

ACADEMIC PLAN

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

The Durham College (DC) 2020-2025 Academic Plan aims to advance our vision of academic excellence by building on our previous plan's significant success and aligning with the college's strategic plan. The plan sets the college's academic goals, reflects our current reality and helps us overcome our most pressing challenges as we embrace new approaches to managing our enrolment, teaching practices and evolving student expectations.

This plan comes at a critical time in DC's history. The future of post-secondary education will see change, unlike any since the introduction of the Ontario College system in the 1960s. We can expect teaching and learning to evolve from what it was before the pandemic, which means we need to reconceive learning experiences. We will take this opportunity to leverage the strengths of remote and in-person modalities and blend them to maximize learning.

We must also be responsive to our labour force, which is demanding new and different skillsets from its workers. By offering short-duration programs focused on reskilling and upskilling, in addition to our current credentials, DC will be well-positioned to help workers transition from the work of today to that of tomorrow.

As we continue to adapt, we must not lose sight of the importance of empowering our academic leaders, both in and out of the classroom, to create dynamic learning experiences that support, prepare and challenge students. To this end, the 2020-2025 Academic Plan provides a clear vision of where we want to go as we focus on exceptional academic quality, exemplary teaching and learning experiences, strong international engagement, exceptional applied research and the strategic management of our enrolment.

This plan's strength is due to contributions from employee groups, students, members from our Program Advisory Committees, our Alumni Association and a range of other industry and targeted community stakeholders. I want to thank everyone for their enthusiastic participation and thoughtful feedback.

The future is full of possibilities, and our ability to continue to be nimble and flexible remains essential. Together, we will lead the way, realizing our shared goals and objectives by implementing meaningful strategies to achieve collective success.



Sincerely,
Elaine Popp, PhD
Executive vice president, Academic

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Durham College is situated on the Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas and the territory that is covered by the Williams Treaties. We are thankful for the opportunity to teach and learn on the lands of the Peoples of Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.

This Land Acknowledgement should not function as closure, resignation, or acceptance of the structural conditions of settler colonialism that remain in effect today. We hope that it sparks a desire to learn about our shared history, provoke thought, reflection and change which are the starting point of creating respectful, reciprocal, relationships.





Many of the photos in this publication were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



INTRODUCTION

The Durham College (DC) 2020-2025 Academic Plan is a critical part of the college's strategic planning framework that guides us in achieving our academic goals and objectives as we strive for excellence. It is an aspirational plan that aligns with the college's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and our Strategic Mandate Agreement 3 – articulating what we want to do in practical and achievable ways.

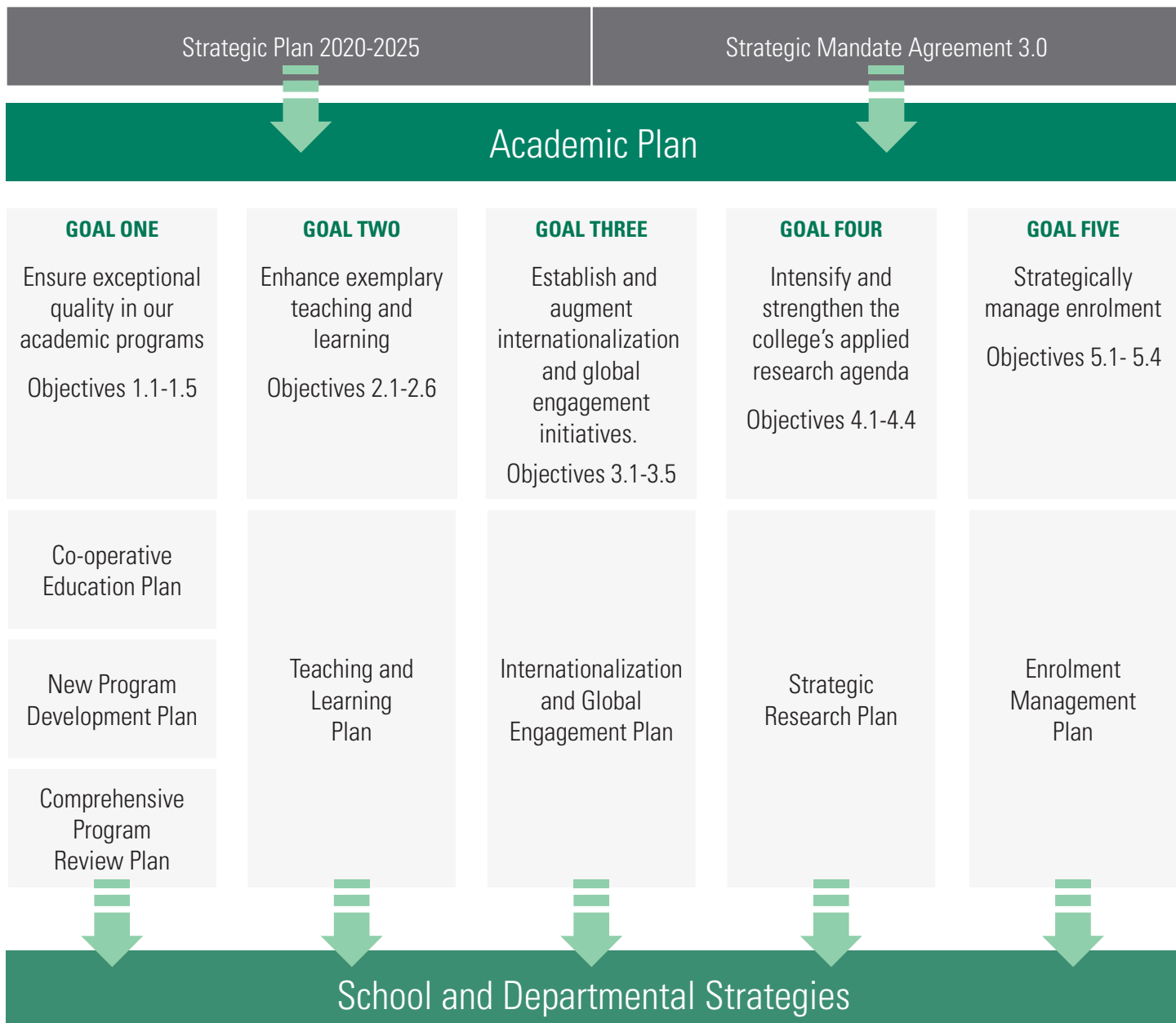
This plan ensures that DC moves confidently to 2025 with clearly defined academic goals and objectives. It positions the college to respond to the changes post-secondary education is facing and those new challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic while helping to address evolving student populations and expectations, professional practices and workplace technologies.

While considering the post-secondary landscape at the end of our 2017-2020 plan, this plan builds on the successes of that document by maintaining our goals to:

- » Ensure exceptional quality in our academic programs.
- » Enhance exemplary teaching and learning practices.
- » Establish and augment internationalization and global engagement initiatives.
- » Intensify and strengthen the college's applied research agenda.
- » Strategically manage enrolment.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

To build a plan that reflects the most comprehensive perspective possible and the greatest number of voices within the DC community, virtual and in-person consultations took place before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. We cast our net wide, gaining perspective from employees, students, industry and other stakeholders, including our Academic Council, Program and Research Coordinators, Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members and our Alumni Association.



SETTING THE STAGE

The landscape of post-secondary education is changing, compounded by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Success for Durham College (DC) will hinge on a clear plan and a strategic path forward for our academic future. This document lays out our vision – a vision developed collaboratively with input from internal and external stakeholders. The 2020-2025 Academic Plan is forward-looking, flexible and adaptable to ensure that we remain a leader in delivering high-quality programs and exemplary teaching and learning practices. To achieve this shared vision, we must be innovative and nimble, while staying true to the core values that make us all proud to be a part of the DC community.

We must continue to be creative in how we deliver curricula and in the professional development options we provide to our faculty members. Fully leveraging the benefits of technology will be key to achieving our goals. We will explore new opportunities in applied research and expand our approaches to work-integrated learning. This plan also recognizes the importance of creating a culturally and globally engaged community and strengthens our enrolment management strategies.

As we consider teaching and learning, we must be cognizant of the changing nature and needs of our learners. We anticipate continued growth in blended learning, where remote delivery is purposely and intentionally integrated with in-person instruction. Courses will be designed to realize the comparative benefits of both teaching approaches, paired with the advantages of synchronous or asynchronous delivery.

This plan also recognizes the disruption in our labour markets. Employers are increasingly demanding new skills and requiring us to envision new education options. Considerations such as technology, automation, machine learning, and artificial intelligence will continue to disrupt jobs. The workforce is changing as well, with an ageing population that translates to a shrinking labour force, leading to information or skills gaps. By offering flexible programs, increased remote and alternate delivery options, such as micro-credentials, DC will respond to these changing industry needs. And it won't stop there; lifelong learning will continue to be an important differentiator across sectors. We have to equip our youth accordingly and retrain older workers, enabling them to leverage shorter, more flexible education.





We must prepare our graduates for the changing way that we work. The shift from traditional employment where workers are full-time employees to increased opportunities in the gig-economy necessitates that skills traditionally employed by entrepreneurs will be fundamental to all workers. While technical abilities continue to be critical, our graduates also require durable skills that are not specific to one area and can be applied across job clusters.

Finally, this plan considers the impact that the pandemic has had on DC's enrolment. In the short- to mid-term, we will need to focus on recovery from the enrolment consequences of the pandemic, directing our recruitment and conversion efforts to meet pre-pandemic targets.

Then in the longer-term, we will be required to address some of the other enrolment challenges we saw before COVID-19, including a changing demographic profile of our students, declining traditional college-age students, and resource capacities.

While the pandemic will eventually resolve, many of the changes we are experiencing in post-secondary education are here to stay. We are ready to meet these challenges head-on. Now is the time for DC to lead the way.

GOAL 1: ENSURE EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY IN OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Academic reputation and strong, market-driven programs are key decision-making factors for prospective students. To ensure Durham College's (DC) continued success, we must maintain our strong reputation for offering quality education that meets the needs of our students, employers and the many local, national and international communities we serve.

As we develop, launch, review and renew programs, we must address advances in technology and automation and shifts in academic disciplines. We must provide a combination of practical applied education, work-integrated learning and durable skills training. By offering a broad range of programs and focusing on continuous improvement, our students will acquire the skills, knowledge, and competencies they need to be well-rounded graduates, prepared to take on the world.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 We will develop, launch, review and renew high-quality programs that reflect evolving societal and workforce needs.
- 1.2 We will maximize opportunities for students to build the durable skills they need to be successful in their careers and lives.
- 1.3 We will embed, enhance and expand experiential learning, global engagement and applied research opportunities.
- 1.4 We will support lifelong learning through innovative approaches to curricula and program delivery.
- 1.5 We will support our commitments as a proud signatory of the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes, the Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada charter and the BlackNorth Initiative pledge.





GOAL 2: ENHANCE EXEMPLARY TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES

Teaching is ever evolving and reflects changes in subject content, new instructional strategies, technology advances, and student learning needs.

All faculty members need continuous professional development opportunities throughout their careers to keep pace with these changes. Learning opportunities will continue to strengthen teaching practices and focus on students' learning needs while increasing achievement in their courses. Expanding their knowledge and skills to implement the best instructional practices that focus on students' learning needs will ultimately grow student success.

Exemplary teaching and learning practices that leverage cutting-edge educational technologies and instructional strategies are required to prepare our students to succeed.

OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 We will enhance the culture of exemplary teaching by promoting continuous professional growth.
- 2.2 We will foster a scholarly approach to teaching and learning that supports student success.
- 2.3 We will support and recognize faculty members' leadership and inter-professional networks.
- 2.4 We will enhance digital fluency and global competence in faculty members to support students in the ever-changing world of work.
- 2.5 We will celebrate excellence and innovation in teaching.
- 2.6 We will continually renew learning spaces, educational technology and teaching and learning resources.



GOAL 3: ESTABLISH AND AUGMENT INTERNATIONALIZATION AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

International students enhance the learning and work experiences of their peers and college employees. They connect us to global networks and contribute to our local economy. As part of an interdependent global society with increased interconnectedness, our graduates need to have global competence, which will encourage their tolerance and commitment to cooperate and appreciate our shared humanity.

Internationalization and global engagement at home and abroad provide students and employees with the tools, resources, understanding and experience required to succeed in this ever-increasing global world.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 We will be the post-secondary institution of choice for students from around the globe.
- 3.2 We will support the success of international students through a sense of belonging as valued members of our intercultural community.
- 3.3 We will create a community that supports the development of global citizens and leaders.
- 3.4 We will connect students to learning opportunities around the globe.
- 3.5 We will enhance global partnerships.





GOAL 4: INTENSIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE COLLEGE'S APPLIED RESEARCH AGENDA

Canada needs more graduates who can foster innovation. Durham College's (DC) applied research agenda is focused on skills-building opportunities for students to engage with faculty members and external partners to participate in practical workplace and social innovation projects. This commitment to a strong and thriving applied research agenda supports the call from government, funding agencies, community groups and employers for increased innovation to address real-world problems and recognizes the leading role colleges play in research innovation and scholarly activities.

The applied research agenda will continue to leverage and promote the expertise of employees and strong community and industry relationships, as reflected in DC's established research centres.

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1** We will implement strategies to further develop and strengthen faculty members' research capabilities.
- 4.2** We will increase research training opportunities for students to engage in applied research projects both within and outside curricula.
- 4.3** We will establish research collaborations with relevant external stakeholders.
- 4.4** We will increase the profile and awareness of applied research activities across the breadth of our research areas both within and outside of the college.



GOAL 5: STRATEGICALLY MANAGE ENROLMENT

Now more than ever, Durham College (DC) must remain focused on recruitment, conversion and student success to stay responsive to the changing external post-secondary environment and evolving government priorities.

Strategically managing our enrolment will enable us to accomplish the fulfillment of our mission and student experience goals. From initial enrolment planning through to the ongoing evaluation of our progress, our efforts must remain dedicated to ensuring that prospective, new and returning students and alumni are supported throughout their learning journeys.

By considering the entire student lifecycle and ensuring we have the right students in the right programs as well as the supports and services to help them succeed, DC will be best positioned to overcome any challenges we may face and foster the long-term success of the college.

OBJECTIVES:

- 5.1** We will achieve recruitment and conversion targets.
- 5.2** We will achieve enrolment targets.
- 5.3** We will achieve student outcome measures as identified by DC and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.
- 5.4** We will establish processes and systems for effective data-driven enrolment decisions.





IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The goals and objectives in the Academic Plan identify our academic priorities through to 2025. Additionally, the plan provides the foundation for strategies to be developed and implemented during this period, which will impact everything we do as a college well beyond 2025.

As a next step, each academic school and department will have the opportunity to develop implementation strategies to realize these goals and objectives. A template has been created for the schools and departments to follow to ensure consistency throughout the strategy planning process. These implementation strategy templates will then evolve into the Academic Plan Strategy template.

The Academic Plan Strategy will be updated, actioned, progress-monitored and reviewed annually.









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