

UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
Douglas College Report – March 26, 2010

THE CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT (CAFD, or the Centre)

Change at Douglas College

Douglas is in the throes of demographic change in all employee groups: leaders, faculty, and staff. This change is most evident in our senior leadership group: a new President and a new Vice-President Education were recently hired. Our faculties are led by four acting deans, an acting associate dean and two new deans. A leader who has been at the College for four years is jokingly called an old-timer!

Scott MacAlpine, the new President, has convened a strategic planning process focused on seven key themes: learner pathways, research and scholarly activity, aboriginal initiatives, service excellence, internationalization, learning technologies and community responsiveness. Input has been gathered from themed discussion group meetings of College employees, town hall-like gatherings of community partners and a student survey. Key questions revolve around the role of the institution as a comprehensive community college that offers both applied and university transfer credentials while also providing programs and services to a variety of non-traditional and short-stay clients. A comprehensive strategic plan is expected to be unveiled later this spring. The new strategic plan and the visions and values of the new leaders will influence the work in the Centre for Academic and Faculty Development.

Centre for Academic and Faculty Development Staffing, Programs, Services and Advisory Structures

At present, the Centre employs a Research and Scholarly Activity Coordinator, a Faculty Development Coordinator, a Coordinator for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, an Office Coordinator and a Centre Director. The first three of these coordinators have part-time appointments.

The Faculty Development Office offers a year-long workshop program; intensive, theme-based sessions in May, June and August; cohort-based PD activities such as reading circles; a faculty peer mentoring program; regular Instructional Skills Workshops; and individual consultations. A College-wide advisory committee composed of elected representatives from each of seven faculties provides additional direction and faculty perspectives on FD-related work. Student engagement, instructional excellence, curriculum development, appropriate assessment, the scholarship of teaching and learning, teaching with technology, collegial connections, and principles of effective practice have been primary themes in FD programs and services. Future initiatives will also reflect the forthcoming strategic directions.

DOUGLAS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Tell Us What You Want

As the faculty group at Douglas grows, changes, and becomes more diverse, so too do needs for faculty development. The CAFD team has recently attended Faculty Education Committee meetings in all faculties to learn from department coordinators and deans about PD needs that are specific to their areas. Interestingly, what is viewed as good and desirable in one faculty is viewed as unnecessary or inconsequential in another. For example, in one faculty, curriculum development is viewed as a priority, while in another, a program focused on basic research skills is considered most desirable. This phenomenon points to the need for more customized programs and services.

DOUGLAS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

We Go to Them

In keeping with the theme of PD that is targeted to the needs of a specific group, the faculty development coordinators have invited requests for customized PD. Instead of focusing entirely on College-wide workshops, sessions on topics such as Academic Integrity, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and Intercultural Communications have been taken “on the road” to full faculty and department meetings at both campuses. Participants report high satisfaction with this customized PD.

More Collaboration with the Faculties

As instructional needs become more department-specific, CAFD coordinators have collaborated with faculty-based PD committees to open PD opportunities that have traditionally been faculty-based to the larger College community. A good example is the current collaboration between CAFD and the Faculty of Commerce and Business (C&BA). C&BA has opened their week-long intensive training on case study teaching to the larger College community. Jim Erskine, a well-respected proponent of the case study approach will work with a diversity of Douglas College faculty in mid-May.

Student Research Days: Now at Both Campuses

The first Douglas College Student Research Day held in 2009 was such a success that it now occurs on an annual basis and is offered at both the New Westminster and the Coquitlam campus. Students’ research is displayed in a poster format so that College employees have opportunities to meet and talk with the students in our midst who are already well on their way to becoming scholars and researchers.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Small Grants Program

With support from the Office of the Vice-President, Education, CAFD is again offering a limited number of small grants (value \$500) to faculty members to encourage and support research on teaching and learning within the College. The grants are intended to expand the number of faculty members actively involved in research on student learning and to increase awareness of SoTL research conducted at the College by supporting the dissemination of research findings.

Symposia: Seem to be the Way to Go

Data from the DC Institutional Research Office show higher attendance at “big” PD events such as a major speaker or symposium. Interestingly, the data also indicate that attendance at regularly-scheduled PD events that follow the major event continues to be high for a few months. As a result, the CAFD team has decided to offer two symposium-like activities this year: One May 7, focusing on research and scholarly activity, and one in late August, focusing on either internationalization or new learning technologies.

Olympic Break = Three ISWs

Douglas College was one of many institutions to close during the February Winter Olympics, but our ISW facilitators collaborated to offer three ISWs during the two-week break. Interest in and attendance at the ISWs were high and included four visiting scholars from China currently teaching in the Business Faculty. The international scholars added unique perspectives to the discussions of teaching and learning.

Efforts are still being made to expand our current group of ISW facilitators and to provide resources for interested parties to attend the Facilitators Development Institute. Many of the seasoned Douglas ISW facilitators are now working in coordinator or chair positions, and so the pool of available facilitators has dwindled.