



SA
STUDENTASSOCIATION
GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT
2019–2020



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studentassociation.ca



The SA Team

Rosalyn Miller - Acting General Manager

Wafa Ulliyan - Operations Manager

Avez Hasham, Galina Chible - Senior Coordinator, Finance

Chris Yalousakis - Safewalk Coordinator

Jason Beeston - Senior Coordinator, Building

Yaw Okyere, Linzee Exner - SA Connect Support Staff

Jessica Pasion - Internal Coordinator

Michelle Pettis - Community Care Coordinator

Antoinette Salazar, Romina Avila - Community Care Centre Support Staff

Mick Sweetman - Publications & Communications Coordinator

Halley Requena-Silva - Interim Publications & Communications Coordinator

Mohammad Sarker - Academic Coordinator

Neil Cumberbatch - Recreation Coordinator

Ronnie Cruz - Community Services Coordinator

Greg Philip, Mireya Forero, Lisa Lee - Student Nutrition Access Program (SNAP) Leads

Russ Adade - Student Networks & Clubs Coordinator

Slobodan Krupezevic - Facilities Coordinator

Dennis Knowles, Jose Barrios, Chris Browne, Deborah Crane, Qader Afghan - Facilities Support Staff

William Reid - Student Legal Counsel

Yukiko Ito - Senior Coordinator, Health Benefits

Cherry Ding, Emma Fullante, Shavaughn Thompson

Health Benefits Support Staff

To Our Members...

■ A message from the SAGBC's General Manager



Alongside an amazing group of elected student leaders representing the Board of Directors, together with staff we led the organization through the most tumultuous period in the organization's history, 2019-2020.

In spring of 2019, the Association entered a challenging period as we strived to meet the demand imposed on us by the Ontario Government, Student Choice Initiative (SCI). The SCI showed little value for the relevance of student unions and the delivery of key programs, potentially disrupting critical services such as the foodbank program now renamed Student Nutrition Access Program.

We redesigned our programs and services to maintain essential services while remaining in compliance with the rigorous requirements of the SCI legislation. The SA focused on meeting the essential needs of our student members and remained committed in making the necessary changes to ensure that the organization remained fiscally sound and welcoming. The SCI was later struck down by the courts as “unlawful” but with over 90% of our student population opting into the few programs deemed non-essential we were ahead of the curve in many ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown forced us to shift from 100% in-person programming to fully online engagement and as this was unprecedented we worked together with our student body, GBC partners, external partners and collaborators to achieve this change. We continue to learn and improve in the delivery of virtual programming, keeping the mission statement at the forefront of our works. The pandemic impacted our students significantly and the Board of Directors approved an emergency bursary of \$400,000 to support students in critical need.

We will continue to assess the effects of the pandemic and respond accordingly during the course of the 2020-2021 fiscal year. We will focus on improving our online program and service delivery platforms to be more innovative and engaging. In addition, we will work as hard as we can to make sure that as an organization we are doing all that is necessary to keep you safe and maintain your student experience at George Brown College.

Over the last year, we have accomplished many things that are worth celebrating and the report captures the innovative changes along with the successes.

Thanks to our hard-working and dedicated staff, students, volunteers and industry partners who helped us navigate the challenges and celebrate the wins of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

~ Rosalyn Miller, General Manager



Message from the SAGBC Board of Directors

Your 2019-2020 SAGBC Board of Directors



We are the student union representing the interests of all GBC students who become members. We focus on representation, advocacy, events and the delivery of services with the objective to build a united student movement to strive towards a high-quality education. As a member of the SA you have a right to join or vote for the SA board of directors and shape the future of GBC. Cultivating our rich diversity is a hallmark of the Student Association. Together we work to promote a campus climate that is respectful, inclusive, supportive, and safe. These core values allow us to provide a living and learning environment where you can all pursue your dreams and reach your highest potential.

The Board of Directors of 2019-2020 had a challenging year but successful in meeting our obligations to our members,

A) the Student Choice Initiative, the SA Board - made difficult decisions that affected our members: went through lot of changes:

1. Creating a membership fee for SA governance and oversight
2. Separating our members by class – those that opting in or did not opt into the SA membership and two classes were created to comply with the Student Choice Initiative
3. Rebranding the organization as core service and programs deemed essential were restructured
4. Re-negotiated with GBC the SA fees to the prior year format after court deemed government SCI unlawful and where we regained our autonomy to program from student lens.

B) There were some major changes in the Governing policies of the Student Association such as:

1. The Consolidation and reformatting of the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Student Association of the George Brown College
2. Amendments to ensure compliance with Governance Standards & the Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act and General Governance Practice across student Unions
3. Revised sections in the Voting Directors of Accountability Manual to ensure that the elected board members are accountable, transparent and honest to each other and the members of the Student Association

As members of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) the Student Association was in full support to challenge the Student Choice Initiative which was regulated by Government of Ontario. The Student Association carried out the following campaigns with CFS

1. We the Students Campaign – (number of Signatures we achieved)
2. Supported as a student union the court challenge on SCI , which CFS won and was deemed unlawful
3. Mental Health Matters
4. Fight the Fees Campaign
5. Student Voters Education – Providing Information & Educating students regarding federal elections

In collaboration with the George Brown College and the GBC Foundation, the GBC & SA COVID-19 Relief Fund was formed and distributed a total of \$1,012,900 to 4021 students in winter and summer semester 2020. The Student Association contributed \$350,000 in the GBC and SA COVID-19 Relief Fund. Furthermore, the Student Association established and distributed \$50,000 to 332 Students through Emergency COVID-19 Equity Care Fund.

In the year of 2019, the Student Association distributed \$488,000 in the awards and bursaries to the students of George Brown College and we encourage students to apply for the Year 2020.

The Student Association would also like to acknowledge the incredible work of our staff, board members, partners and the members. We couldn't have made it through this challenging year without the continued support of our members. We look forward to the upcoming successful years of the Student Association of George Brown College.



Jasmyn St. Hilaire
Director of Communications & Internal

Kushagra Manchanda
Director of Operations

Taranjeet Singh Manchanda
Business Educational Centre
Representative

Ricardo Brown
Construction and Engineering
Technologies Educational
Centre Representative

Manisha Punjabi
Director of Education & Equity

Jolie Tadros
Health Sciences Educational
Centre Representative

Jamie Jamieson
Hospitality and Culinary Arts Educational
Centre Representative

Benny Brown
Community Services and Early Childhood
Educational Centre Representative

Key Highlights...



3000+
Cases of Academic
Issues Helped



\$50,000
Distributed to
marginalized students
during COVID-19



500+
Students with legal
and financial concerns
assisted



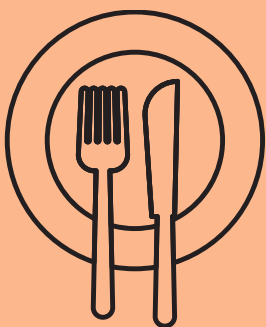
71
Student-led Clubs
and Networks
ratified by the SA



14%
Rise in international
health plan enrollment



1,716
Free walk
accompaniment
from SafeWalk



30,000
Students served
through SNAP
programs



80
Events and parties
for over 11,000
students

SA Operations

■ Keeping SA spaces clean and friendly



“The Operations team strives to foster meaningful growth and learning opportunities to George Brown students. They provide a safe, clean and accessible spaces at which students can study, relax and socialize. Their team members, including the SA Building Capital & Facilities team, SA Connect, Events & Recreation Team and SafeWalk, work hard to offer students a safe and memorable experience at the college.”

- Wafa Ulliyan, Operations Manager

SA Connect

SA Connect is the team of friendly faces who help understand students' needs and requests and connect them with the services they need.

The SA Connect team helps students schedule their graduation photos, gain their International Student Identity Card and buy movie tickets at a discounted price. They also offer a free-to-use fax machine that all students are able to use.

Because of COVID-19, the SA Connect team had to leave their posts at Casa Loma, Waterfront and St. James, but even in remote learning, they remain committed to helping student access SA services.

Building & Capital

The SA spaces are designed to provide students with a space to relax, study, grab lunch and enjoy life at George Brown. And the SA's facilities team are the ones who keep it that way.

The Student Association is striving to make our spaces accessible, vibrant, and student-centered. A large capital project was launched in early 2020 to upgrade all of our welcome and support spaces to offer enhanced support spaces to our students across the three GBC campuses, but due to COVID-19 pandemic, the project was put on hold. The SA efforts will continue to foster the student's experience and accessibility.

SafeWalk

■ Helping students safely and securely get to and from GBC

The SA's SafeWalk team saw their program grow in 2019-2020, as they offered 1,716 free walks to students, faculty, and any other members of the George Brown College community. That's 14.2 walks per day at all campuses, a 14% rise from last year's average.

The St. James campus (451) saw the most walks, with Casa Loma (446) right behind it. Daniels Waterfront, a new addition to the SafeWalk team this year, was the site of 214 walks.

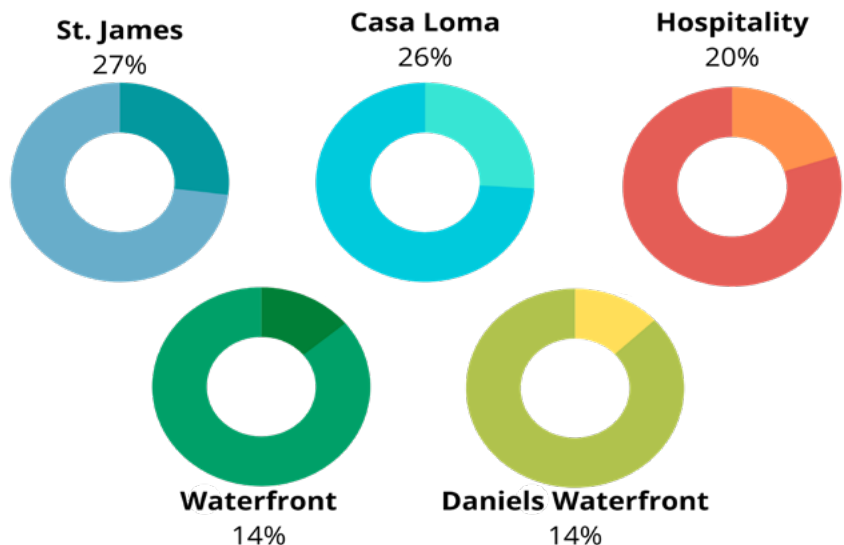
In addition to a larger body of people served, the SafeWalk team made itself more accessible to George Brown students this year. In partnership with the Canadian Hearing Society and the college's Accessible Learning Department, SafeWalk became an accessible program for employment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

And as the threat of COVID-19 rose, SafeWalk took proactive measures to protect the health and safety of its staff. By mid-February, bottles of hand sanitizer and tissue boxes were included in

SafeWalk bags, and staff were instructed to maintain six feet of distance from one another.

And when COVID-19 forced the school to shut down, meaning SafeWalkers weren't allowed on campus, the SafeWalk team refunded students their fees for the Spring/Summer semester.

Over the summer of 2020, the SafeWalk team worked hard to make sure its service was back for the new school year safely and effectively. With SafeWalkers on each GBC campus, the team is ready to get back underway.



Student Nutrition Access Program

- Helping students get access to a healthy diet which doesn't break the bank



The Student Nutrition Access Program was one of the SA's most successful programs in the 2019/20 school year, with students utilizing their services 30,000 times.

Among their many successes include the Good Food Market, which gives students access to low-cost fruits and vegetables with locations at Casa Loma and Waterfront. The Good Food Market served almost 2,000 people between September 2019 and March 2020, as the SNAP team worked to ensure the market provided students with a wide selection of produce.

They also managed the SNAP Pantry, which served 1,466 households and over 8,400 individual visits. The SNAP Pantry distributes nutritious food and meals to students experiencing food insecurity.

The SNAP team also served over 8,000 breakfast meals through its Breakfast Table Program. There are countless numbers of students who do not allocate enough time for breakfast, and the Breakfast Table Program allowed them to grab a healthy option (like yogurt, fresh fruit and granola bars) instead of a doughnut from Tim's.

And the SNAP team's commitment to the health and nutrition of George Brown College students remained undisturbed after COVID-19 forced staff and students off-campus. As the economic impacts of COVID-19 took effect and students lost their incomes, SNAP stood up to support them. They distributed over \$13,500 worth of grocery gift cards to students who could prove they were financially impacted by the pandemic.



Breakfast Table
8000



SNAP Pantry
8400



Good Food Market
2000



Gift Card Program
548



Resource Centre
10,936



Income Tax Clinic
548

Health Benefits

■ Medical coverage that lets you sleep easy

The SA's Health Benefits team was particularly impacted by the pandemic. Not only were they forced to adapt their services to a virtual environment, but the number of students seeking clarification about their health benefits and what they cover increased dramatically.

Beyond COVID-19, the 2019/20 academic year was the sixth consecutive year in which the Health Benefits team saw the number of international students using their service grow. This year marked a 14% improvement over the previous year and the highest enrollment rate since the service went into effect. For domestic students, enrollment has remained steady, with a slight decrease from last year's numbers but still well within the year-to-year average over the past decade.

The Health Benefits team has also been working with students directly, answering their questions, advising them on how to take advantage of their benefits and assisting them with requests to opt-out of the service. At the beginning of each semester, thousands of students got in touch with the program, either in person or over phone or email. The health benefits team was there to answer the call for each of them.



International Enrollment:
7,277



Domestic Enrollment:
16,700

"The Health Benefits program is a vital support program for George Brown College students. Knowing you're covered in case of emergency allows students not to worry about the financial impact of medical care and focus on their academics."

- Yukiko Ito, Senior Health Benefits Coordinator

Student Legal Services

■ Navigating legal questions in the COVID-19 era

The Student Legal Service team served over 500 students over the past year – aiding them with services like creating notarized documents, helping manage student affidavits and giving financial advice when needed.

After the COVID-19 shutdown, they made their service available every day of the week via email, and have conducted all consultations virtually. They've also hosted a series of webinars, where students got advice on topics like the Canadian Student Service Grant and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

The Student Legal Service team proved again to be both responsive and flexible to student requests in 2019/20, and despite the challenges students faced during COVID-19, they could always trust that their legal and financial questions could be answered.

Student Academic Support Program

- Helping students adapt to remote learning and solving academic issues during a pandemic


3,000
STUDENTS SERVED

"Every time I hear from students that their academic issues have been resolved through our assistance, it inspires me to work for students and makes me proud of being a staff member at the Student Association."

- Mohammad Sarker, Academic Coordinator

When COVID-19 forced students out of the classroom and into virtual classes, many George Brown students turned to the Student Academic Support Program to voice their frustration with online learning.

Academic concerns added to the stress of the health, safety and economic anxieties of COVID-19, and when students felt unsatisfied with the delivery of online courses or that the college was unaccommodating for the unique situation, they turned to the SASP.

Many others spoke up about the lack of resources, like laptops and stable internet, at their homes. One student wrote in to say they failed a course simply because they did not have an industrial sewing machine at home. And because they failed that course, they



were not able to meet the prerequisites for the next semester.

The Student Academic Support Program supported students through all these injustices by coordinating with college representatives and informing students of their academic rights.

The SASP grew again this year, helping over 3,000

George Brown students identify and resolve their academic issues. They also saw an increase in awareness of their service, as there was a 6.57% increase in the number of students reporting unfair grading.

Community Care Centre

■ Students supporting students

The impacts of the Student Choice Initiative included an overhaul of the Community Action Centre as it previously existed. Rebranded with a new name and logo, the Community Care Centre continued their advocacy and peer-to-peer support with the added uncertainty about whether students would recognize them and the looming threat of the SCI.

But students not only found them, they took advantage of the CCC's services at a greater level than before. With an aim at supporting traditionally marginalized and underrepresented groups, the CCC offered peer-to-peer support and organized several peer wellness events like Orange Shirt Day, Trans Remembrance Day and a BIPOC Book Group.

And when COVID-19 reached its peak, the CCC recognized that equity groups were disproportionately affected by the effects of the pandemic. They formed the Equity Care Emergency Fund, which distributed \$50,000 to over 300 traditionally marginalized George Brown students.



\$50,000



Equity Care
Emergency Fund

Events and Recreation

■ College should be more than just projects and exams

The Events and Recreation team hosted over 80 events this year which helped keep students engaged and gave them an opportunity to take a break from their academics and the stress that comes with it.

Over 11,000 students attended SA events this year, and a survey run by the events team indicates 85% of them left highly satisfied and 93% felt they would recommend SA events to their friends.

And when COVID-19 hit, the Events team switched gears – hosting events online, where students connected over Zoom for events like Digital Yoga, Virtual Paint Nights and live performances by magicians and musicians.

SAGBC Events Survey



89%

Improved their social lives



94%

Worth the money they paid



85%

Highly Satisfied



93%

Would Recommend to friends

“Thank you so much for supporting this virtual event. You have done a really good job creating and supporting a community amongst other post-secondary students where we can compete and play for fun against each other. All respect!”

- Taejai, GBC Student

What kinds of events did we host this year? Here's a look at a few:



Roller Skating

Throwback to the 80's

125 students joined the SA squad for rollerskating at Scooter's Roller Palace.



Back to School Boat Cruise

All Aboard!

Last September, 475 GBC students hit the open water to celebrate the new school year at the SA's 19th-annual Back to School Boat Cruise.



Diwali Night

Celebrating Diwali in style

Over 275 students turned out to celebrate Diwali with music, food and dancing, all provided by the Student Association.

Clubs and Networks

■ Connecting students over interests, passions and ideas

The SA funds and facilitates 71 student-led clubs and networks but, when Doug Ford and the Ontario Conservatives introduced the Student Choice Initiative, all of that work was threatened.

The Student Choice Initiative deemed student clubs a ‘non-essential’ service, meaning under the SCI students could opt-out of this fee. But upon further examination of the SCI mandates, the Clubs team learned that many of the services provided by student-led clubs were considered essential.

The solution was to establish the Student Network Program, in which groups that were categorized as ‘essential’ were labeled Networks and split into three categories: Academic Networks, Health Networks and Recreational Networks.

Despite the threat of SCI and growing concerns about funding, the Clubs and Networks team ratified roughly the same number of student-led clubs and networks as the previous year. Included are 23 academic networks, 20 recreational networks, 7 health and counselling networks and 21 clubs.



“The Black Student Success Network helped me to open up in a community I knew I was going to have a hard time coping with since I was new to the Canadian education system. I was able to create networks and friendships that came in handy in my day to day activities on and off-campus. I’m so glad to have found a club like that. I would have been pretty much lonely and lost in school.”

- Nana Yaa Sika, GBC Student

Student Media

■ Bringing students the news they need to know

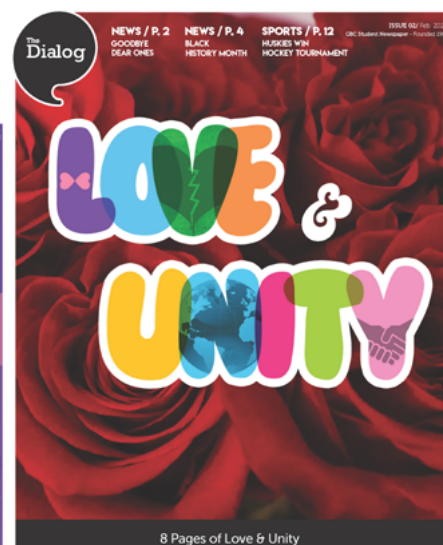
The *Dialog*, George Brown's student-run newspaper funded by the SAGBC, aims to keep students involved and engaged with what is going on around campus. From covering the George Brown Huskies to interviewing College executives to reporting on the SAGBC itself, the *Dialog*'s team of student-journalists published dozens of articles across six monthly newspapers in 2019-2020

Perhaps their most important journalism this year was their coverage of the Student Choice Initiative and how it was deemed unlawful in December of 2019. The *Dialog* took students inside the fight against the Student Choice Initiative and spoke to the key players in the fight against the proposed policy.

Sports reporter Kyle Peters covered the men's and women's basketball teams as they enjoyed hugely successful seasons. Reporter Lara Tai shared the stories of members of the GBC community who were killed in flight PS752 in Iran. And everyone at the *Dialog* provided timely coverage of the SAGBC's board of directors to ensure students leaders are held accountable.

The *Dialog*'s team of student-journalists kept a finger on the pulse of everything at the College and shed light on the thoughts, perspectives and experiences of the GBC community. All their reporting is made available for free, both online at dialognews.ca and through the newspapers that were distributed at every campus.

Some Dialog covers from this year...



SA Internal

■ Helping students fund their education



The SA provides on-campus employment to both domestic and international students above minimum wage. This allows students to easily commute to their classes and to their on-campus work at ease. The soft skills that students either develop or enhance prepares them on what is to come outside the college doors. In 2019-2020, the SA hired over 100+ students during the Fall and Winter Semester – more than half being new hires to the organization.

Another financial opportunity that students can access is the SA Awards, Bursaries and Scholarships. The SA provides a variety of awards, bursaries and scholarships, ranging from \$500-\$2000 per, allowing some peace of mind for students who struggle financially. In 2019-2020, SA awarded over \$300,000 to students. In collaboration with the GBC Awards office and GBC Foundation, the SA strives to continue to partner and work with them for years to come.

Have questions for the Student Association?

We're available at **416-415-5000 Ext. 4730, Ext. 5360 and Ext. 2455**. You can also follow along on **Facebook (SAofGBC)**, **Instagram (@SAGBC)** and **Twitter (@SAGBC)**

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Casa Loma Campus
142 Kendal Ave. – Room e100

St. James Campus
200 King St. E. – Room 147

Waterfront Campus
51 Dockside Dr. – Room 033

Ryerson Campus
99 Gerard St. E. – Room 614

