Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

Service de l'assurance de la qualité des collèges de l'Ontario

Program Quality Assurance Process Audit

Final Audit Report

Executive Summary

Durham College

December 2013

This report represents the findings of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit for Durham College carried out **April 2-4, 2013** (on-site portion).

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college personnel, members of the Review Panel, and the Management Board of the OCQAS. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this Report.

For the College:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

For the Review Panel:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

For the Management Board:

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Review Panel Membership

Chair: Hans van der Slagt, Consultant, Higher Education

Members: Maureen Callahan, Consultant, Higher Education Policy and

                             Practice

                             Lisa Boyle, Academic Chair, Nova Scotia Community College

A.   <u>CONCLUSIONS</u>

The Audit Panel is impressed with the quality assurance processes and policies in place at Durham College. There is strong evidence of an ongoing commitment to quality assurance at all levels of the organization and, most importantly, the evidence is generally supported in the opinions of the students interviewed by Panel members.

All six criteria have received a "MET" rating. The Panel has identified one sub-criterion in each of Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 that have received a "PARTIALLY MET" rating. However, the Panel felt that the issues identified were not significant enough to lead to a downgrading of the overall criterion in each of those areas.

The Panel provided recommendations related to each of the "PARTIALLY MET" sub-criteria and, in addition, made further recommendations relating to other sub-criteria. These recommendations have been made in the spirit of encouraging the College in its obvious commitment to quality improvement and helping it to advance in that commitment.

More importantly, as proof of its commitment to ongoing quality improvement, the College has identified 30 "areas for improvement" many of which would take the College to an even higher level of quality assurance.   For this, the College deserves strong recognition and congratulations.

B.   <u>OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL</u>

Criterion	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Criterion 1	X		
Criterion 2	X		

Criterion 3	X		
Criterion 4	X		
Criterion 5	X		
Criterion 6	X		

C.   **COMMENDATIONS**

(1) The College has put in place a number of faculty development processes that, overall, are exemplary for the College. These include:
- The Centre for Academic and Faculty Enrichment (C.A.F.E.); provides teaching and learning expertise, leadership, and support to faculty at Durham (some of their programs and resources are listed below)
- Full-Time Faculty Development Program
- Durham College Teaching Certificate Program
- "JumpStart" Program (training for faculty in curriculum teaching/learning, evaluation)
- New Technology Comfort Self-Evaluation Tool
- "Teaching Squares", Self Reflective Process about teaching
- "Teaching in Community 2013", a faculty program of reflection and renewal

(2) The College recently established an Integrated Student Services Model, bringing together several support services and integrating transactional, advising and counselling to foster student learning and development under one roof. The Student Services building was opened in December 2010 and is a vital first point of access to staff from Admissions and Recruitment, Registration and Records, Student Service Operations, Financial Aid and Awards, Career Services, Student Life, Student Academic Learning Services, Diversity, Student Receivables, and the International Student Office. This "one referral" model enables students to obtain information and advice from Student Service Representatives (SSR) who are cross-trained in a number of areas. Students can also receive more in-depth assistance as required. This model is meeting students' needs to be successful and has contributed to considerably reduced wait times.

D.   **AFFIRMATIONS**

The College, as part of its Self-Study, has identified a number of "Areas for Improvement". The strategies are impressive for their comprehensiveness and demonstration by the College that they plan to take their quality assurance policies and processes to a higher level. The Self-Study document identifies the strategies or action plans, identifies the responsibility and lead on the project and provides a timeline for completion of the project. A summary of the strategies follows:

Criterion #1

- Implement an electronic, centralized Program Learning Outcome (PLO) repository
- Create and implement an electronic, centralized Course Learning Outcome (CLO) repository
- Integrate the electronic data from the PLO and CLO repositories to provide efficiency in the creation of program maps and communicate this information to program faculty and administrative coordinators

Criterion #2

- Improve the graduate self-audit process (re graduation requirements) and improve communication to students regarding the process through MyCampus
- Develop and implement mechanisms that will allow the automation of the credit transfer process
- Develop processes to track and update academic articulation agreements and pathway information on an ongoing basis
- Develop a joint marketing plan for Durham and UOIT to increase student awareness about academic pathways and credit transfer; although the Audit Panel affirms this plan, it believes the College should also be making specific reference to the Provincial data base and student portal ONTransfer sponsored through the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer
- Implement the Ontario Education Number (OEN) to allow the tracking of student mobility and program completion
- Create a policy and procedure for academic freedom and enhance the current intellectual property policy and procedure with respect to applied research

Criterion #3

- Implement a new timetable/scheduling plan for General Elective course offerings to increase availability of General Electives and choice for students (College included in Criterion #1; Audit Panel felt this affirmation belonged more appropriately in Criterion #3)

- Increase the number of on-line General Education courses (College included in Criterion #1; Audit Panel felt this affirmation belonged more appropriately in Criterion #3)

Criterion #4

- Develop hybrid course delivery that is pedagogically sound and actively engages student in learning
- Develop a quality assurance mechanism to measure the effectiveness and student satisfaction with flexible, hybrid learning
- Communicate and implement the expectation to all full and part-time faculty regarding the use of DC Connect (Learning Management System) as a method to communicate with students and to provide regular feedback about their academic progress to achieve consistency

Criterion #5

- Review ratio of full-time, partial-load, sessional, part-time faculty and adjust ratio to increase more sessional and partial-load contracts and reduce the number of part-time contracts to improve consistent delivery of curriculum
- Develop and implement a succession plan to recruit qualified teaching staff
- Increase opportunities for faculty engagement in PD to support flexible curriculum delivery (on-line and hybrid)
- Implement action/goals identified in Durham College Accessibility Five Year Plan and ensure alignment with the AODA – integrated standards
- Implement "Universal Design for Learning" across the College
- Review the current Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan and update to ensure optimization of learning resources and facilities to support the learning process and student success

Criterion #6

- Implement a policy and procedure for program revisions greater than 25% to ensure all approval processes are completed (College included in Criterion #3; Audit Panel felt this affirmation belonged more appropriately in Criterion #6)

The Audit Panel has reviewed the College's quality improvement strategies as identified above and agrees that these will contribute greatly to the enhancement of the College's quality assurance processes.

E   RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit Panel identified a number of recommendations related to specific criteria and listed them in the pertinent Criterion sections in the body of this Report.

The Audit Panel recommends that the College:

1. implements measures to ensure student awareness of all PLAR opportunities, within and external to the College.
2. considers a broad, cross-disciplinary review and approval process for course outlines that might include review and approval by a sub-committee of Academic Council and/or peer reviews by academic staff in other schools, as has been noted by best practices at other institutions.
3. implements processes to ensure that new and innovative teaching methods are evaluated to test their effectiveness and, where valid, to ensure that such methods are shared with other faculty across the College.
4. confirms its position by way of a formal policy regarding the level of education and expertise required of faculty for particular positions.
5. continues its work with faculty to ensure 100% compliance with the use of DCConnect as per the policy.
6. supports and monitors faculty engagement in reflective practice and shares the insights gained through this reflective practice across the College.
7. encourages faculty to increase their participation in professional development activities related to the teaching and learning process.
8. ensures that space and equipment requirements are in place prior to permitting significant enrolment increases.
9. reviews its policy and procedures for the student evaluations of regular, full-time faculty and implement policy to ensure regular, frequent and comprehensive evaluations are conducted.
10. reviews the activities and membership of its advisory committees to ensure compliance with the existing Terms of Reference for PACs.