



2014 Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board, George Brown College May 2015

A Message from the Chair

I am pleased to announce that the George Brown Research Ethics Board has had a very successful and productive year. The Board has been able to offer several relevant professional development opportunities for the George Brown College community. Ongoing support from the Board has enabled those individuals engaged in research, individuals considering research projects, and others exploring requirements for research ethics review to meet their specific needs. Members of the Board have met individually with several faculty and staff of the College to answer research ethics review queries and concerns. This in turn has provided many seeking research ethics review with clarified and expedited processes and approvals.

The REB members have engaged in several professional development events including the National CAREB conference in Montreal April 2014, the HAR research ethics subcommittee 4th Annual PD day May 2014, the Regional CAREB conference in November 2014 in Toronto, and an advanced research ethics workshop in March 2015.

The Research Ethics Board has adopted the Multisite Research Ethics Review Application Form as the standard form for all who are seeking research ethics review. This change comes with the adoption by 19 colleges across Ontario of the multisite form that was developed by the Heads of Applied Research, research ethics Subcommittee. The multisite form allows researchers to complete one form for one or more colleges when considering a multisite study. The modification to a standardized form has and will continue to assist researchers who are seeking ethics review from more than one Ontario College.

The Board has undergone some changes to its membership with Dr. Karen Ekstein stepping down and Dr. Zeenat Janmohamed from the School of Early Childhood Education recently joining the Board this spring.

I would like to also take this time to thank Ms. Baaba Lewis, our REB administrative assistant for her immense work in providing organizational support for the Board. Ms. Lewis is the liaison for all prospective researchers contacting the research ethics office. This has allowed researchers to have a direct link with the REB. Ms. Lewis has simplified the process of the research ethics review by offering researchers an avenue for connecting them to the appropriate individuals, accessing resources, and all

other elements needed to address the application process. Many thanks also go out to Dr. Robert Luke, Vice President of Research, for his continued support of the REB.

The REB is looking forward to continued work with the George Brown Community to increase awareness of how the Board can assist those who are pursuing ethical review when using human participants in their studies/projects. The goals for the upcoming year include further professional development of new members, the provision of workshops and other professional development opportunities for the GBC community and the finalization of the Student Based Research Policy. The Board will also be undergoing succession planning for a number of members and the Chair of the Board.

Sincerely yours,

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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 2015.

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:

Name	Department/Institution
Sarah Evans, RN, MN, EdD	Chair, Research Ethics Board Centre for Health Sciences
Barbara Godfrey, RN MScN CON(c)	Centre for Health Sciences
Taras Gula, M.Ed.	Centre for Health Sciences
Paul Horbal, B.A.Sc., M.Sc. (Elec. Eng.), J.D.	Bereskin & Parr, Intellectual Property Law
Julie Moore, BSc.N, RN.	Mount Sinai Hospital
Csilla Reszegi, Doctor Pharm., M.B.A.	Centre for Prep. & Liberal Studies
Paula Johnson Tew, M.B.A., Ph.D.	Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts
Zeenat Janmohamed, Ph.D. Alternate member	Early Childhood Education
Rose-Marie Nigli, M.T.S, Ph.D. (c) Alternate member	Student Affairs

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

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, 2014 to March 31, 2015. On average the REB reviewed 4.1 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, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

Types of application	Total
NEW RESEARCH PROTOCOLS	49
ANNUAL RENEWALS	23
STUDY COMPLETION REPORTS	24

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Type of Research Ethics Submission

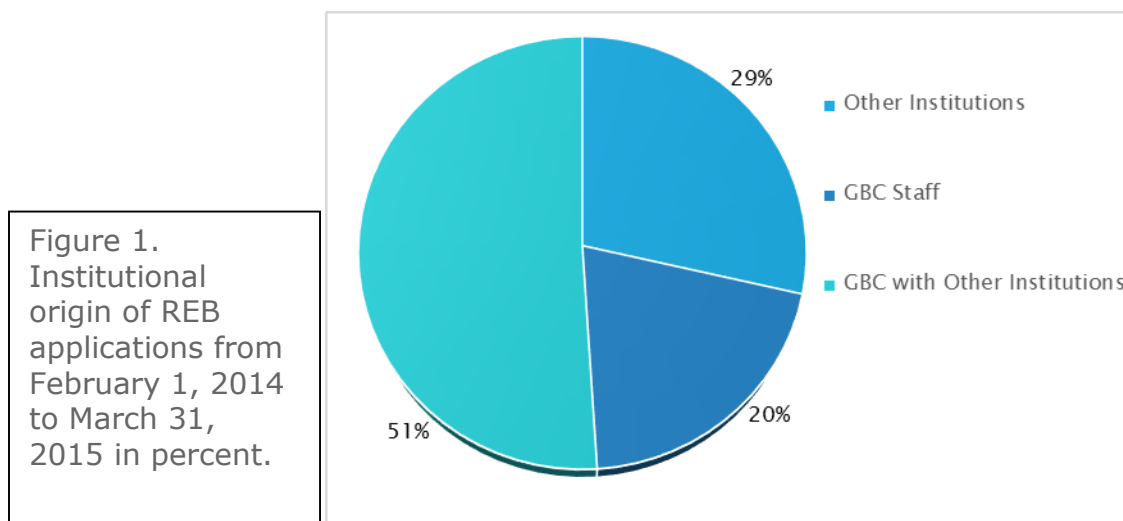
Between February 2014 and March 2015, eleven Ontario Community Common Multi-Sites applications were submitted by researchers. Nineteen Ontario colleges have agreed to accept the multi-site application to streamline ethics application process in member colleges. As well, the REB received two applications 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

Institutional Origin of Research Submissions

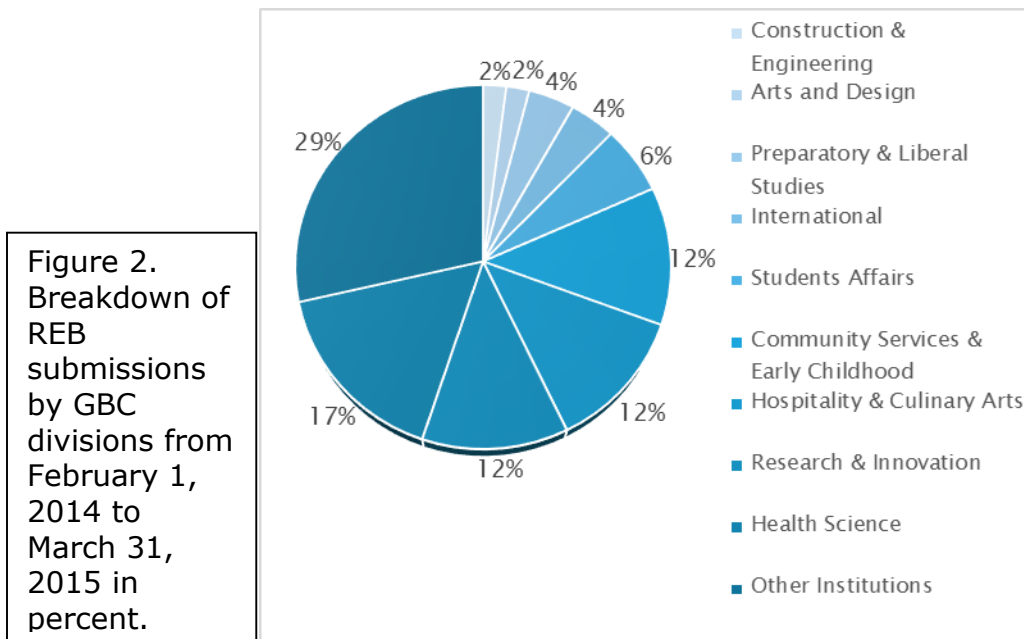
Fifty-one percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year were collaborative projects between GBC staff and other institutions (Figure 1). Researchers based at other institutions submitted twenty-nine percent applications and GBC staff submitted a total of twenty percent of the protocols.



Ethics Review Process and Statistics

Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year the REB has had more applications than any other year. Health Sciences has been more active submitting seventeen percent applications followed by Community Services & Early Childhood, Applied & Institutional Research and Centre for Hospitality & Culinary Arts submitting twelve percent each of the total application. Student Affairs, Preparatory & Liberal Studies, Arts and Design, Centre for Construction & Engineering Technologies and International submitted eighteen percent of the applications (Figure 2).



Achievements in 2014-15

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

- Capacity building via recruitment;
- The board participated in a workshop to develop and update new and old members skills;
- Provided workshops and education to various stakeholders in research including faculty, support staff, administrators and targeted workshop to Research & Innovation department;
- 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;
- Board members meet informally with potential researchers to offer advice and guidance on ethics applications as needed by applicants;
- Facilitated concurrent sessions during the HAR REB subcommittee conference; and
- Hosted 2014 HAR REB subcommittee conference at George Brown College.

Goals for 2016

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 2015;
- Recruit full and alternate members to fill 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;
- Finalize Student Based Research Policy;
- Develop policies and procedures for post hoc reviews; and
- Developing succession planning process.

Conclusion

In 2014-15, we welcomed a new alternate member. 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 2016 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.