

Friday, April 21, 2017

**Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce 22nd Annual Business Excellence Awards
nomination for Don Lovisa, president, Durham College**

Over the past decade, as a local resident and business leader, Durham College (DC) president Don Lovisa has established himself as one of the most dynamic, visionary and personable leaders based in Oshawa, as well as a reputable voice for Ontario and Canada in advancing our knowledge economy. Don truly embodies what it means to be a community builder at all levels, from a local to an international context. With unwavering integrity and authenticity, Don has dedicated himself and his career to serving his community through transformational leadership.

The college has thrived under Don's guidance, realizing significant, strategic growth in students, learning spaces and reputation. DC has become the fastest growing college in Ontario, moving from less than 7,000 students in Don's first year at DC to more than 11,000 in fall 2016; one of the largest employers in Durham Region, with more than 1,500 employees; and has undergone a campus revitalization of nearly \$140 million in renovations and new buildings. There was a time when such outcomes were not considered obvious, as Don inherited a dire financial state for the college. It has been through his focus, perseverance and skillful engagement of his leadership team, and outreach across the region and country to rally leaders for DC's mission, that Don has made his achievements.

Registering an economic impact of more than \$800 million to Durham Region, there is virtually nowhere in the area where DC's presence is not felt. The college has also introduced more than 40 new market-driven programs in established, emerging and dynamic fields of study that continually evolve to directly support our local employers and economy. Don has also overseen the development of DC's applied research enterprise that brings together experts from across the college who work collaboratively with students and local businesses to develop innovative, results-driven solutions to help businesses reach their goals. As a result, DC's financial stability and accountability under Don's leadership has meant Oshawa and its surrounding communities are attaining meaningful growth as the college continues to add new employees and services to better assist students.

Don's professional achievements directly reflect his innate understanding that the success and well-being of the college and the City of Oshawa are inextricably linked, meaning a stronger community for everyone. He never takes for granted that the college's success is not possible without the support, partnerships and generosity of its partners, including the city. It has been through his focus, perseverance and skillful engagement of his

leadership team, and outreach to community partners, that Don has truly fulfilled the college's promise that 'success matters' – for Durham College, its students, its employees and its community. To Don, these are not simply words – they are a foundation for a better community overall.

Don is continually sought after for policy advice in local and international settings. The provincial government has called on him in his role as vice-chair of Colleges Ontario not only for guidance in understanding the crossroads facing higher education but also for his understanding of community issues such as access to daycare. Federal ministers have called on Don to assist on issues such as the lack of women in skilled trades, involving both Don and the college in a national roundtable for solutions. At an international level, Don has advised education leaders in Barbados, India and Vietnam on best practices for cultivating a knowledge economy through higher education.

A tireless advocate and champion for the college system, Don holds roles on numerous sector-focused committees including:

- Chair, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Co-ordinating Committee
- Vice-chair, Committee of Presidents
- Vice-chair and Eastern Region Representative, Committee of Presidents Executive
- Co-chair, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development/Colleges Ontario Policy and Funding Steering Committee
- Chair, Colleges Ontario Three-year Degree Advocacy Group
- Member, Ontario College Application Service Board of Directors
- Chair, Colleges Ontario 50th Anniversary Task Force

It was in his role as chair of Colleges Ontario's 50th anniversary task force, which is responsible for the milestone anniversary celebrations in 2017 commemorating the founding of the Ontario college system, that Don successfully led a request to the Ontario government for a \$50-million legacy fund for the province's public colleges. Announced on April 3, the legacy fund will see each college in Ontario receive a portion of the funds that is to be put towards enhancing the student experience.

Don's ability to mobilize teams and leaders across settings on matters that are at the heart of supporting our knowledge economy is nothing short of remarkable. Don has a vision of the deep, long-term impact education has for local and global communities, and leaders have aligned with him to invest in his inclusive vision, time and time again.

His accomplishments support students and industries, and provide a visionary view into what the college represents for the local economy. Since becoming president of DC, he has led more than \$140 million in new investment to the college including capital expansion and campus renewal.

In 2011, Don spearheaded the development and opening of DC's \$22-million Student Services building at the college's Oshawa campus, which has become a system leader in offering students one-stop access to support services. Recognizing that students require contemporary supports to be successful within the classroom and beyond, Don's vision embodied in the Student Services building and the supports provided within are the totality of what it means to provide students with an open, accessible learning environment.

More recently, Don aligned all levels of government to invest in the new Centre for Collaborative Education (CFCE), which is currently under construction at the college's Oshawa campus. A legacy project tied to the college's 50th anniversary in 2017, the new multi-level, 75,000-square-foot-facility will serve as an educational access point for students while bringing together local, Indigenous and global community groups and members of key business sectors, and is being designed to reflect and address the needs of both students and the community, including the desire for more collaborative learning and social spaces. The CFCE will serve as a community hub in Oshawa for the college's growing numbers of domestic and international students, the majority of whom stay in the region, which is thriving as it is maturing into a dynamic economic engine of innovation – again, in large part by Don's design, as he has recently assembled the CEOs of Durham Region to catapult the region into being a hub of innovation.

In May 2016, Don played a key role in bringing together eight of Durham Region's largest employers along with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to host the region's first-ever Idea Summit, a one-day conference designed to be a platform for the development of a new strategy aimed at creating jobs and stimulating investment and innovation in the City of Oshawa and the greater Durham Region.

Also in 2016, as a further extension of his vision for growth and development in Durham Region, Don led the college and its partners in the Durham Learning and Business district (dLAB) in successfully promoting the expansion of GO train service along the Lakeshore East line to Bowmanville. dLAB is a development project focused on creating opportunities for students to get involved in research, manufacturing and entrepreneurial activities to create stable, long-term employment in the area and beyond. The college, and Don specifically, had a lead role in the group that met with key leadership at Metrolinx and within the provincial government to discuss the need for GO expansion through to Bowmanville. This included the group overseeing a business case identifying that expansion would result in the creation of 21,000 permanent new jobs, 6,000 person years in construction employment, 6,000 homes to be built within walking distance of a GO station and more than \$70 million in annual savings for residents related to time, vehicle costs and improved road safety. In June, the provincial government announced the expansion will be in place by 2024, bringing four new GO stations to Durham, including two in Oshawa.

dLAB was developed as the result of a provincial environmental assessment that recommended GO expansion across Highway 401 as the preferred option for attracting significant new jobs and residents to Durham Region.

Plans for the new dLAB site, which straddles the Whitby-Oshawa border, intend to bring together private enterprise with higher education and emerging technology to create a dynamic new urban hub of talent, innovation and growth.

Don's success in establishing DC as a trusted partner is also evident in the college's recent invitation to join the City of Oshawa's "Teaching Cities" initiative, where along with other partners that include the Canadian Urban Institute, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the University of Toronto's Civil Engineering department, the city will become a living lab to learn about urban issues and create solutions to urban problems.

Everyone who knows Don acknowledges that he comfortably balances a far-reaching vision and network, while maintaining true authenticity in his relationships, including and especially with his students. The DC community, including its students, recognize Don as a friendly face; someone who is always open to conversation and ready to cheer on members of the DC family as well as the community, all without breaking stride while he continues to advance the business relationships and operations of the college.

Don joined DC in July 2007 as vice-president, Academic, following a successful 20-year career at Confederation College in Northern Ontario, where he held numerous positions including dean of the School of Business, Hospitality and Media Arts. Prior to entering the post-secondary sector, he worked internationally, consulting and providing training and teaching in areas of globalization, market-driven economic transition, international trade, and entrepreneurship and business development. This impressive range of skills has proved beneficial for not only the college, but the greater community as well.

Professional achievements aside, Don genuinely values the importance of civic duty, which has led him to participate in many initiatives that aim to enhance quality of life for Oshawa residents. This is one of many points of inspiration for his ongoing community work. Don is a member of the 100 Men of Oshawa, a group of community member and leaders who are committed to helping others in the community by making an immediate, direct and positive effect on the lives of their neighbours. Every three months, members come together to jointly select a local charity or not-for-profit organization and each write a \$100 cheque with 100 per cent of their donations going directly to the selected organization. Don is an honorary member of the Rotary Club of Oshawa, and a fervent supporter of United Way Durham Region (in fact, in 2016, Don made good on his promise to dye his hair DC green if the college reached its fundraising goal of \$25,000 during its annual United Way campus campaign!).

He participates in activities for the Durham Community Roundtable Group and Durham Prosperity Conference, and recently completed his term as co-chair of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer, an organization dedicated to assisting students to achieve successful academic and career futures by facilitating the development of educational transfer pathways among Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities.

Beyond his professional and civic duties, Don also takes great care to prioritize time with family and model the work-life balance he wishes for all of his employees, colleagues and peers. He and his wife, Cheryl, find immense joy in spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Guided by the college's mission that the student experience comes first, Don continually rallies both the campus community and greater community, inspiring invaluable support and engagement from alumni, industry and community partners – in Oshawa and well beyond -- and all levels of government. He continues to skillfully balance the day-to-day needs and ambitions of DC students and employees with the bigger picture of Canada's modern workforce in both a local and global context. Mobilizing DC's employees each and every day, he remains truly committed to connecting the dots between the college's programs and services, key sectors in the City of Oshawa, and current and future generations of skilled professionals to encourage innovation, opportunity and prosperity for all.