to move toward true inclusion. Since that time, College-wide professional development days have featured keynote speakers and themes relating to diversity and inclusion, intercultural skills, mental wellness, generational differences, Indigenization and community.
- Over the next few years, we put in place a new employee Code of Conduct ([Do the Right Thing](#)), and added key [policies](#) such as Respectful Workplace, Human Rights, Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response, and Protected Disclosure (Whistleblower).
- In 2019, Douglas developed its first Indigenization Strategic Plan, which was integrated into the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan under the theme of Social Responsibility. While much work is ongoing, some related initiatives have been launched, including:
  - an Indigenous Certificate in Academic Foundations (launched in 2022)
  - an [Indigenization Learning Journey](#) – professional development modules for employees in all roles who want to deepen their understanding of, and respond meaningfully to, the Calls to Action of the TRC, and to support Indigenization and Reconciliation at the College (launched in 2023)
- In Fall 2020, with the launch of the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, a Mental Health Strategy Committee was established to develop a mental health strategy that would set goals and provide recommendations to ensure the College is addressing the mental health needs of students and employees, with an emphasis on the importance of equity and inclusion for mental wellness.
- With the help of CCDI, the College undertook an extensive [employee survey](#) in 2020–2021, seeking to deepen its understanding of employee demographics. The results provided a baseline for assessing employees' experience of inclusion, support and belonging at the College.

- In Spring 2021, the College engaged an external panel of academic experts to audit its policies through the lens of antiracism, inclusion and the removal of systemic barriers, and has since been working with the panel's recommendations for policy changes.
- Also in Spring 2021, the College's Human Resources Department published its HR Plan 2021–2025, building in EDI, Indigenization and respectful workplace priorities.
- In Fall 2021, the College created the position of Manager, Respect, Diversity and Inclusion, a position responsible for leading the College's efforts to embed EDI in its institutional culture, structures, policies and practices.
- Over the 2021–2022 academic year, the College contracted with [Inclusive Excellence Strategy Solutions](#) to provide training in unconscious bias and antiracism, and to advise employees on how to advance inclusion and equity goals. Initially, training was completed by all members of the College Board, Senior Management Team and Deans/Associate Deans/Directors. Since this time, it has been delivered to more than 150 additional registrants.
- In Spring 2022, the College published statements on Equity in Hiring, to promote recruitment of people from groups experiencing inequity, and on its EDI commitment to foster "an equitable, accessible, diverse and inclusive campus where all people feel a sense of belonging."
- Also in Spring 2022, the College adopted a policy of providing free menstrual products in washrooms and, by Summer 2022, had posted online [guides](#) to both accessible and gender-inclusive campus washrooms as well as gender-inclusive signage at campus washroom facilities.
- In Summer 2022, the Academic Division hired an Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor to support and advise faculty members on Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. This role was converted to a permanent position under the title "Director, Indigenous Academic Initiatives," effective September 2023.
- In Fall 2022, the College's EDI Steering Committee was established, co-chaired by Douglas College President Dr. Kathy Denton and AVP of Human Resources Sherry Chin-Shue. The Steering Committee leads and oversees the development and execution of the College's EDI Strategy, including the identification of the overarching themes of this EDI Plan.
- Also in Fall 2022, the [EDI Learning Modules](#) were made available to all current and new employees. A second level of learning modules was launched in Fall 2023.
- In Spring 2023, the College launched its new [Core Competency Framework](#), outlining the skills, behaviours and characteristics that contribute to employee growth and success. This framework identifies both inclusion and Indigenization as competencies that contribute to a College culture that is respectful and inclusive.
- Also in Spring 2023, the College launched a new advisory committee – the Accessibility Committee for Douglas College – a cross-College body that helped shape the [Douglas College Accessibility Plan 2023-2026](#), posted to the College website in August 2023.

- In October 2023, Douglas College launched its [Mental Wellness Strategy](#), a plan for integrating mental wellness into all aspects of the College community, in support of the strategic goals of ensuring that the College environment supports students and employees in achieving mental wellness, and of fostering a culture of psychological safety and resilience for all its community members.
- Also in October 2023, Douglas College formally adopted the Okanagan Charter, an international charter supporting the infusion of health-promoting strategies throughout colleges and universities, aimed at enhancing each institution's capacity to create a culture of compassion, well-being, equity and social justice.

Building on these milestones along the College's EDI learning journey so far, this EDI Plan marks a moment of focus and intentionality; it brings these many previous efforts together, to improve accessibility, equity and inclusion under a comprehensive, clear and strategic vision.

## EDI themes and dimensions

Building on the foundational initiatives listed above, the EDI Plan 2023-2025 sets out a comprehensive and strategic roadmap, providing a context for future initiatives that will move the College further toward our goal of being a welcoming and inclusive place for all who come to visit, play, work or learn.

Central to this plan are five themes, developed by the EDI Steering Committee over the 2022-2023 academic year. Each theme carries with it an aspirational statement expressing the goal for Douglas College, followed by a number of “dimension” statements identifying the scope of activity through which the goal will be met.

### THEME 1: VISION, STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Douglas College’s Vision, Strategy, Structure and Leadership demonstrate a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion that is illustrated by dialogue, engagement and action. Leaders are actively engaged in, and accountable for, equity, diversity and inclusion goals, and for monitoring progress, facilitating information-sharing and building awareness.

#### **Dimensions:**

- **Vision and Strategy:** The College has a clear vision, and EDI is embedded in its values, culture and processes. The College strives for continuous improvement in meeting its EDI goals.
- **Leadership and Accountability:** Leaders are accountable for implementing the College’s EDI vision as well as for setting goals, achieving results and being role models for EDI.
- **Structure:** The College governance and organizational structure, policies and processes support and champion EDI initiatives at all levels of the College.

## THEME 2: INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Employees and prospective employees experience the College as a workplace that is inclusive and welcoming. They feel respected, and both supported and encouraged to express their needs and experiences.

### **Dimensions:**

- **Recruitment and Hiring:** The recruitment process is equitable and fair, and attracts applicants from diverse groups. Hiring committees and hiring managers are knowledgeable about the impact of conscious and unconscious bias on their decisions, and strive to mitigate them.
- **Advancement and Retention:** The College workforce is diverse across levels and functions, and career growth and advancement opportunities are available to all employees. The onboarding process results in new employees feeling valued and included. Performance reviews are conducted in an equitable manner with consideration for individual circumstances and backgrounds.
- **Job Design, Classification and Compensation:** The College reviews job requirements, descriptions, classifications and compensation for potential bias. Compensation reviews ensure that biases based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, function or other potential areas of discrimination are reduced or eliminated.
- **Training and Development:** Regular and ongoing training and professional development are offered to all employees to foster the knowledge and skills they need to work in a diverse environment and contribute towards EDI goals.
- **Flexibility and Wellness:** Flexible work arrangements are encouraged, actively promoted and not career limiting. Benefits and services are available to meet the diverse needs of employees. Leaders prioritize psychological safety, security and wellness in the work environment.



## THEME 3: INCLUSIVE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

An inclusive campus environment is welcoming and accessible to all. The principles of equity, diversity and inclusion are considered in all aspects of the College campus, including the design and layout of physical and digital spaces, wayfinding information, signage, commemorative efforts, communication practices and technology solutions.

### Dimensions:

- **Built Environment:** The College considers equity, diversity and inclusion in its physical space design, with a focus on universal design to ensure accessibility for all individuals, including those with disabilities.
- **Digital Spaces:** Digital spaces, including external and internal websites, are designed to be welcoming and accessible to all members of the community, considering inclusive language and cultural and accessibility needs.
- **Communication and Technology:** Communication practices and technology are inclusive and accessible to all members of the College community, taking into consideration inclusive language as well as cultural and accessibility needs.

## THEME 4: INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Equity, diversity and inclusion are key factors in the learning environment at Douglas College, including in course design, teaching practices, research, assessment and activities, as well as in services outside the classroom. Equity, diversity and inclusion in the learning environment are fostered through professional development opportunities that prepare employees to create inclusive learning spaces where students feel valued and supported.

### Dimensions:

- **Professional Development:** The College offers professional development opportunities to help faculty and staff to enhance their understanding and skills in creating inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and supported. This includes training sessions and other learning experiences on topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion in instructional design and pedagogy.
- **Course Design, Teaching Practices and Research:** Course design, teaching practices and research initiatives prioritize the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences.
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** Assessments and evaluations are conducted equitably, with consideration given to diverse learning styles and cultural backgrounds. Student assessment and grading practices are regularly evaluated to identify and eliminate any biases.
- **Activities and Services:** The College supports inclusive activities, events and services that celebrate and recognize the contributions of diverse communities and cultures. Student services are responsive to the diverse needs and interests of students.

## THEME 5: ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Douglas College is a responsible and accountable member of the broader community, one that engages and consults with equity-deserving groups. The College builds partnerships and contractual relationships with organizations that are also committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in support of College educational programs, research and other activities.

### **Dimensions:**

- **Community Engagement:** The College actively engages and consults with equity-deserving groups in the community, and seeks out philanthropic opportunities and partnerships that align with its equity, diversity and inclusion goals and objectives.
- **Diversity Representation:** The College promotes an inclusive and diverse image through its marketing and communication efforts and ensures that marketing materials reflect the diversity of the College community, programs and initiatives.
- **Responsible Partnerships:** The College values partnerships and contractual relationships with organizations committed to equity, diversity and inclusion, and is committed to sourcing goods and services from suppliers who share these values.

## Next steps

In preparation for the implementation of this plan, the EDI Steering Committee designed an internal employee survey that was deployed in Fall 2023. The purpose of the survey was to establish a baseline assessment of employee experiences of working at the College, with questions organized around the five EDI Plan themes.

A total of 441 employees completed the survey, for a response rate of 30 percent. The Steering Committee has reviewed the results to determine priorities and will be striking project teams to follow up on resulting recommendations. Project teams will be responsible for developing action plans to be implemented over the next two years.

The EDI Plan will be refreshed to incorporate these recommendations and action plans early in 2024 and will continue to be factored into College planning during the development of the next strategic plan (2025-2030).

## Questions or feedback?

Please direct any questions or comments to Sherry Chin-Shue, AVPHR, at [chinshues@douglascollege.ca](mailto:chinshues@douglascollege.ca) or Kathy Denton, President and CEO, at [dentonk@douglascollege.ca](mailto:dentonk@douglascollege.ca)