



2012

Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board

George Brown College
March 2013

A Message from the Chair

Reflecting back on 2012-2013, I believe that the George Brown College REB has been able to make some profound and lasting changes that will increase the capacity and sustainability of the Board. Working closely and answering to the needs of the George Brown College community, this Board has designed and presented a number of needed workshops on educating prospective researchers in meeting the requirements of the ethics approval application process. A workshop for faculty engaged in student course based research was initiated this past year with more workshops and professional development opportunities planned for this upcoming academic year. The Board is also in the process of formulating a policy around student course based research to ensure continuity and consistency throughout the college.

The Board is pleased to announce, that we have entered into an agreement with the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning REB to act as our Appeals Board. We in turn will provide them with the same service in cases where researchers wish to appeal decisions made by either colleges' REB.

This past year, has provided two REB members, the opportunity to attend the annual CAREB conference in Toronto and the Heads of Applied Research (HAR) subcommittee's PD event at George Brown College. Currently, we are working at organizing another HAR subcommittee PD event that coincidentally will be held at the college in the spring.

Over the past year the Board has had some membership changes and is pleased to announce the addition of Paul Horbal, JD, who is our first practicing lawyer/community member. The Board is also happy to report that this past year two alternate members, Csilla Reszegi and Rose-Marie Nigli agreed to become full REB members. An individual that needs sincere thanks and recognition goes to Dr. Jaswant Kaur our past Chair and current member for providing the Board with six years of dedicated and inspiring work.

Dr. Kaur has decided to pursue other college opportunities and is stepping down. I myself have been asked and have agreed to stay on for another two-year term as the Chair of the Board.

For the upcoming year the Board will be looking for alternate members to fill vacancies. In addition succession planning processes will be implemented to assist the Board in maintaining its sustainability and capacity for the upcoming years.

I would like to extend my thanks to key members in the Research Department who have been instrumental in assisting the Board over the past year. Dr. Robert Luke consistently has worked to meet the needs of the Board. Baaba Lewis, REB administrative support has provided the Board with the day-to-day operational needs that have allowed the Board to work seamlessly and efficiently over the past year. She has ensured that communication channels were maintained between the Board and the George Brown College community providing accountability and professionalism to the Board.

In summary, this has been an exciting and progressive year for the Board. The goals for the upcoming year of the Board will remain to provide and to increase exposure of ethical conduct in research, while initiating a variety of professional learning opportunities for the George Brown College community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Evans".

Sarah Evans, RN, MN, EdD

Chair, Research Ethics Board

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About this Report

This report is published annually to inform the George Brown College community, research staff and other interested stakeholders of the achievements, forward-looking plans and role of the George Brown College Research Ethics Board (REB). Far more than a summary of the REB's activities, this report documents how various departments and divisions at GBC are engaged in research and are working together to foster and strengthen a rich ethics culture within the College. This report will provide a brief summary of the role, procedures and activities of the REB, as well as outline proposed activities for 2013.

Overview of Research Ethics at George Brown College

GBC is committed to the highest ethical and academic standards for its students, faculty and staff. GBC respects the academic freedom of all research conducted with its support, and ensures that this research meets the highest academic standards. The College requires research involving its employees, students and/or equipment and facilities to be conducted using ethical and moral research practices. The conscious commitment of GBC to upholding modern standards of research ethics has led to a policy obliging all research projects conducted under the auspices of the College, irrespective of the source of financial support or location of research, to undergo a research ethics review.

The REB is a vital part of research at the College and reports directly to the President. The primary purpose of the REB is to ensure that ethical principles are applied to research. The REB endorses and uses the *Tri-Council Policy 2 Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2)* as a guide. In the event of a problem or discrepancy with a research protocol, researchers and the REB consult the TCPS 2.

George Brown College's Research Ethics Policy

GBC's research ethics policy, *Ethics Guidelines & Review Process for Research Involving Human Subjects*, applies to all faculty, staff and students regardless of where their research is conducted. The policy states that all research involving humans, even when conducted by researchers who are not affiliated with the College but who may access its resources (either equipment or personnel), falls within the jurisdiction of the GBC REB. The policy clearly states that no research on human participants shall be undertaken without the prior approval of the REB.

The REB ensures that the highest ethical standards are met and maintained from the time the research proposal is submitted, throughout the data collection stage, to the dissemination of results. The Board is accountable to ensure that all research involving human subjects conforms to the ethical standards outlined in the College's policy. In reviewing each research protocol the Board ensures compliance by articulation of TCPS 2 guidelines. The core guiding principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy 2 Statement include:

- Respect for Persons,
- Concern for Welfare,
- Justice.

The Research Ethics Board

The REB functions with the commitment and hard work of all its members, who each have experience with the due diligence involved in human research. The Board has shown continued commitment to meet the challenges and ensure consistent conformity to the TCPS 2 ethical guidelines.

Following are the members for 2013 and for the coming year:

Sarah Evans, RN, MN, EdD
Chair, Research Ethics Board
Centre for Community and Health
Sciences

Paula Johnson Tew, M.B.A., Ph.D.
Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts

Rose-Marie Nigli, M.T.S, Ph.D.(c)
Student Affairs

Csilla Reszegi, Doctor Pharm., M.B.A.
General Education and Access

Taras Gula, M.Ed.
Community Services and Health Sciences

**Paul Horbal, B.A.Sc., M.Sc. (Elec.
Eng.), J.D.**
Bereskin & Parr
Intellectual Property Law

Jenny Yeow, M.Sc., M.B.A.
Ryerson University

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

A. Total Research Ethics Submissions

Table 1 displays the total number of new research applications, annual renewal applications and study completion reports received by the REB from February 1, 2012 to January 31, 2013. On average the REB reviewed 3.2 new REB protocol applications per month. This excludes July and August, when the REB is on summer break.

Table 1. Total number of REB applications, renewals and study completion reports from February 1, 2012 to January 31, 2013.

	New Research Protocols	Annual Renewals	Study Completion Reports
Total	34	12	20

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

B. Type of Research Ethics Submission

Between February 2012 and January 2013 there were two applications to the REB requiring full board review; all other applications were reviewed under the delegated process. A delegated review is conducted by one member of the REB and the Chair. Risk is the primary criterion used to determine if a protocol may be reviewed through the delegated process rather than by the full Board. The Tri-Council 2 Policy Statement states that: “if potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research, then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk.” Reviews may also be delegated if:

- The review is an annual renewal of a project previously approved by the REB, and the “open file” is up to date;
- The research involves only review of patient records by hospital personnel; or
- The Principal Researcher submits a letter of affirmation confirming that conditions laid down by the REB have already been approved by another institution or funding agency.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

C. Institutional Origin of Research Submissions

Thirty-eight percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year were submitted by GBC staff with other institutional collaboration (Figure 1). The next highest number of submissions came from researchers based at other institutions. GBC staff submitted twenty-seven percent of the applications.

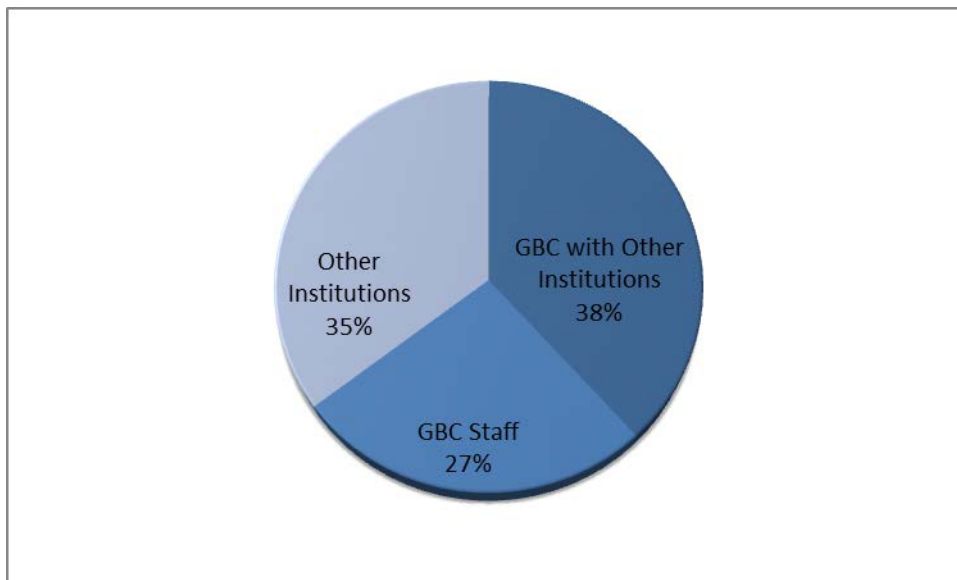


Figure 1. Institutional origin of REB applications from February 1, 2012 to January 31, 2013 in percent.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

D. Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Health Sciences have been particularly active submitting fourteen percent of the total applications. Centre for Business and Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts followed closely with twelve percent each. Four academic divisions and two corporate divisions submitted a total of twenty-seven percent applications with each division submitting fewer than ten percent. (Figure 2).

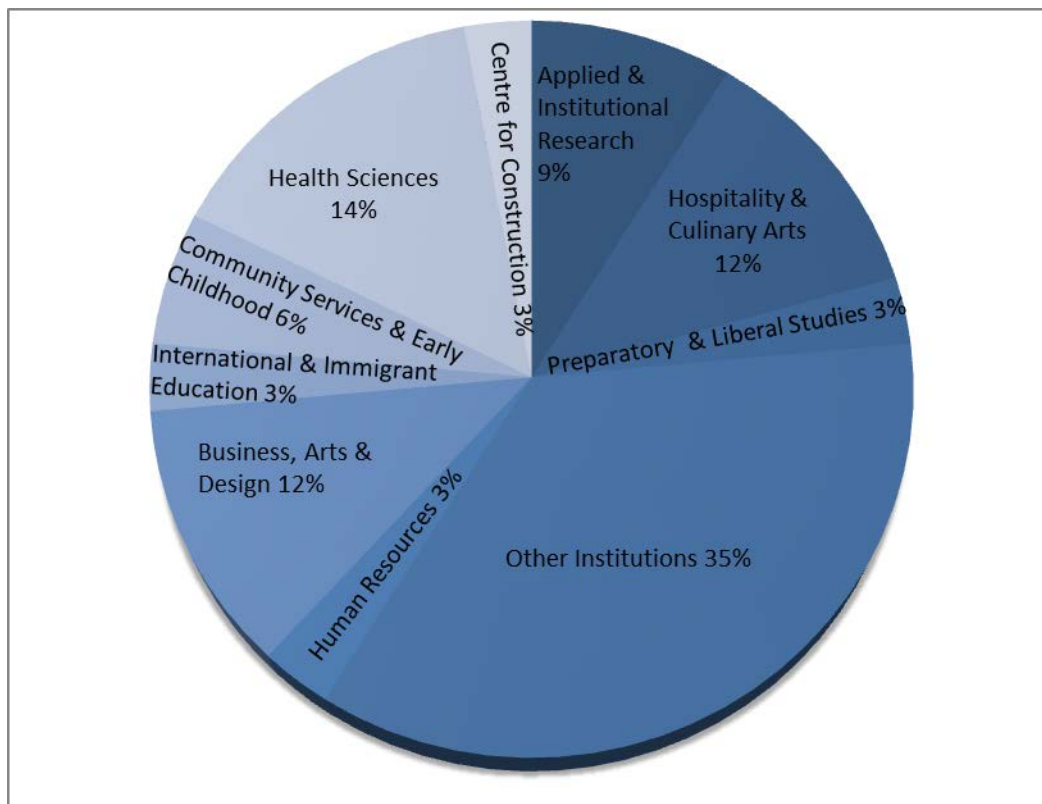


Figure 2. Breakdown of REB submissions by GBC divisions from February 1, 2012 to January 31, 2013 in percent.

Achievements in 2012-13

The Board was able to dedicate its sixth year to improving processes. Some of our most important achievements were:

- Added legal counsel/community member to the board;
- Developing policy on student based research;
- Provided workshop and education to various stakeholders in research including faculty, support staff, administrators, and students intending to engage in research;
- Adopted the Multi-site REB application. Researchers submitting applications to more than one college in Ontario may fill in one application form and submit to multiple colleges. The researcher needs to check each college's site-specific requirements. As at the time of this report nineteen colleges have signed off on the Multi-site form;
- Provided professional development for faculty engaged in student based research directed at increasing capacity by ethical review proxy;
- GBC's has been added to the list of institutions for TCPS 2: CORE Register for TCPS 2: CORE
- GBC REB entered into an agreement with the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning REB to act as our Appeals Board. GBC in turn will provide Sheridan College with the same service in cases where researchers wish to appeal decisions made by either colleges' REB;
- Two REB members attended the annual CAREB conference in Toronto;
- Participated in the Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) REB subcommittee conference. Representatives from Ontario colleges provide structure and process to support quality ethics reviews across the College

system, safeguarding research participants and demonstrating consistent and reliable research ethics quality assurance to funders and other institutions;
and

- Hosted 2012 HAR REB subcommittee conference at George Brown College.

Goals for 2013

Our goals for the coming year are to:

- Sustain efforts to update the skills of all REB members by arranging for them to attend conferences hosted by the National Council on Ethics in Human Research and the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards;
- Continue to participate in external committees to contribute to discussions of matters including REB governance;
- To host the HAR REB subcommittee conference in May 2013;
- Policy on student based research to be finalized;
- Recruit full and alternate members to fill the open vacancies;
- Facilitate and enhance the ethics review process by recruiting experts from within and outside the college to contribute their knowledge to the review process;
- Provide workshops, lectures and other forms of education to various stakeholders in research including faculty and students intending to engage in research; and
- Developing succession planning process.

Conclusion

In 2012-13, our first practicing lawyer/community member joined the board, and one member is leaving after serving her term. Overall, the Board members have provided extremely positive feedback about their experiences as members of the REB. We hope that the proposed improvements and activities for 2013 will help educate GBC staff and students about research ethics and further promote the college's research culture. As more researchers become familiar with our process, we are certain that the significance of the REB will be recognized in the College research community. As we move forward, we will renew and strengthen our commitment to ethical standards for research involving human subjects.