



# **2013 Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board**

George Brown College  
March 2014

# A Message from the Chair

The year 2013-2014 has been an exciting one for the REB. As a Board we had many opportunities to continue growing and expanding our horizons in working with the George Brown community. Over the year, we held workshops in each of the Intercession weeks, hosted the Heads of Applied Research Subcommittee PD event in May at the Waterfront. The event was attended by nearly 100 REB members, faculty and staff interested in partaking in professional development related to ethical conduct in research. Attendees came from more than 15 colleges across Ontario. The PD event venue was so well received that we are going to be hosting it again this upcoming year.

The work accomplished this year reflects the dedicated commitment of the REB to help promote ethical conduct in research practices at the College. On several occasions, REB members have dedicated their time in working with the college community in educating and assisting individuals to navigate and finalize the requirements needed for the REB application process. The Board has also provided opportunities for members to partake in PD events at McMaster University and through CAREB.

In addition to the above, the REB has participated in a Pilot Project initiated by the Heads of Applied Research Subcommittee and approved by the Heads of the Applied Research in Ontario to use an Expert Panel to review multisite REB applications. This pilot will continue for one year at which time we hope the results will offer a new expedited opportunity for researchers to utilize an innovative process of ethics review.

This past year the Board has seen our community member Jenny Yeow from Ryerson University complete her 4 year term with the Board. She has been replaced with Julie Moore RN, BScN from Mount Sinai Hospital. We have added another alternative member to the Board Barbara Godfrey RN, MScN who is faculty in the Centre for Health Sciences at the College.

The progress we made this year would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our Administrative Assistant, Baaba Lewis. Baaba has played an integral role in providing the REB with the administrative support allowing our Board activities to run smoothly and efficiently. I also wish to thank Dr. Robert Luke for this continued support and his attention to the Board's concerns throughout the academic year.

The REB goals for the upcoming year include pursuing professional development opportunities for the George Brown community and promoting the Board as a visible and supportive resource for all who wish to conduct ethical research. The Board will continue to engage in developing a Student Based Research procedure and policy guide. The Board remains committed to succession planning. The Board will be looking at adopting the Multisite REB form as the standard form in order to create a more seamless process to the application process.

In summary I look forward to serving on the Board in the upcoming year and working with the George Brown Community,

Sincerely yours

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 2014.

# 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 2014 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

**Karen L. Ekstein, MIST, MBA, PH.D.**  
Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts

**Julie Moore, BSc.N, RN.**  
Mount Sinai Hospital

**Barbara Godfrey, RN MScN CON(c)**  
Centre for Community and Health Sciences

# 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, 2013 to January 31, 2014. On average the REB reviewed 2.9 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, 2013 to January 31, 2014.

	<b>New Research Protocols</b>	<b>Annual Renewals</b>	<b>Study Completion Reports</b>
<b>Total</b>	29	10	24

# Ethics Review Process and Statistics

## B. Type of Research Ethics Submission

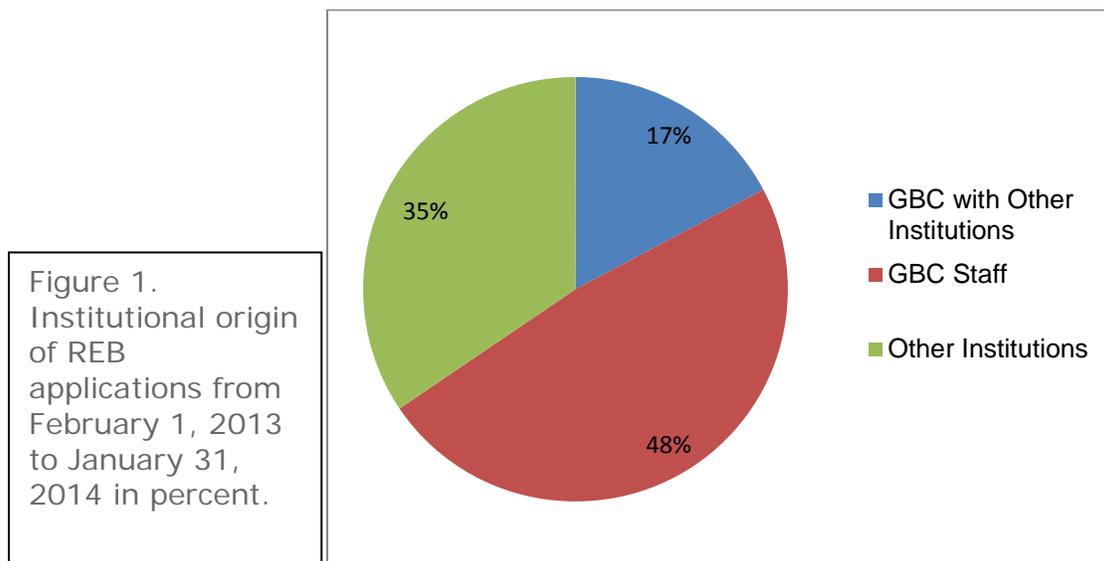
Between February 2013 and January 2014 six multi-sites applications were submitted by applicants. As well, the REB received one application which required full board review; all other applications were reviewed under the delegated process. A delegated review is conducted by one member of the REB and 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

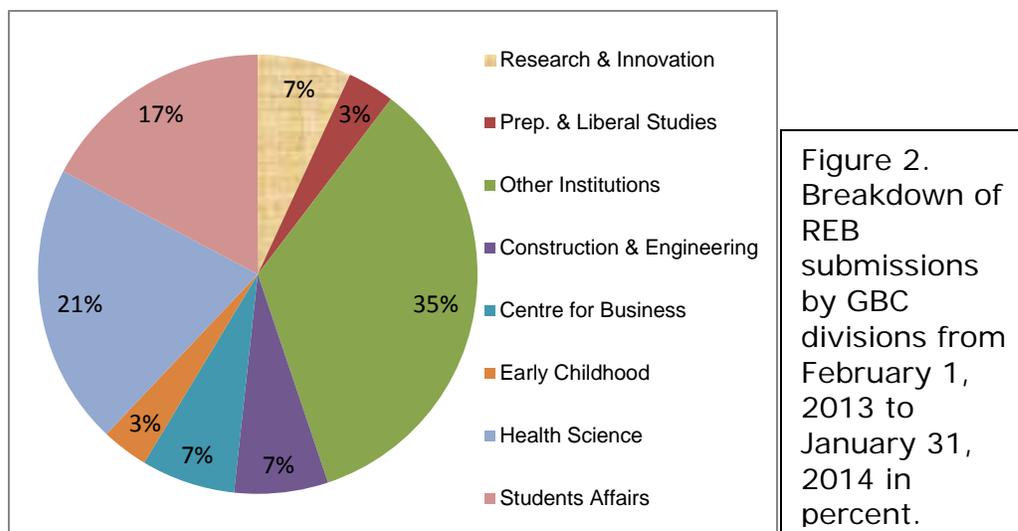
Forty-eight percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year were submitted by GBC staff (Figure 1). Researchers based at other institutions submitted the second highest protocols. Seventeen percent of the applications were collaborative projects between GBC staff and other institutions.



# Ethics Review Process and Statistics

## D. Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Health Sciences has been more active submitting twenty-one percent of applications. Student Affairs submitted seventeen percent; Applied & Institutional Research, Centre for Business and Centre for Construction & Engineering Technologies submitted seven percent each. Preparatory and Liberal Arts and Centre for Community Services and Early Childhood submitted six percent of the total application (Figure 2).



# Achievements in 2013-14

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

- Added a community member to the board;
- Strengthen pool of alternate members;
- 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;
- GBC REB entered into an agreement with the Humber College REB to act as Appeals Board. GBC in turn will provide Humber College with the same service in cases where researchers wish to appeal decisions made by either colleges' REB;
- Two members attended ethics review workshop at McMaster University;
- One REB member attended the CAREB Ontario 2013 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;
- Two members facilitated concurrent sessions during the HAR REB subcommittee conference; and
- Hosted 2013 HAR REB subcommittee conference at George Brown College.

# Goals for 2014

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 2014;
- Continue the work on student based research policy;
- 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;
- Develop policies and procedures for post hoc reviews; and
- Developing succession planning process.

# Conclusion

In 2013-14, we welcomed a new community member to the board and two alternate members. 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 2014 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.