



Government Relations **2023 Annual Report**





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Land Acknowledgment

George Brown College is located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and other Indigenous peoples who have lived here over time. We are grateful to share this land as treaty people who learn, work, and live in the community with each other.



About Us

Making the Connection

Government relations is about aligning shared interests between government and our institution. It's about ensuring we strategically plan, position, and promote the work we do, and maintain good relationships with external decision-makers and funders, as well as sector partners.

The George Brown College Government Relations (GR) Unit was established in January 2023, building on the success and longstanding work of many dedicated government relations leaders within the college.

Our team works to build and maintain positive relationships with government entities, and participates in policy advocacy, legislative monitoring, partnership building, strategic communication, issue analysis, and legislative compliance.

We focus our efforts on keeping lines of communication open with municipal, provincial, and federal levels, ensuring George Brown College is top of mind when government thinks of impressive institutions that are building a workforce for the future.



Mission

Our mission is to support George Brown College's work

The GR Unit is committed to delivering an integrated hub and spoke model to ensure alignment of George Brown College needs with government goals.

Meet the Team



Joe Cressy
Senior Vice President – External Relations, Communications and Real Estate Development



Laura Jamer
Director – Government Relations



Munisha Basiram
Manager – Government Relations



Message from the **President**

Dear colleagues:

What a thrill to look back on a terrific year at George Brown College through the lens of government relations. Our newly created Government Relations (GR) Unit demonstrated its impact by working with you and your teams to showcase the tremendous achievements of our staff, faculty, and students.

Keeping positive and open lines of communication fostered by the GR Unit with our government partners is critical to meeting the needs of our students and the labour market. This report showcases the value of public investment in our institution. Additionally, it highlights the pride we can all take in our best-in-class programs and course offerings.

Government relations is about aligning our interests with those of our students and industry partners, as well as funders and legislators, to advance mutual understanding and co-ordination. I am pleased that the GR Unit is launching its Government Relations Strategy through this report. This is a moment to reflect on our achievements of the past year, and to look forward to our future.

Thank you to all involved who work with and support the GR Unit, and congratulations on an outstanding 2023.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gervan Fearon
President, George Brown College

"I invite you to read through the highlights of the college's first-ever Government Relations Annual Report."



Message from the **Director**

Dear GBC community:

It is with immense pleasure that I extend my gratitude and thanks to each one of you as we present the first annual report of our newly formed George Brown College Government Relations (GR) Unit.

Together, we have accomplished a great deal in 2023. The support and collaboration displayed by the entire George Brown College community, external partners, and sector allies, have been instrumental in the remarkable success we have achieved in our first year together.

The birth of the new dedicated GR Unit in January 2023, building on the success and longstanding work of many dedicated government relations leaders within the college, marked a significant milestone, and transformed aspirations into tangible achievements.

We welcomed our Prime Minister, dozens of ministers and officials, and showcased our three campuses and brilliant work of our faculty and staff. Behind the scenes, we achieved record-fast government approvals, positioned the college prominently in the minds of our funders, and profiled our amazing programs and students.

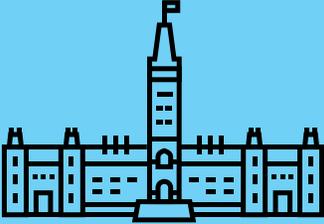
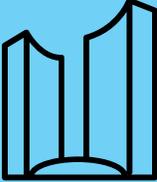
As we continue to evolve and grow, we remain committed to our shared advocacy goals. We look forward to the year ahead, and thank you for being an integral part of our efforts.

With gratitude,

Laura Jamer
Director – Government Relations,
George Brown College

“Reflecting on this past year fills us with pride as we witness the collective impact of our efforts.”

By the Numbers

Totals	 Federal	 Provincial	 Municipal
55 Events	13 Federal Events	31 Provincial Events	11 Municipal Events
73 Elected Officials	03 Prime Ministers/ Federal Leaders Hosted on Campus 06 Ministers (Federal) 13 Federal Parliamentarians 09 Federal Bureaucrats	09 Ministers (Provincial) 12 Provincial Elected Officials 08 Provincial Bureaucrats	13 Municipal Elected Officials
47 Hosted Events	07 Federal Events Hosted on Campus <hr/> 14 GBC Tours	16 Provincial Events <hr/> 03 Announcements Hosted	07 Municipal Events
60	Total Attended Events		GR Events Attended..... 26 GR Events Hosted 28 Conferences..... 06

Priorities

Relationship Building: Throughout the year, the GR Unit establishes and maintains connections with government officials, policymakers, post-secondary institutions, and stakeholders. Through these relationships we facilitate information exchange, foster collaboration, and enhance George Brown College's visibility.

Advocating: Long term, building strong relationships can help influence policy decisions, improve communication channels, and provide valuable insights for informed decision-making in the realm of government relations.

Partnering: As a member of the broader post-secondary community within the City of Toronto and the province of Ontario, we work with valued partner organizations to achieve common goals as well as all levels of government. At the national level, we are proud to partner with [Colleges & Institutes Canada \(CICan\)](#) and [Polytechnics Canada](#). Provincially, we partner with [Colleges Ontario](#) and the [Ontario Chamber of Commerce](#). We also have key partners at the local level, including the [Toronto Region Board of Trade](#), [Waterfront BIA](#), and [Waterfront Toronto](#).



Top 5 Big Wins



George Brown College Hosts Toronto Mayorality Housing Debate

On May 24, George Brown College hosted the Toronto Mayorality Housing Debate at the Daphne Cockwell Centre for Health Sciences.

Moderated by Joe Cressy, the discussion included Olivia Chow, Mark Saunders, Josh Matlow, Mitzie Hunter, Ana Bailão, and Brad Bradford.

Prime Ministers of Canada and Barbados Visit George Brown College for Student Sustainability Town Hall

On October 19, George Brown College welcomed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, co-chairs of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocates group, as well as MP Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, to participate in a town hall discussion with students on Canada-Caribbean international relations and how to build a more sustainable world.



GBC Hosts Ontario Government Announcement for \$300M in PSW Recruitment Funding

On November 23, George Brown College hosted Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care Stan Cho and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones to announce up to \$25,400 in funding per individual, for PSW students and recent grads. The ministers were accompanied by 4 GBC PSW students, Miranda Ferrier from the Ontario PSW Association and Marketa Evans from Colleges Ontario. Delegates wrapped up the day with a tour of our nursing and dental schools.



Federal Environment Minister Makes EV Announcement at George Brown College

On December 19, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, visited the Waterfront Campus to learn about our Electric Vehicle Technician program and announce new federal EV regulations. He was accompanied by 7 federal colleagues, industry and media representatives.



George Brown College Acquires Corus Quay in Waterfront Campus Expansion

As a key component of facilitating the acquisition of 25 Dockside Drive, the GR Unit managed to secure the required Ontario Government Section 28 approval within a record-breaking 10 weeks due to solid relationships with key government members. This approval process can typically take up to 9 months.



Seasonal Highlights



Tours

Jan 27

Minister of Long-Term Care Paul Calandra visits George Brown to tour Daphne Cockwell Centre for Health Sciences

Jul 5

Tour of the Daphne Cockwell Centre for Health Sciences with Deputy Minister Wai from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Aug 9

George Brown Culinary Augmented Education students showcase skills at Premier's home stakeholder breakfast event



Limberlost

Mar 17

Minister of Labour Seamus O'Regan tours Limberlost Place



Skilled Trades

Mar 29

George Brown hosts Skilled Trades Ontario CEO and the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development for apprenticeships announcement

Oct 4

George Brown College Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies (CCET) showcased in BOLT Day of Discovery with Ontario's Minister of Education Stephen Lecce and Associate Minister of Transportation Vijay Thanigasalam



Aug 9

Limberlost topping off event



Visit

Mar 31

Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh visits Waterfront Campus



CICan

April 23
Colleges and
Institutes Canada
Conference



Polytechnics

May 15
Polytechnics Canada
Conference



Mayoralty Debate

May 24
George Brown
College hosts Toronto
Mayoralty Housing
Debate



Students in Action

Jun 16
George Brown College
Culinary Augmented
Education students
showcase skills at
Premier's Big City
Mayors Luncheon



AMO

Aug 21
Association of
Municipalities of
Ontario Conference



PMs Town Hall

Oct 19
George Brown College
hosts Prime Minister
Justin Trudeau and
Prime Minister of
Barbados Mia Mottley
for a town hall event



Mass Timber Talks

Dec 12
George Brown hosts
Ontario Natural
Resources and
Forestry Minister
Graydon Smith and
industry leaders
for mass-timber
roundtable



EV Program Shines

Dec 19
George Brown hosts
Canada's Minister
of Environment and
Climate Change
Steven Guilbeault
for EV regulations
announcement

Reach

Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Footprint

Strengthened Partnerships with the City of Toronto

- **March 23:** Toronto Region Board of Trade Annual Dinner
- **October 3:** Joe Cressy's Participation on Toronto Region Board of Trade Waterfront Forum
- **October 11–13:** Toronto Global Forum & Housing Summit 3.0
- **November 13:** Mayor's Evening for the Arts
- **November 15:** CivicLabTO Symposium
- **November 7:** Boat Tour with Mayor and key stakeholders of the Waterfront to advocate for city approval of LRT next steps
- **December 6:** École Polytechnique Massacre Remembrance Day event with Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow
- **December:** Waterfront expansion announcement planning and co-ordination



Strengthened Partnerships with Provincial Bureaucrats and Staffers

- **February 6:** Ministry of Colleges and Universities Awards
- **February 9:** Schulich event at Humber College
- **November 23:** Minister of LTC Announcement and tour with MOH, LTC, PSW association, and other stakeholders
- **December 11:** Mass-timber roundtable and tour of Limberlost Place with Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Graydon Smith



Strengthened Relationships and Visibility with Federal Government Officials

- **March 2:** Federal and provincial representatives attend Mental Health Conference on campus
- **April 27:** Visit from Economic and Social Development Canada senior officials
- **December 19:** Federal EV announcement with 7 MPs



Invited Partners On Site to See Our Campus

- **November 9:** Casa Loma Campus tour with Colleges Ontario policy team
- **September 29:** Employment and Social Development Canada tour and federal visit with Polytechnics Canada staff



Strengthened Partnerships with Advocacy Associations

- **March 23:** Toronto Region Board of Trade dinner
- **October 3:** CIGan Day on the Hill & GR working group meetings
- **October 3:** George Brown College participation on Toronto Region Board of Trade Waterfront Forum
- **November 1–2:** Ontario Chamber of Commerce Economic Summit
- **November 21:** Toronto Region Board of Trade Talent Symposium
- **November 26–27:** Colleges Ontario Higher Education Summit & Awards Gala and leadership meeting
- **November 28:** Housing presentation to CIGan
- **December 5:** Empire Club of Canada - Infrastructure Meeting
- **December 5:** Evening with Ontario Chamber of Commerce chiefs of staff and deputy ministers' EAs





Advocacy

The GR Unit works across jurisdictions to raise the prominence of the college and promote understanding of our value to the fabric of Toronto, Ontario and Canada to various levels of government. Key themes in our advocacy include the following:

-  Post-secondary education
-  Housing
-  Transit



Post-Secondary Education

Blue Ribbon Panel: Working with partners to provide solutions for financial stability in post-secondary education.

In March 2023, the Ontario government created a blue-ribbon panel to provide advice on the financial stability of post-secondary education. Over the past few months George Brown College has participated in the blue-ribbon panel to discuss and provide solutions in response to the challenging landscape of post-secondary tuition. The panel delivered its report of recommendations to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in November addressing tuition and how to better align education with labour market needs.



Housing

Investigating solutions for post-secondary affordable housing for staff and students.

Colleges play a critical role in supplying the highly skilled workforce to support growing labour market demands across the province. Ontario's lack of student housing affordability and supply is a critical challenge that if left unaddressed, will have long-term implications for the social and economic development of the province. As an urban Ontario institution, with all 3 campuses located in Toronto, GBC has positioned itself to be a leader in exploring housing opportunities rooted in student success in Canada's most expensive city. George Brown College's recently published [Housing Taskforce – Progress Report and Initial Findings](#) documents the pressing demand for student housing solutions. The study found that existing government funding programs for affordable housing do not consider student residences as an eligible type of housing and there are no additional funding sources available to acquire or build new student residences.



Transit

Advocating for expanded transit options through the East Waterfront LRT.

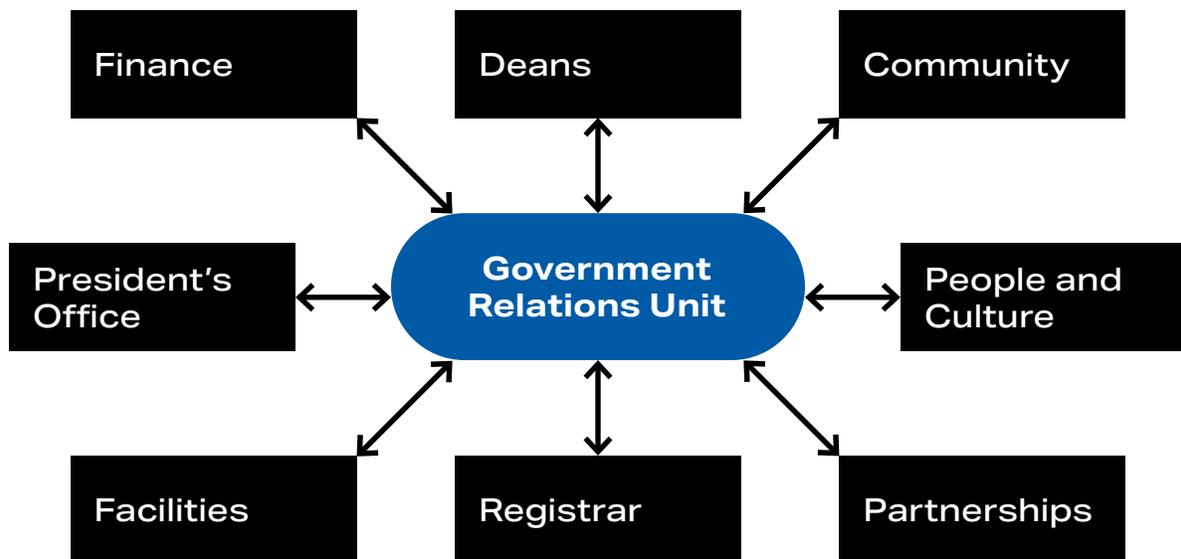
The Union Station to Queens Quay Link and the East Bayfront Light Rail Transit line, also known as the Waterfront East LRT (WELRT), is a priority Waterfront Transit Network project and a joint effort involving the City of Toronto, the TTC, and Waterfront Toronto. On November 7, George Brown and Waterfront Toronto hosted a boat tour with Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow, other city officials, and key waterfront stakeholders to learn about the college's contributions to the community and the need for efficient transit. The event highlighted why investing in the proposed WELRT line is essential to connect new and existing educational, business, and residential developments to meet continued growth in the area. Shortly after, Toronto City Council members approved the expansion of this new line.

Government Relations Strategy 2024

It is through this annual report that we are pleased to announce the completion of our first **Government Relations Strategy: A framework for addressing strategic priorities in future months and years.**

This strategy was built after several months of consultation internally, externally, and as a result of several diverse teams collaborating to identify goals and objectives that align with our future college vision.

Broadly speaking, the strategy provides a framework to guide decision making on advocacy, tours and events, and how we allocate our energy and resources. Further, it recommends developing internal systems to share critical information internally and externally, and takes a whole-of-institution approach to interactions with government. It is a guidebook for continuing to build our GR Unit as a shared services resource, ultimately to best support the work of faculty and staff.



Methodology



Strategic Priorities

Priority #1: Develop George Brown College as an effective partner in finding solutions to student housing

Frame George Brown College as both Ontario's most urban college and as the leading voice on urban student housing in order to create and capitalize on opportunities to further the housing agenda while helping solve the broader housing affordability crisis.

Priority #2: Promote George Brown College as a driver of economic and social development and a key asset in the labour force development pipeline

Highlight the importance of training in the economy, and GBC as an enabler of opportunity for students and a labour force development pipeline for businesses in its local communities.

Priority #3: Showcase George Brown College applied research and best-in-class training

Differentiate George Brown College from other colleges by highlighting its excellence in core areas, which themselves make college education unique—college-led innovation and real-world education.

Priority #4: Lead the way for responsible and effective international student recruitment and success

Underscore George Brown College's approach to international students as a solution to Canada's labour market challenges and a responsible path forward to colleges' international recruiting.

Internal

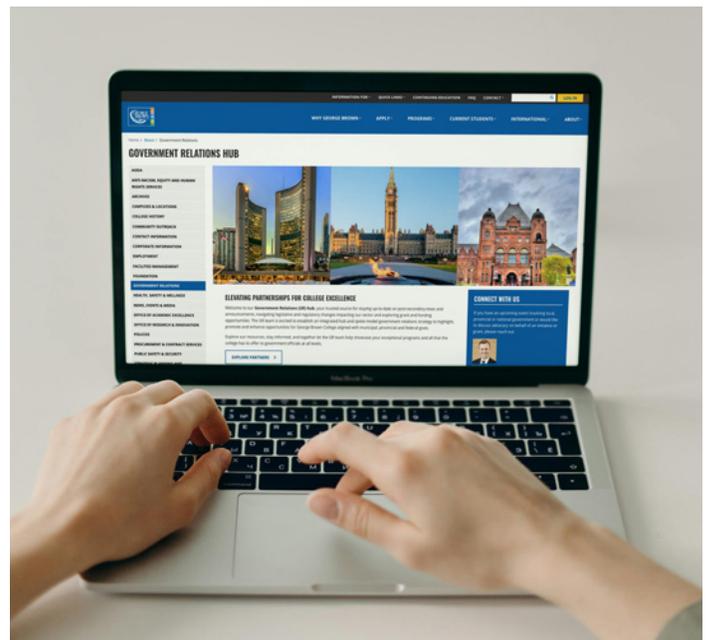
In December 2023, the GR Unit launched a newsletter and landing page as a hub for all news, events, and updates. Stay in the know with our Government Relations Roundup email. Our monthly newsletters will share relevant federal, provincial and municipal post-secondary news, legislative updates, events and more. Please [sign up to receive the newsletter](#).

Visit our Government Relations (GR) hub, your trusted source for staying up to date on post-secondary news and announcements, navigating legislative and regulatory changes impacting our sector, and exploring funding opportunities.

The GR Unit is excited to establish an integrated hub and spoke model government relations strategy to highlight, promote, and enhance opportunities for George Brown College aligned with municipal, provincial, and federal goals.

Explore our resources, stay informed, and connect with the GR Unit to showcase your exceptional programs and all the college has to offer to government officials at every level.

[Government Relations Hub | George Brown College](#)





In Closing

The GR Unit takes pride in the milestones achieved in 2023 and the collective dedication across the George Brown College community to make it all happen. Our journey has been defined by opening our doors to elected officials and others in federal, provincial and municipal governments, strengthening external partnerships, and showcasing remarkable George Brown programs. Our gratitude extends to all stakeholders, partners, and team members who contributed to this year's success.

We look forward to more opportunities for advocacy, innovation, and positive impact in 2024.



Connect with Us

If you have an upcoming event that could be profiled to local, provincial or federal government, or if you would like to discuss advocacy on behalf of an initiative or issue, please email the GR Unit at: GR@georgebrown.ca



Follow our journey at:
georgebrown.ca/government-relations

