

**PROPOSAL TO DOUGLAS COLLEGE**

# SUPPLYING EMERGENCY MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AT DOUGLAS COLLEGE



**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY**

DOUGLAS STUDENTS' UNION

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## BACKGROUND

At Douglas College and all post-secondary institutions in Canada, menstruation is a natural occurrence that women, trans and non-binary members of the community experience on a regular basis. Beginning a period unexpectedly can be a major disruption for students to succeed academically and fully participate in their community on campus.

As governments and more institutions recognize the need to address period poverty through policy changes and actions, Douglas College has an opportunity to address a typically unspoken concern and need through providing emergency menstrual products in all washrooms at all campuses.

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# WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?

## HOW DOES THIS AFFECT DOUGLAS COLLEGE STUDENTS?



Period poverty is experienced by women, trans and non-binary people who face challenges, financial or otherwise, accessing the basic necessity of products to manage their periods.

There is often silence around periods and period poverty due to the embarrassment and isolation dealing with the barriers of inadequate access.

According to United Way “Not having access to menstrual products is an Isolating factor: 18% of respondents indicated that they missed school, 22% work, 29% community events, and 27% social events when they didn’t have access.”<sup>1</sup>

(Period\_Promise\_Research\_Project\_Final\_Report\_-\_Errata\_May\_28\_2021.pdf (shopify.com))

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## BARRIER TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

### Barrier to Academic Success

Mensuration is a natural occurrence that people who menstruate encounter monthly which often comes unexpectedly. Getting your period without having the necessary items to deal with it can significantly impact the academic success of a student.

When students get their periods unexpectedly and unprepared, they often do not have the necessary products to manage this basic biological function.

### Post-Secondary Periods: Access to Menstrual Supplies on Campus and Impacts on Students

As reported in Dr. Lisa Smith and Dr. Selina Tribe's research report "Post-Secondary Periods: Access to Menstrual Supplies on Campus and Impacts on Students", a large number of students leave campus, go home or miss classes and important evaluations due to the lack of available menstrual supplies on campus.

- 68.2% have started their period unexpectedly while on campus;
- 62.8% experienced a spill, leak, stain or overflow of menstrual blood while on campus;
- 67.0% have had to leave class while it was in session to manage menstrual flow;
- 46.0% have been late for class in order to manage menstrual flow;
- 49.0% missed, had to leave, or arrived late for class because they did not have the menstrual products they needed readily available;

"Post-Secondary Periods: Access to Menstrual Supplies on Campus and Impacts on Students"  
- Dr. Lisa Smith and Dr. Selina Tribe



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## GENDER-EQUITY

Douglas College students are overwhelmingly women identified at 64%, and the lack of accessible menstrual products seriously hinders the ability to provide equal access to education for all students regardless of sex or gender identity.

Students who are male identified do not encounter the same barriers that their women identified counterparts do. Students who do not menstruate has assurances that they will have access to all the supplies they need, free of charge, to manage their normal biological functions to be present and active on campus.

Stigma surrounding periods is still prevalent and has been shown to directly affect those that are women identified to success. In research done in 2020 by Free Periods Canada, 67% of menstruators surveyed end up missing school and social events.

(<https://www.freeperiods.ca/map-the-system>)

Period poverty is a facet of financial poverty and is a gendered issue. Women identified students are disproportionately more likely to experience poverty due to structural inequality. A 2019 survey by Plan International Canada found that 34% of women and girls in Canada are regularly or occasionally forced to sacrifice something else within their budget to afford menstrual products.

Trans and non-binary students face additional stigmas. By supplying menstrual products in all washrooms including men's washrooms, this will reduce barriers to the supplies that they need.





## DIGNIFIED EXPERIENCE ON CAMPUS

The stigma and embarrassment around managing periods is often a very undignified experience. Being caught off guard and dealing with spills, leaks and stains is very disruptive and de-moralizing.

"I have experienced several occasions when I have unexpectedly started bleeding in class and did not have menstrual products with me. At those times when I am not prepared to handle my period, I have felt distress and embarrassment."

"Post-Secondary Periods: Access to Menstrual Supplies on Campus and Impacts on Students Research Report"  
Dr. Selina Tribe and Dr. Lisa Smith, Douglas College Menstrual Research Group  
May 8, 2021  
[https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A\\_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH](https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH)

"[On presentation day] I went to the bathroom and saw that I had gotten my period and had a big stain on my pants (from my crotch area to my backside). I didn't have any period products, so I used toilet paper. When it was my turn to present, I stood with my legs crossed to hide any stain that was visible in the crotch area and angled myself so my classmates couldn't see my backside. I had to stand at an angle to prevent losing marks, without exposing my stain."

"Post-Secondary Periods: Access to Menstrual Supplies on Campus and Impacts on Students Research Report"  
Dr. Selina Tribe and Dr. Lisa Smith, Douglas College Menstrual Research Group  
May 8, 2021  
[https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A\\_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH](https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH)

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# DOUGLAS COLLEGE COMMITMENTS TO STUDENTS

The Vision articulated by Douglas College can be accomplished by actions towards menstrual equity in combatting period poverty.

## VISION

"To graduate resilient global citizens with the knowledge and skills to adapt, innovate and lead in a changing world."

Douglas College can lead by example with the knowledge that addressing period poverty supports all students to become resilient global citizens who will be able to adapt innovate and lead in a changing world.

Douglas College's Values shape the learning community and inform and govern decision-making at all levels of the institution. These core values support the action to provide emergency menstrual products in all washrooms at all campuses.

[www.douglascollege.ca/about-douglas/learn-about-douglas/core-purpose-vision-and-values](http://www.douglascollege.ca/about-douglas/learn-about-douglas/core-purpose-vision-and-values)

### HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

We do the right thing. We treat each other with fairness and respect, and we model ethical behaviour in our academic, interpersonal and administrative practices.

### INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

We challenge ourselves. We strive for excellence in our academic programs, or teaching, our student and employee services and our administration.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We embrace uniqueness. We recognize, celebrate and support the cultural, ethnic, religious, physical and individual diversity of our students and employees.

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

We take the long view. We uphold our responsibility as careful stewards of the financial, physical and environmental resources entrusted to us.

### COMMUNITY AND RELATIONSHIP

We care. We support each other and our community partners in our role to cultivate resilient global citizens and to advance a more prosperous, just and fair society.

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Supplying emergency menstrual products is supported by the values above. It is the right thing to do, it treats all students fairly and respectfully in addressing their needs. Supporting students and employees specifically on this identified need is innovative and demonstrates leadership within the post-secondary sector. By providing the supplies for menstrual needs, Douglas College will demonstrate the recognition and support to the diversity of students and employees. The minimal financial cost to supply products is a good demonstration of Douglas College's commitment to the success of students and employees. Most importantly, the decision to supply emergency menstrual products will demonstrate how much Douglas College cares and supports for each other and its role towards advancing a more prosperous, just and fair society.

## REQUEST TO DOUGLAS COLLEGE

The Douglas Students' Union formally requests Douglas College to fund and supply emergency menstrual products in all washrooms at all campuses.

Students and the whole Douglas community deserve and should have a dignified experience on campus. Douglas College can ensure a welcoming and comfortable environment by providing emergency menstrual products to support students managing a basic, normal biological function without interference with their academic success or barrier to their education.

By knowing that their biological and menstrual needs are met while they are on campus, students can focus on their education rather than their menstrual management needs. This simple but powerful action will demonstrate to students Douglas College's commitment to their success. It demonstrates leadership in combating stigma and period poverty and create an equitable environment for all genders.





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## COST ESTIMATE FOR DOUGLAS COLLEGE\*

Based on the United Way Period Promise Cost Calculator, the financial cost to Douglas College to supply emergency menstrual products is minimal comparatively to other costs.

Based upon the estimation used in the formula, with statistical information from the Douglas College Institution Accountability Plan and Report 2020-21 and financial information from Douglas College 2020-21 Audited Financial Statements, the total annual cost to supply menstrual products is approximately \$38,000. With the reduction of in person classes for the Fall 2021 semester at 25%, the total cost at 75% attendance would be approximately \$29,000.

FROM STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS	100% ATTENDANCE	25% ATTENDANCE
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> \$161,757,150	0.023451%	0.017588%
<b>EXPENSES (NOTE 15)</b>		
<b>-SUPPLIES &amp; SERVICES</b> \$28,283,284	0.134121%	0.100591%
<b>ANNUAL SURPLUS</b> \$15,957,000	0.237725%	0.178294%

(DOUGLAS COLLEGE AUDIT 2020 21)

Appendix A \*  
Period Promise Calculation  
Annual Cost Calculation for Douglas College

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The annual financial cost to fully supply the menstrual products needed represents less than 0.02% of Total Expenses, less than 0.13% of Supplies & Services Expenses and less than 0.24% of the annual surplus at the end of the 2021 fiscal year. Keep in mind that this cost estimation is based upon Douglas College fully supplying the needs of all menstruators and not on

an emergency basis, the actual real cost to Douglas College will be much less. The estimated annual cost is inflated due to the best cost estimation formula available. The financial commitment is small but will have a major impact to not only students but also employees and guests of Douglas College.

\*This calculation is based upon the time on campus that both full-time employees and full-time students spend on campus in a regular academic year

\*This calculation is based upon the student FTE reported in the Douglas College Institution Accountability Plan and Report 2020-21

\*This calculation is based upon the reported number of staff as full-time as the report does not break down the number of full and part time employees in the Douglas College Institution Accountability Plan and Report 2020-21

\*This calculation is based upon the assumption that 65% of students and staff are women-identified

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## OTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE IMPLEMENTED SUPPLYING MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS OR HAVE PLANS IN THE NEXT YEAR TO IMPLEMENT:

- Thompson Rivers University -  
Kamloops, BC
- Vancouver Community College -  
Vancouver, BC
- Justice Institute -  
New Westminster, BC
- Langara College -  
Vancouver, BC
- Camosun College - Victoria, BC
- University of Victoria -  
Victoria, BC
- Vancouver Island University -  
Nanaimo, BC
- University of Northern British  
Columbia - Prince George, BC
- Centennial College -  
Scarborough, ON
- Queen's University -  
Kingston, ON
- University of Alberta -  
Edmonton, AB
- McGill University - Montréal, QC



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## SOURCES

- DC Menstrual Research Team Report (Appendix B):  
[https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A\\_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH](https://douglassu.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Data/EYVU-hD0JjNCgXPy4e57ZBYBUf2A_VgR4ff0aa3ZLT6gQQ?e=1SUpNH)
- United Way Period Promise Research:  
[https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0169/5960/2752/files/Period\\_Promise\\_Research\\_Project\\_Final\\_Report\\_-\\_Errata\\_May\\_28\\_2021.pdf?v=1622477329](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0169/5960/2752/files/Period_Promise_Research_Project_Final_Report_-_Errata_May_28_2021.pdf?v=1622477329)
- Free Periods - <https://www.freeperiods.org/periodpoverty>
- Free Periods Canada - <https://www.freeperiods.ca/>
- Douglas College - <https://www.douglascollege.ca/>
- Douglas College Quick Facts for Academic Year 2019-20 -  
<https://www.douglascollege.ca/sites/default/files/docs/institutional-research-and-planning/Quick%20Facts%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>

# APPENDIX A

## Period Promise Calculation

\*Products cost \$0.25 per product

PRODUCT	periods per year	x 5 days each	x 1 every 6 hours	Total
	13	5	4	260 products per year

WORKERS:	Hours worked per day	N days per year	/	Hours worked per year	/hrs in a year	= %time at work
	8	250		2000	8760	23%
	*250 is 5day work week with 10 vacation days					
				23/100	x/260	
	Full Time Staff Person:					59.8 products per year
	60 products x 0.25= \$15 per year or \$1.25 per month					
	*\$0.25 cost per product					

STUDENTS:	Hrs per class	Class per term	weeks per term	terms per year	hr per year	/hrs in a year	= %time on campus
	3	4	14	2	336	8760	4%
		hrs per week	hr per term				
		12	168				
					4/100	x/260	
	Fulltime student on campus:					10.4 products per year	
	10.4 products x 0.25 = \$2.60 per year or \$0.21 per month						
	*\$0.25 cost per product						

## Annual Cost Calculation for Douglas College

### Full Time Equivalent Students at Douglas College

2020-21 FTE	11121
* Douglas College Institution Accountability Plan and Report 2020-21	
65% women-identified students	

Number of FT Students	N FEMALES	COST ANNUALLY
11,121	7228.65	\$ 2.60 \$ 18,794.49

### Total Staff at Douglas College

2020-21	1963
* Douglas College Institution Accountability Plan and Report 2020-21	
65% women-identified staff	

Number of FT Employees	N FEMALES	COST ANNUALLY
1,963	1275.95	\$ 15.00 \$ 19,139.25

<b>Total Cost Per Year</b>	<b>\$ 37,933.74</b>
*based upon all products needed for students and staff	
*inflated cost due to part-time staff counted as full-time	
*inflated cost due to estimate based upon regular supply usage vs. emergency usage	

<b>2021-22</b>
25% of courses offered online
25% reduced staff working on campus
<b>Total Annual Cost \$37933.74 reduced by 25% = \$ 28,450.31</b>

### Douglas College 2020-21 Audited Financial Statements

From Statement of Operations	
Total Expenses	\$ 161,757,150
Expenses (note 15) - Supplies & Service	\$ 28,283,284
Annual Surplus	\$ 15,957,000

		100% attendance	25% attendance
From Statement of Operations:			
Total Expenses	\$ 161,757,150	0.023451%	0.017588%
Expenses (note 15) - Supplies & Services	\$ 28,283,284	0.134121%	0.100591%
Annual Surplus	\$ 15,957,000	0.237725%	0.178294%
*Douglas College Audit 2020-21			