

## DCFA Response to the College Budget

February 19 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the College budget. We appreciate the opportunity for all employees to attend and ask questions at the Budget Forum that was held on February 6, 2026.

At the root of the annual budget is the mandate of the College and the current Administration's vision of the institution's future.

The DCFA would like to begin with a general critique of the whole budget process. In the forum, the answers lacked substance or did not provide useful information. Only ballpark dollar amounts were attached to Salaries & Benefits and Supplies & Services. There were not sufficient detail or numbers for us to give meaningful feedback.

It was stated that there would be "continued administrative efficiency and cost reduction initiatives by all areas" yet when the DCFA asked how many administrators had been laid off or positions unfilled we were told that the College could not provide those numbers. As stated in previous years, there is a commitment to the 70% instructional and 30% for support. We do not know what that means without details. More administrative positions have been added in recent years or are protected while faculty members are being laid off. The DCFA has accessed the HRBD. In fiscal year 2024 the percentage of total compensation at Douglas College was DCFA 56%, BCGEU 24% and Excluded 15%. The percentage of compensation dedicated to Excluded has nearly doubled since 2001.

This current year, 2025/2026 had a budgeted surplus of 2.4 million dollars and it ended up being 3.1 million dollars. An additional 9.3 million was generated, 5 million of which came from better than expected returns on investments. This was to be set aside as "grant deferral for future years". You could argue that the real surplus this year was 12.4 million dollars. And yet there have been more than 20 layoffs of regular faculty members, other regular faculty positions not refilled as faculty retire or leave the college for other reasons, and contract faculty losing the opportunity for work. The college repeated that it will use the surpluses to provide financial stability and runway. Despite the word runway being repeated many times, we do not know what that means.

The College clearly stated the priorities are “808 Royal, or Risk Mitigation or Result in a net increase to surplus”, which means make a profit. We disagree with these priorities.

The DCFA understands there will be workload reductions and layoffs in Counselling and we are frankly baffled. While we acknowledge that the number of International students will decrease, we know that the demand for Counselling services is primarily from domestic students and that demand shows no signs of a decrease. Given the necessity for this essential service in times of a mental health crisis, these types of support are crucial for our student’s continued safety and success.

As we stated for the last three years, an area where more resources could be used is in Counselling and Accessibility Services. The development of a mental health strategy for students, staff, faculty, and administrators is key for our workplace to become a healthy and effective work and learning environment. This strategy will take time and in the meantime faculty and other employee groups are trying their best to support students. Faculty are mentioning the high level of student mental health needs arising out of the pandemic. In addition, the move towards greater inclusion means an increase in demand for accessibility services, but we have not seen a corresponding increase in faculty positions to support this.

The DCFA repeats the question about layoffs, because for the upcoming financial year the budgeted revenues are 209.4 million with expenses of 206.3 million which is gives a budgeted surplus of 3.1 million dollars.

The DCFA is confused by the employer’s repeated assertion that they have not budgeted for early retirement incentives. Gives the direct costs of severance packages and the indirect costs of a reduced workplace in terms of course offerings and operations, we fail to see the logic behind not offering, and thus not budgeting for, early retirement incentives.

We note the spending of 0.828 million dollars (828 thousand dollars) of the Ministry Funded Program Capital in four Faculties over and above proposed operating capital budget additions, but as there were no numbers given for that addition the DCFA finds it difficult to comment.

We applaud the work that led to an increase in domestic student FTE to 105% of the Ministry target this current year and the plan to keep it at 105% for the next few years.

We did note that in 2023/2024 30% of FTE were International. In 2024/2025 is reduced to 27% and then to 20% in this current year. The plan is for this to further decrease to 16% between 2026 and 2029.

The College stated it is using Enhanced Analysis to refine predictive modelling to support decision making. The problem with shifting decision making over to a computer is that those decisions are only as good as the model. The DCFA urges the college to use common sense and a focus on the public good as it looks at “shifting patterns of demand to guide section adjustments.”

Thank you for considering the feedback on the draft budget.

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