



## PQAPA Update from Don Lovisa October 2007

Durham College is participating in the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (**PQAPA**). The purpose of this communication is to begin the campus dialogue around quality concepts, to encourage *individual* and *collective* ownership of quality as a priority and to provide you with an update on our PAQPA initiatives.

### **Purpose of PQAPA:**

The purpose of PQAPA is to support our own focus on the quality of the learning experience at Durham College through a review of the quality assurance processes the college has in place or is planning to put in place. It is intended to be developmental in nature and begins with the college completing a Self-Study and submitting a written report to the Audit Panel-- an external panel of trained reviewers. The Self-Study identifies the degree to which the college's own policies and practices ensure compliance with the five identified PQAPA Quality Criteria. It is designed to allow us to identify our own strengths and weaknesses with accompanying evidence / data / documentation.

The focus of the PQAPA criteria is on 'Putting Learning First' with particular attention paid to:

- the learner
- the learning environment
- learning outcomes
- student success

Each of the five quality criterion aligns with, or contributes to learning and student success:

1. Admission, credit for prior learning, promotion, graduation, and related academic policies support program development and student achievement of program learning outcomes.
2. Programs conform to the Framework for Programs of Instructions and the Credentials Framework, are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature / titling principles, and maintain relevance
3. Method of program delivery and student evaluation are consistent with the program learning outcomes.
4. Human, physical, financial, and support resources to support student achievement of program learning outcomes are available and accessible.
5. Regular program quality assessment that involves faculty, students, industry representatives, and others as appropriate for the purpose of continual improvement is in place and happens.



The Panel reviews the Self-Study report and supporting documentation in preparation for the 1 ½ day site visit, intended to allow the Panel the opportunity to meet with members of the campus community to “drill down” as they confirm the college’s stated thoughts. The visit ends with an exit interview during which the Panel will share its considered thoughts.

### **Durham College Preparation:**

The PQAPA process will enable us to identify and celebrate our strengths, refine our processes and develop strategies to address our quality challenges. To accomplish this, we will, over the next few months:

- COLLECT DC policies, procedures, communication practices and provide evidence of application and usage. Learning outcomes will be a key element of the collection process, as they are central to all five PQAPA criteria.
- IDENTIFY the gaps where we are missing key policies; or we have them but they are not ratified and communicated; or they simply are not applied in our day to day work.
- TRIAGE between those gaps that we can address before we write our self study and those where we will use PQAPA as an opportunity to identify our strategies and plans for addressing continuous quality improvement over the next 18 months.
- REMEDIATE to address as many areas as possible this fall and early winter.
- REPORT, celebrating our successes and strengths, and demonstrating a comprehensive approach for the areas in which we have work to complete to enhance the quality agenda.

### **PQAPA Task Group:**

The PQAPA process reaches across the college and thus, requires cross-college participation and communication. To carry out the work that must be done to prepare for the Spring audit, a cross-college PQAPA Task Group has been formed, composed of representatives including: VP academic, VP planning, student affairs representative, dean, associate dean, office of the registrar representative, academic council chair, faculty, human resources representative, campus services representative, innovation centre/curriculum representative, and a facilitator/writer. The committee meets every two weeks and its mandate and purpose will be defined at the first couple of meetings. For more information about PQAPA, please visit the following website:

[www.ocqas.org/pqapa.html](http://www.ocqas.org/pqapa.html)

Although PQAPA is ultimately an externally driven “review”, it is an opportunity to meet our own goals for quality improvement, and to ultimately serve our objectives on behalf of the student experience at Durham College. Please stay tuned for updates and events related to this important initiative as we work to ensure a quality learning environment.