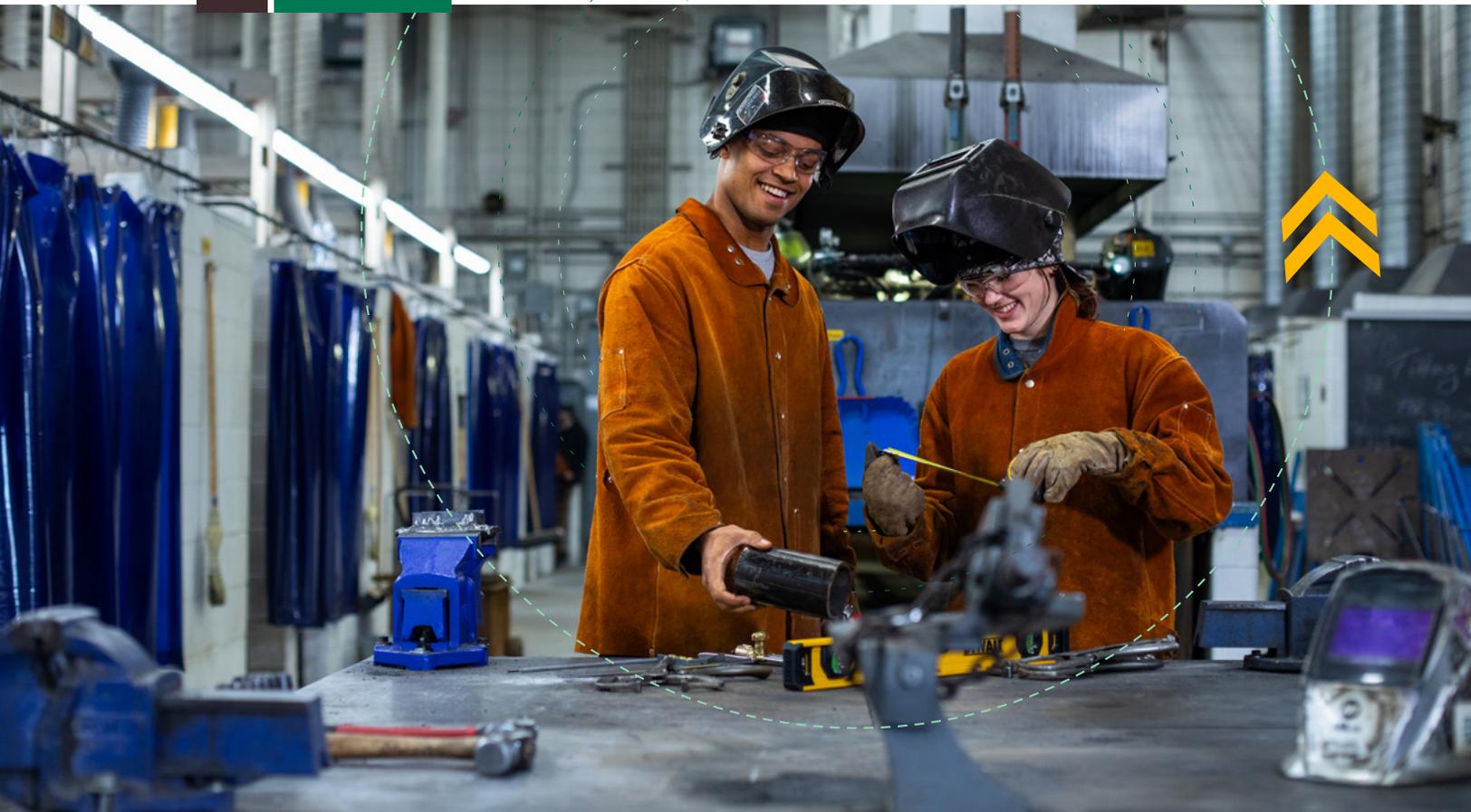


2026-2030

# ACADEMIC PLAN





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## ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

Durham College is situated on the traditional lands of the First Peoples of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. These lands are covered under the Williams Treaties and rest within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the Indigenous Peoples who care for and, through the treaty process, share the lands on which we live, learn, teach, and prosper today.



## MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND STUDENTS

At Durham College (DC), teaching and learning are at the heart of everything we do. Whether we are preparing learners for in-demand careers, supporting pathways to further education, helping employers upskill their workforce through corporate training, or partnering on research that addresses real community challenges, our academic mission is realized through the actions of every employee across the college.

Guided by our shared purpose of transforming lives, building careers, and enriching communities, this Academic Plan reflects how we are choosing to work together in an increasingly complex and fast-changing environment. We are aligning our efforts to our three core pillars – teaching and learning, research and community and student success – and notably bringing together the Academic and Student Affairs portfolios in a more intentional and collaborative way. These actions help us ensure that we are working together to offer innovative programs and courses, creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels supported and can realize their full potential.

With a future-focused mindset and a commitment to continuous improvement, I am confident that together we will deliver meaningful outcomes for our students and strengthen DC's role as a leader in post-secondary education in the years ahead.



**Dr. Jean Choi**  
Vice President, Academic and Students

## ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Through a focused and evidence-informed engagement process, we gathered insight to shape the academic and student priorities of the Academic Plan.

Drawing on more than 2,200 touchpoints collected through the college's Strategic Planning consultations, we analyzed feedback from students, employees, alumni, and community stakeholders, filtering insights most relevant to the academic and student portfolios.

This work was complemented by targeted in-person consultations with Program Coordinators, the Academic Leadership Team, the College Advisory Council, and external partners, including members of our Program Advisory Committees.

Together, this feedback informed the development of the plan's pillars and goal statements and guided the refinement of the enabling actions that support implementation.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

Durham College (DC) is rising to meet a moment of profound change. As technologies advance, industries evolve, and communities face economic, environmental, and social challenges, the role of post-secondary education has never been more important, or complex. We have a responsibility and an opportunity to respond with purpose, ensuring we are preparing learners for meaningful and in-demand careers and lasting contributions to their communities.

This changing landscape requires intentional, forward-looking academic planning. To remain responsive and relevant, DC must continue to adapt how we design and deliver post-secondary education — ensuring programs, learning experiences, and supports align with evolving workforce needs, emerging technologies, and the diverse realities of today's learners.

This Academic Plan outlines how DC will respond over the next four years by establishing clear priorities and a shared direction for our work. Together, DC is positioned to deliver high-quality education, meaningful community impact, and comprehensive supports that enable students to thrive, at DC and beyond.



As a mature student in Plumbing, I have been delighted to come into this learning environment each day. The state-of-the-art shop facilities are well laid out to handle groups of students, and it is a pleasure to **learn new skills with modern tools and equipment.**

The content is deep and rich, and the instructors have great practical knowledge and experience and are well-connected to industry. I will look forward to returning to this supportive environment as I move on in my journey.

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**BILL PALMER, STUDENT,  
MECHANICAL TECHNIQUES – PLUMBING**

“At Durham College, we don't just prepare students for the future – we help them create it. Through applied learning, industry partnerships, and emerging technologies like AI, we empower learners to innovate and lead with impact.

Our commitment to reimagining education, while honouring diverse perspectives and ways of knowing, ensures graduates are **equipped to drive meaningful change, strengthen communities, and build careers** that shape the workforce of tomorrow.”

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COREY GILL, FACULTY MEMBER, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## PILLAR 1

# HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Capitalize on emerging evidence-based teaching practices and a culture of excellence to deliver transformative, future-focused academic courses and programs, and learning experiences.

### ENABLERS:

- » We will anticipate workforce demands and collaborate with industry and community to design, launch and renew high-quality academic programs and training that meet evolving labour market needs.
- » We will harness emerging technologies, incorporate artificial intelligence, invest in leading-edge equipment and reimagine learning spaces to provide exceptional student experiences.
- » We will empower faculty and staff to lead in their fields by investing in professional development, fostering meaningful industry partnerships, and advancing the creation of new knowledge.
- » We will continue the journey towards reconciliation by embedding Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into curriculum, teaching resources and learning supports.



“

As a student research assistant working alongside firefighters and tactical athletes, I had the opportunity to contribute to applied research that **directly addressed real-world challenges facing our community.**

This experience deepened my learning beyond the classroom by connecting me with industry professionals and showing me how research, innovation, and collaboration can drive meaningful impact locally, and beyond.”

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**ABIGAIL ANSELL, STUDENT, SPORTS MANAGEMENT  
AND RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

## PILLAR 2

# RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Foster a vibrant culture of innovation and research that connects students, faculty and staff to solve real-world challenges and drive meaningful impact, locally and globally.

### ENABLERS:

- » We will engage in meaningful community and applied research partnerships that address pressing societal challenges and generate impact locally and globally.
- » We will enhance experiential learning opportunities in our programs, providing hands-on experiences and connections to the workforce.
- » We will leverage our network of industry and employer leadership to support success and build new bridges to the community.
- » We will expand academic pathways to unlock multiple opportunities for lifelong learning, locally and across global communities.



“I truly feel that experiential learning that sees a **convergence of student development, faculty leadership, and industry engagement** contributes to growth for those involved and produces meaningful community impact. Giving our students a competitive edge in tomorrow’s world starts by guiding them to choose curiosity, collaboration, and shared responsibility. I am fortunate to play a role in supporting the initiatives that make DC a valued community partner and an incredible and unique place to learn and work!”

CRISTINA ITALIA, EXECUTIVE DEAN, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND FACULTY OF MEDIA, ART AND DESIGN

“Durham College has created an environment where I feel genuinely supported both academically and professionally. Through hands-on learning, accessible support services, and opportunities like the work-study program, I have been able to grow my skills, build confidence, and feel a strong sense of belonging within the DC community. The encouragement from faculty and staff has made a meaningful difference in my ability to succeed and persist, and it has prepared me to transition into the workforce with clarity and confidence.”

SARAH ADESUYI, STUDENT, MARKETING PROGRAM  
AND SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT

## PILLAR 3

# EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT SUCCESS AND EXPERIENCE

Nurture an inclusive and empowering environment to ensure students have equitable opportunities to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

### ENABLERS:

- » We will foster a culture of inclusion and belonging where all faculty, staff and students are respected, engaged, and have equitable access to opportunities.
- » We will enhance and align support services that respond to evolving student needs and promote all dimensions of wellness.
- » We will create a culture of support and belonging that bolsters student persistence and retention by providing a comprehensive suite of wraparound supports and resources.
- » We will cultivate global competence by creating impactful learning opportunities and collaborative projects on our campuses and abroad.



It is a privilege to be part of an **inclusive organization that recognizes health and wellness as foundational to academic success.** Through a shared responsibility and collaboration across leadership, faculty, support services, and community partners, health and wellness services and education are embedded into campus culture. Students are empowered to use their voices to shape meaningful change while building the life skills, resilience, and mental health literacy needed for life beyond school.

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JESSICA LEE BENDER, HEALTH PROMOTIONS  
COORDINATOR, CAMPUS HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE

