



2011

Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board

George Brown College
March 2012

A Message from the Chair

I am pleased to introduce the fifth Annual Report of George Brown College's Research Ethics Board. It reflects the activities of the Board from February 2011-January 2012.

As the new Chair of the REB I am privileged to have been given this opportunity to engage with a board that has been working diligently towards protecting the safety and rights of human research participants while promoting a culture of ethical practice in conducting research at this college.

As the REB for George Brown College we continue our efforts to conscientiously work towards reviewing and implementing ethical practices in research that is being conducted at this college.

During this year, we have attained a number of our key goals outlined in the last report.

As a maturing REB we are pleased to have adopted a multi-college site application form to assist researchers in a more efficient and expeditious review process by filling one application for a number of college sites. As of the date of this publication 11 colleges have adopted this application form.

Throughout 2011-2012 our members have had opportunities to participate in continued education conferences and workshops.

Over the past year we have reviewed numerous new applications and renewals

This past year we have successfully addressed and reviewed a number of unique ethical issues presented by researchers. These opportunities have in turn increased the board's capacity.

In the upcoming year 2012-2013 the board is looking at further increasing capacity by ensuring that new and existing members receive continued educational opportunities so that the Board can work with the growing number of protocols.

The Board will continue to make available workshops, lectures and other forms of educational practices to various stakeholders in research including, faculty and students intending to engage in research.

The Board continues to engage in succession planning for those members who have fulfilled their term.

This year we have met with some changes, with two members leaving the board to pursue other interests and the acquisition of Csilla Reszegi, Rose-Marie Nigli and Taras

Gula as full time members. We are in the process of considering two more alternative members to the Board.

I would like to extend my thanks to Baaba Lewis the new REB administrative assistance. Her dedication and support have been greatly appreciated. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Applied Research Office, Dr. Robert Luke, and Loc Nuygen, for their support over the last year.

Looking forward to a rewarding year,

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

Sarah Evans, RN, MN, EdD (c)
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 2012.

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 Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)* as a guide. In the event of a problem or discrepancy with a research protocol, researchers and the REB consult the TCPS.

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 guidelines. The core guiding principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy 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 ethical guidelines.

Following are the members for 2012 and for the coming year:

REB Members

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

Jaswant Kaur Bajwa, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Research Ethics Board
Center for Preparatory and Liberal Studies

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

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

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

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

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, 2011 to January 31, 2012. 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, 2011 to January 31, 2012.

	New Research Protocols	Annual Renewals	Study Completion Reports
Total	32	13	19

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

B. Type of Research Ethics Submission

Between February 2011 and January 2012 there was one application 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 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

Fifty-nine percent of all proposals reviewed by the REB this year were submitted by GBC staff with no other institutional collaboration (Figure 1). The next-highest numbers of submission were GBC collaboration with researchers from other institutions. Two applications were from another institution with no GBC collaboration.

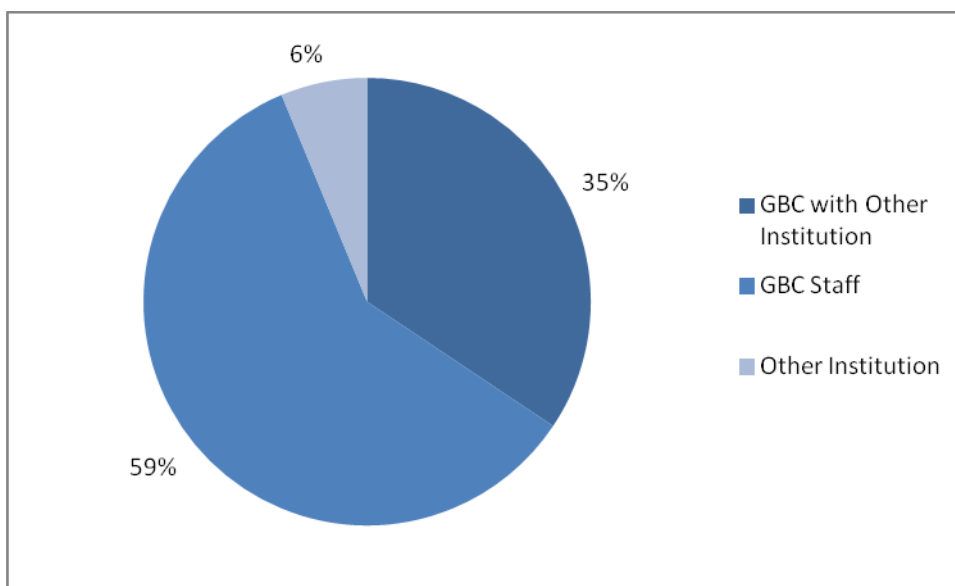


Figure 1. Institutional origin of REB applications from February 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012 in percent.

Ethics Review Process and Statistics

D. Breakdown of REB Submissions by GBC Centre

This year Health Sciences and School of Business were more active followed by Community Partnership, Hospitality and Culinary Arts and School of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Although the highest number of applications came from other institutions but GBC staff working on their masters or doctors of philosophy made up majority of this number. (Figure 2).

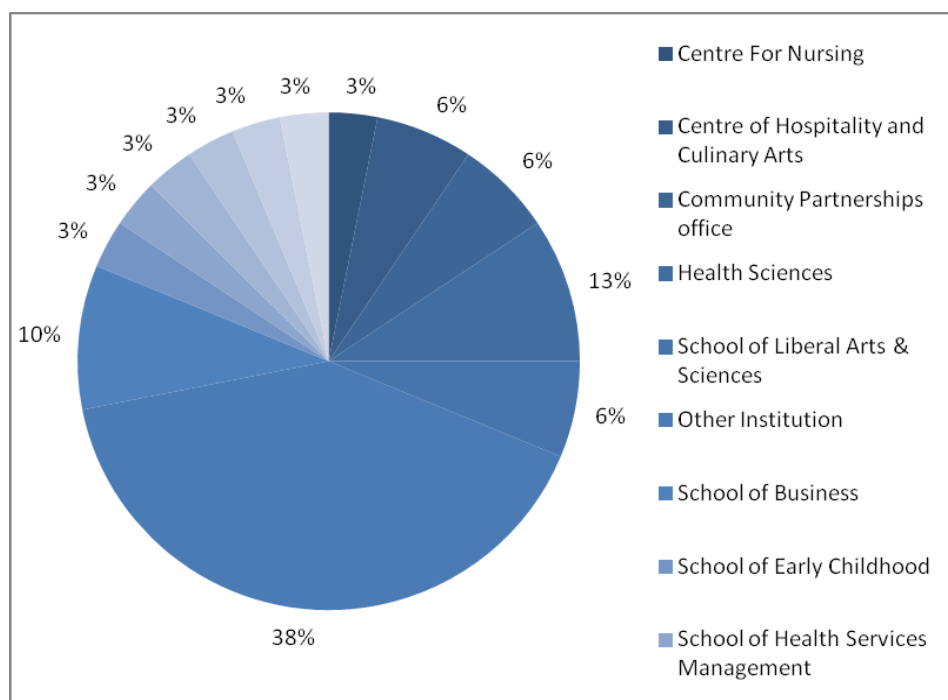


Figure 2. Breakdown of REB submissions by GBC centre from February 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012 in percent.

Achievements in 2011-12

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

- Recruited more people for the Board
- Implemented an electronic monitoring system
- Held information sessions and provided assistance to individual researchers to facilitated the ethics application process
- Members attended REB related conferences and workshops
- Members served on other boards that help facilitate their work as REB members and more the REB agenda forward
- Participated in the Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) REB subcommittee. 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
- Adopted a common multi-site REB application form for researchers to use within the College System.

Goals for 2013

Our goals for the coming year are to:

- 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;
- Work to further optimize the ethics review processes through the implementation of standard operating procedures that are complemented by the newly implemented electronic data management system;
- 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, the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards and the Heads of Applied Research subcommittee conferences
- Continue to participate in external committees to contribute to discussions of matters including REB governance; and
- Document succession planning and recruit new members

Conclusion

In 2011-12, we had some new members joining the board, and others leaving after serving their terms. 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 with the new leadership, we will renew and strengthen our commitment to ethical standards for research involving human subjects.