



# SAGBC 2014 Strategic Plan

**July 26, 2014**

**Ken Steele, Eduvation Inc.**

*Based on recordings, photos, notes, flipcharts, post-its  
and online polling created during the board and staff retreat*

# Background

This draft strategic plan reflects the work and discussion of the SAGBC board of governors and full-time staff at their annual retreat in July 2014. The strategic planning process was facilitated by Ken Steele (Eduvation Inc.) and involved the following student directors and full-time staff.

## Student Directors:

Thomas Hadwen,  
*Campus Director - Casa Loma*

Yassamin Yassini,  
*Campus Director - St. James*

Samantha Brown,  
*Constituency Representative - Aboriginal*

Shaganpreet Kang,  
*Constituency Representative - International Student*

Jatinder Mann,  
*Director - Education and Equity*

Geneve Gray,  
*Director - Finance and Operations*

Saroop Pahal,  
*Director - Internal Affairs*

Gagan Deep,  
*Director - Public Relations*

Halley Requena-Silva,  
*Director - Student Life and Campus Relations*

Katherine Klomp,  
*Educational Representative - Arts and Design*

Mahnoor Ashraf,  
*Educational Representative - Business*

Jay Murphy,  
*Educational Representative - Community Services & Early Childhood*

Nicolas Kiriakou,  
*Educational Representative - Construction & Engineering*

Melanie McIntosh,  
*Educational Representative - Hospitality & Culinary*

## Full-Time Staff:

Antoinette Davis, *Executive Director*

Jason Beeston, *Facilities Coordinator*

Yaw Boateng, *Graphic Designer*

Merdy Jane,  
*Calling Member Services Staff*

Robert Cerjanec,  
*Operations Manager*

Neil Cumberbatch,  
*Sr. Coord. Of Events & Marketing*

Cherry Ding,  
*Member Services Staff*

Colin Druhan,  
*Equity & Advocacy Manager*

Angela Gallant,  
*Health Science Academic Appeals Coord.*

Kristine Galvan,  
*Clubs Coordinator*

Yukiko Ito,  
*Sr. Coord. of Member Services*

Robert McMechan,  
*Collaborative Programs Coordinator*

Karla Orantes,  
*Sr. Coord of Academic Advocacy*

Jessica Pasion,  
*Internal Coordinator*

Michelle Pettis,  
*Coordinator of Community Action Centre*

William (Bill) Reid,  
*Legal Aid & Counsel*

Shaun Shepherd,  
*Community Services Coordinator*



## Mission

We are the students of George Brown College, committed to supporting each other in the struggle for student rights, the pursuit of quality education and the provision of services in a safe, accessible and equitable environment.

## Mandate

The Student Association functions as the central student government representing the interests of all George Brown College students. The Student Association focuses on representation, advocacy, delivery of services and the operation of businesses to support its overall mandate. The Student Association's basic objectives shall be:

- a. To build a united student movement among the students of George Brown College regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic status.
- b. To provide a democratic forum to voice students' concerns and issues.
- c. To provide the opportunity for students to unite in various student groups to address concerns specific to particular constituencies of the Student Association.
- d. To facilitate cooperation among all students and student groups to work towards common goals on a cooperative basis.
- e. To voice the students' perspective on issues at the College, municipally, provincially, and federally and to represent the students' interests at all levels.
- f. To promote awareness of pertinent College activities and policies.
- g. To strive towards a high-quality education by providing optimal support services accessible to all students.

(The SA Mission and Mandate are cited from the SAGBC *Constitution*.)



# SA Services

The SA currently provides important services to GBC students in five broad categories:

1. **Student Life** (especially social activities, volunteer opportunities, social spaces, clubs, orientation, and alternative programming)
2. **Education/Equity/Advocacy** (especially the Academic Advocacy program, advising, financial supports, awareness campaigns, and the Community Action Centre)
3. **Information/Communications** (especially the SA website, the Dialog, the Source, posters and student representatives)
4. **Revenue/Financial** (especially by employing students, managing space, hosting vendors, offering bursaries and scholarships, and frosh kits). These financial services are made possible by revenue-generation through sale of branded merchandise (Run GBC), the operation of a student bar, sale of TTC Transit Passes, and the student levy.
5. **Health & Wellness** (especially the Health and Dental plan, Community Action Centre, SafeWalk, and Food Bank)

Retreat participants believe that the SA is particularly good at running events, managing space, and employing students. As of July 2014, they believe there is room for significant improvement in the way the SA runs campaigns, manages its brand and awareness, engages students, and offers food choices on campus. They also indicate that GBC would be a better place with more networking or academic events, less bureaucratic “runaround” for students, better wi-fi, healthier food options, and better interactions between faculty and students.

This Strategic Plan focuses on ways to improve and expand our existing services to GBC students. Unless otherwise noted, the SA intends to continue offering existing services.



# Priority Goals

In their July 2014 retreat, the SA board and staff identified the following overall strategic priorities for 2014-15:

1. Enhance Student Engagement with the SA
2. Improve Awareness of the SA and its Services
3. Improve Campus Life for GBC Students
4. Improve Campus Facilities
5. Improve Student Employability
6. Improve SA Governance
7. Advocate on Behalf of Students with GBC
8. Improve Academic Experience
9. Improve Student Health & Wellness
10. Build SA Financial Sustainability

These ten goals have shaped the structure of the strategic plan that follows.



# Goal 1: Enhance Student Engagement with the SA

It is a top priority to engage more GBC students more deeply, to foster two-way communication and feedback, and to inspire more students to participate in SA elections. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

## *Overall*

**Promote SA volunteerism** through on-campus signage, website, social media. Recognize volunteers with certificates, co-curricular transcripts, etc. *TBD*

**Gather more student feedback** through surveys, town halls, classroom talks, social media, or suggestion boxes in the SA offices. Constituency reps can gather more student feedback and bring it to more frequent meetings. Package that feedback, share it back with students and use it to advocate with GBC administration. Develop an action plan to advocate for more qualitative feedback on annual KPIs. *Staff and Board*

## *In-Person Outreach*

More **one-on-one outreach** by SA directors, classroom “speaks,” meetings with students, etc. Set targets (eg. 50 talks). *Board*

Hold monthly **student town hall meetings**, formal or informal, to discuss issues and raise awareness of student needs. Program representatives to promote the town halls. (Target: attendance.) *Board*

**Hold a social** with past and present SA members. (Target: 1 within 2 years.) *Board*

**Capture event photos** and post to social media channels, or perhaps give out hard copies to students present, with SA branding. *TBD*



## *Website / Social Media*

**Enhanced social media content** for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. Multiple updates daily, more interesting content. Use HootSuite to schedule steady streams of updates to multiple platforms in advance. Develop a social media identity for the SA mascot. Integrate quizzes, offer prize giveaways, tweet contests, scavenger hunts, selfies, etc. Project a Twitter wall during live events. (Targets: eg. 400 followers for SA Instagram account, 100 followers for CAC Instagram account.) *Staff*

Better **promote board meeting** times and locations, and perhaps hold them on a pre-set schedule, so that students can attend. *Board*

Encourage student involvement in **video content** for promotion. Ensure videos are close captioned. Play videos on SA TV's. *Board and Staff*

Promote opportunities for **student writers** to submit to the *Dialog*, and make it more appealing to younger students. *Staff*

## *Print Materials*

Handouts containing **photos of the SA executive** to encourage personal interaction. *Board*

Print more **SA-Branded clothing** for sale and as giveaways to students, to build spirit. *Staff*



## Goal 2: Improve Awareness of the SA and its Services

It is a priority to raise awareness of the SA, and to connect them with SA services, activities, events and campaigns that could contribute meaningfully to their success. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Overall*

Develop a **focused communication strategy**, with clarity about the scope of our services and our key messages, at certain times of the year and to certain audiences. *Staff*

Liaise, coordinate, and **cross-train with GBC staff** (eg. in Disability department, Student Centre, or Alumni department) to ensure that staff connect students with the SA whenever appropriate. (Target: trial cross training with 3 departments by October 2015). *Board, Staff and GBC Staff*

### *In-Person Outreach*

Get more information in, or get more involved in, **campus tours** for new students and prospective students. Provide tours of SA spaces or information sessions about SA services.

*TBD*

### *Website / Social Media*

**Promote student accomplishments** and volunteer opportunities on the SA website, newsletter and social media. Track stories (eg. number of bursary winners showcased). *Staff*

**Create brief videos** for each department or service (about 2 minutes), and post them on the SA website. *Staff*





Create **podcast**, radio or video podcast and post regularly to YouTube channel. Create video blogs for specific communities (such as ASL). *Staff*

**Redevelop the SA website** to make it more usable, engaging, and add mobile capability. (Budget required). *Professional agency*

Conduct a **feasibility study** for an SA Mobile App or Text Messaging system to inform students, push calendar reminders, etc. *Board*

### *Campus Promotion*

**Improve SA Branding** on SA property. *Staff*

**Utilize GBC screens** to promote our services at Waterfront and Casa Loma campuses. *GBC Staff*

**Pull-up Banners or Signage** to promote volunteer opportunities, SA services on campus. More clear and consistent directional signage for SA services on campus. *Staff*

**Advertise in unexpected places** such as tables in the cafeteria, coasters in the King's Lounge, on KLE&B receipts, waiting areas, etc. (Target: 3 new platforms this year.) *Staff*

### *Print Materials*

**Pamphlet of SA services** as a handout for students, perhaps distributed with a “snack-run” once per term. *Board and Staff*



## Goal 3: Improve Campus Life for GBC Students

It is core to the SA mandate and mission to enhance the experience of GBC students on campus, and to provide social activities, programming, and services that contribute to campus life. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Overall*

Set **clear goals/objectives** for SA events and activities. Plan more academic and networking events, not just social events, on all campuses. Perhaps the “Campus Connection” could help establish a stronger bond between campuses. *Board and Staff*

The SA needs to develop **stronger connections with GBC staff** in student life and student affairs, to collaborate and coordinate more effectively on events, space, and protocols. *Staff, Board and GBC Staff*

Advocate for an SA presence in the **new student residence**. *Staff and Board*

### *All Campuses*

Better food options were a top priority on all campuses (see Goal 9). Specifically, can we provide a **nutrition bar** in SA spaces, with healthy snacks for students? *Staff and Board*

**Improved wayfinding signage** could help students locate SA services and facilities on all campuses. *Staff*

It was felt that more **USB charging stations** on campus would be appreciated by students, but this was a low priority for funding. Perhaps a sponsor could be identified? *TBD*



### *St James Campus*

**Advocate to provide space** for Hospitality and Culinary Arts students to sell their own food and drinks in the Hospitality Building. *Staff and Board*

### *Waterfront Campus*

The SA needs to schedule **more events** at the Waterfront campus, particularly program-related events, to improve students' experience of campus life there. (Target: number of events.) *Staff*

The SA needs an **announcement board** at the Waterfront campus to publicize activities and events to students there. *Staff*

The SA should extend more services of the **Community Action Centre** to the Waterfront campus. *Staff*

The Waterfront campus would appreciate a **video game system**, ping-pong or table-tennis tables. Overall, retreat participants did not see this as a high priority for funding. Perhaps a donor/sponsor could be identified? *Staff*

### *Casa Loma Campus*

The SA needs to schedule **more events** at the Casa Loma campus, particularly large-scale program-related events, to improve students' experience of campus life there. (Target: number of events.) *Staff*



## Goal 4: Improve Campus Facilities

The SA will continue to improve its own campus spaces and facilities, and advocate for improvements to GBC facilities and infrastructure that affect students on campus. Following are specific priorities identified in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *All Campuses*

We will continue to advocate for more individual, **gender-neutral washrooms**, more **study space**, and more up-to-date **lab equipment** on campus. *Staff and Board*

The investment is justifiable to **make all SA spaces more accessible**. *Staff*

We will advocate with GBC administration to see that every floor on all campuses should have **campus maps** on display. *Staff and Board*

### *St James Campus*

**Better wi-fi coverage** across all campus facilities is important, but in particular we are concerned about the King's Lounge, cafeteria, bookstore and main desk. *Staff and Board*

Students are frustrated by **unreliable elevators** on the St James campus. We will advocate with the GBC administration to repair the elevators permanently. *Staff and Board*

Students want more **lounge area**, more functional **water fountains**, and **larger locker sizes** in the Hospitality Building. *Board*

Students want **more study space** outside the library. *Board*

### *Waterfront Campus*

Retreat participants felt it was fairly important to find funding to **extend the Community Action Centre** to new facilities on the Waterfront campus. *Staff*



The Waterfront campus student services office needs **more furniture** and beanbags. *TBD*

Students want more **sitting area** on the lake at the Waterfront campus. *Board*

### *Casa Loma Campus*

Retreat participants identified the **completion of SA's renovations** to the Casa Loma space to be *the* top priority for any additional funds made available. *Staff*



## Goal 5: Improve Student Employability

The top motivation for all GBC students pursuing their education is ultimately employment, and the SA believes it can play a role, through programming, events, services, and advocacy, in improving student employability and career outcomes upon graduation. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Work Experience*

Increase **work opportunities** for students employed by the SA, particularly international students. (Target: 5 more positions.) *Staff*

Increase **volunteer opportunities** for students with the SA. *Staff*

Evaluate work plans and create **externship opportunities** in the bar, etc. *Staff*

Consider providing **funds for student entrepreneurship**, pop-up businesses, short-term project funding. Perhaps assist GBC administration in raising funds for business incubation.  
*Board and GBC Staff*

### *Collaborate with GBC*

Collaborate with the **GBC Career Centre**. *Staff*

**Advocate for more work placements** and internships provided to students by GBC administration. *Board*

**Raise awareness among GBC faculty** that they must find creative or innovative placement and internship opportunities for their students. *TBD*



### *Career Supports*

Provide **relevant “real-life” workshops** in resume writing, career direction, work culture, interview skills, work permits, the hidden job market, networking, etc. *Board, Staff, and GBC Staff*

Provide industry-specific **networking events** for students to meet alumni and employers. *Staff and GBC Staff*

Consider relaunching the **“Suitables” clothing bank**, which collected business attire donated by stores and made it available to students for job interviews. *Staff*



## Goal 6: Improve SA Governance

The SA is committed to transparency and efficiently stewarding the resources entrusted to it by the students of GBC. Some keys will be enhancing internal communication at the SA, clearly articulating accountabilities, and evaluating individuals for their responsibilities. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Accountability*

Formalize **board evaluation process** to evaluate director performance and hold them accountable. Create policies and monitoring procedures that hold individuals more accountable, create structured and consistent work hours. *Board*

**Make board meetings open to students** and publicize their times and locations. *Staff*

### *Communication*

Complete the **HR Manual**, and improve SA human resources procedures. Create a schedule of policies for review and updating. *Staff and Board*

Develop **communication protocols**, and hold joint SA board and staff meetings (not just individual meetings). *Staff*

Reconsider **format for SA staff reports**, based on feedback to be gathered from board, and ensure staff and directors are reading the reports. *Staff*

Hold **bi-weekly meetings** with the SA Exec and Staff. *Board and Staff*

Provide **project-specific training** for board members where appropriate (eg hiring, meetings). *Staff*



## Goal 7: Advocate on behalf of Students with GBC

It is a priority to advocate on behalf of GBC students with a range of stakeholders, but particularly with the administration of GBC itself, to ensure “value for money” for GBC students in terms of their education. Following are key priorities or improved strategies discussed at the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Collaborate*

Hold an **annual retreat with GBC staff** to reinforce mutual understanding and working relationships. Introduce our staff and board, provide breakfast or lunch. Retreat participants identified this as a top priority for funding. *Board, Staff and GBC Staff*

Hold **regular meetings with academic divisions and service departments** to discuss issues and develop partnerships. Become more involved in field placement structures. *Staff and Board*

Establish more **two-way communication with faculty**, to understand the challenges they face and to ensure they understand SA services and offerings. Find tactful ways to share insights into student engagement and effective teaching strategies. *Staff*

### *Advocacy Priorities*

Encourage the creation of a **GBC Ombuds Office**. (In progress). *Staff, Board and GBC Staff*

Collaborate or partner with GBC administration to **reduce charges** for students, and prevent sudden fee increases. *Staff, Board and GBC Staff*

Help reduce **student run-around** with GBC services, and more flexible timetables. *Staff, Board and GBC Staff*



## Goal 8: Improve Academic Experience

In addition to advocacy efforts to encourage GBC Administration to improve the academic experience for GBC students, there may also be ways that the SA can directly contribute. Following are some new ideas discussed at the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

Hold more **networking and academic events**, not just social events, on all campuses.

*Staff and Board*

Create a **peer support/mentoring program** for GBC students. Engage GBC alumni to share their experiences and networks. *Staff, Board and GBC Staff*

**Gather student complaints and concerns** about faculty and academic issues, and work with GBC Administration to create a formal process to ensure that corrective action is taken.

*Staff, Board and GBC Staff*



## Goal 9: Improve Student Health & Wellness

The SA supports the safety, health and wellness of students directly and through its advocacy efforts. Following are new or improved strategies, tactics, and measurable objectives developed in the July 2014 strategic planning retreat.

### *Services*

Provide **napping stations** on each campus to allow commuter students to take a break for their mental health and academic success. (Target: 2 per campus.) *Staff and Board*

Provide **salsa dancing lessons**, **zumba classes**, free **drop-in yoga**, and **therapy dogs** on each campus during high-stress times such as exams. (Target: 1 location on each campus each semester.) *Board and Staff*

Provide **cheaper, healthier food** in the SA Bar. *Staff*

The SA could provide a **nutrition bar** in its facilities with energy drinks, protein shakes, etc. for students. *TBD*

### *Advocacy*

**Survey students** about preferred food choices for the SA Bar and other campus providers. Share the results with GBC Administration and Chartwells. *Board*

Advocate for **shorter contracts with food service** providers in order to encourage cheaper, healthier, better food options on campus. *Board and Staff*

### *Communications*

Better publicize **student health benefits** such as massage therapy. (Target: 15% increase in student awareness.) *Board*



Address **stigma** surrounding depression and anxiety, and incorporate self-care messaging, through all SA communications vehicles and at SA events. *Board and Staff*

Increase **safety awareness** through motivational posters, flyers, visuals. (Target: 10% more student safety awareness.) *Staff*

### *Education*

Provide **financial management workshops** for students (around budgeting, OSAP etc.), to address a leading cause of stress. (Target: 1 per semester.) *Staff and GBC Staff*

Hold a **mental health conference**, with motivational speaker. Support the Umbrella Project. *Board and Staff*

Conduct **AIDS Awareness Week** seminars and workshops. *Board and Staff*



## Goal 10: Build SA Financial Sustainability

SA staff and directors are committed to maintaining the financial sustainability of the organization without placing undue financial burden on GBC students. To this end, the focus at the July 2014 strategic planning retreat was to identify potential new revenue streams for the SA.

### *Lower Cost*

**Sell naming rights** to SA spaces, such as the new student centre at the Casa Loma campus. Construction companies might reduce their fees in exchange for a named room. *Staff and Board*

**Sell advertising** on the SA television screens, website, and in SA spaces on campus, and sell more advertising in *The Source*. Approach companies doing business with the SA. Put housing ads on our front desk. *Staff*

Better promote the **Bar's catering services**. Students from the marketing program could take this on as project work for their courses. Healthier food options may also increase sales. *Staff and Board*

Seek **corporate sponsorships** from music networks, international calling cards, bank credit cards, laptop manufacturers, electronics retailers, etc. Consider getting a sponsor for the SA health plan, or branded USB charging stations. (Target: 10 more company sponsors). *Staff*

Survey students to identify **opportunities for campus vendors**, and consider bringing vendors to the Casa Loma campus. Create more space for vendors within SA space. *Staff*

Evaluate the potential of a **co-op used book exchange**, on campus or online, to generate revenue. *Staff*



### *Greater Efficiencies*

Consider **eliminating the print production** of *The Dialog* and move it to web-only publication. *Board and Staff*

### *Bigger Investments*

Consider producing more **SA branded clothing and merchandise** for sale. Expand the RUN GBC line from sweatshirts to include hats, notebooks, water bottles, etc. Produce King's Lounge branded items. A feasibility study and business case should be developed. *Board and Staff*

Consider selling **student survival kit** backpacks with the SA brand, and essential supplies. *Staff*

Consider developing a **breakfast and lunch menu** at the King Lounge. *Board and Staff*

Consider establishing a **retail store** on campus, selling stationery items and supplies, and perhaps offering a photocopy service. *Staff and Board*

### *Long Shots*

Consider some long-shot options to generate revenue, including **campus bike rentals**, **raffles**, selling student **artwork**, or producing branded **perfume**. *Board and GBC Staff*



# Priority Investments

The SA board and staff also identified the following significant investments as potential priorities for any new funds made available (in this order):

1. Finish Casa Loma renovations
2. More healthy food options for students
3. Make SA space accessible
4. Host a retreat with college staff
5. Hold more events, particularly at the Casa Loma and Waterfront campuses
6. Hold a Mental Health conference
7. Extend the Community Action Centre to the Waterfront Campus
8. Hold Employment Workshops and Networking Events
9. Expand SA merchandise for sale
10. Develop more video content for website and social media
11. Expand on Wayfinding Signage
12. Announcement Boards at Waterfront Campus
13. Create more Paid Work Opportunities for Students
14. Hold a Textbook Exchange
15. Create more USB Charging Stations
16. Purchase a Gaming System for Waterfront Campus
17. Develop an SA smartphone app
18. Provide free Massage to Students

(These items were identified as expensive but potentially high impact, and retreat participants voted with virtual “dollars.”)