**NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release

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Douglas students applaud the provincial governments’ investment into the Douglas College community with the announcement of the new build at 808 Royal in New Westminster. The new build, set to break ground in summer 2023, will provide 368 beds for future students through on-campus housing, increased access to academic spaces, and a step towards building community in New Westminster.

“One of the many barriers to obtaining a post-secondary education is housing affordability. It is an issue that must be addressed and educating the greater community about the struggles that students face is critical,” said Mehre Dlir, External Relations Director of the Douglas Students’ Union.

808 Royal is a great step towards helping current and future students tackle the affordability crisis and increasing costs associated with attending post-secondary institutions in BC, all at a time when our province is seeing massive growth in the economy and will require a highly skilled, mobile, and resilient workforce.

This will be the largest provincial capital investment into a post-secondary institution that benefits both Douglas College students and the local community in New Westminster. Not only is this the first time Douglas College will be able to offer student residences, but the announcement provides the opportunity for students to access safe and affordable housing that will alleviate pressures on the local rental market. “As a student representative,” says Mehre Dlir, “I am optimistic about the government’s willingness to work with post-secondary institutions to advocate for and provide more housing and consider community-based solutions.”

Chairperson of the BC Federation of Students, Melissa Chirino, added “We know that students are struggling to find affordable places to live, that is why this announcement means so much. This on-campus housing will ensure that students at Douglas College will continue to build a well-resourced and inclusive community on campus. While this is great to see, we look forward to more actions on tackling housing affordability in New Westminster.”

The Douglas Students’ Union has long been advocating for students at Douglas College for over 50 years and believe this is another step towards an accessible, affordable, and equitable post-secondary system in BC for all.

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