

# REPORT OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER

## 2021 GENERAL ELECTION







# OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER

*Your voice • Your vote • Your George Brown*

April 19, 2021

Members of the Board of Directors  
The Student Association of George Brown College  
Toronto, ON

Honourable members:

It is a true honour and privilege to present the report regarding the 2021 Spring Election for the Student Association of George Brown College, which took place April 5-9, 2021.

This report contains two parts. The first part is the statistical report, which includes the election results and other statistics regarding the election. The second part is the retrospective report; this report is entitled "Everything has changed," it contains information and recommendations which the board must consider to ensure better functioning of future elections.

In accordance with the practices of the Chief Electoral Officer of the Province of Ontario, I will be issuing after every election going forward a statement in this letter regarding my authority under By-law 12, section 16, that I have no reason to believe that there were irregularities, fraud or corrupt or illegal practices that affected the result of the election, which was not dealt with by the election discipline procedures.

I therefore present to the Honourable Members this report, in accordance with by-law 12, section 2(d(xiii)) of the By-laws of the Student Association of George Brown College and the results of the electoral event for ratification in accordance with by-law 12, section 18 of the By-laws of the Student Association of George Brown College.

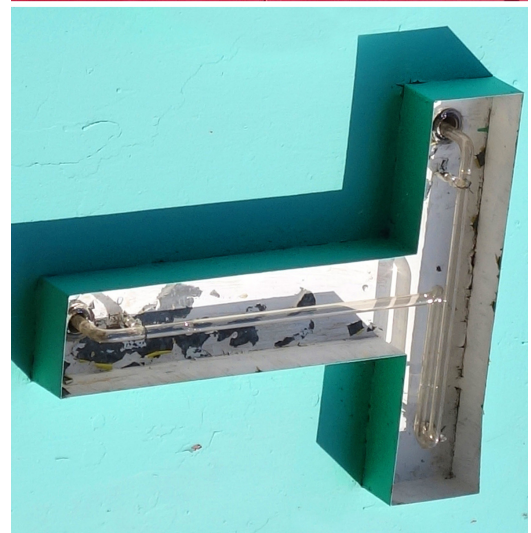
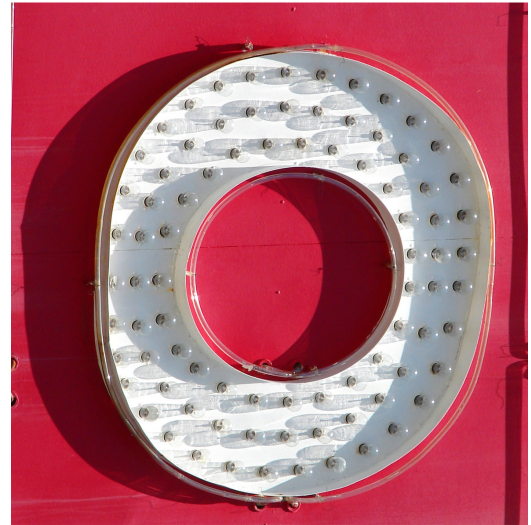
Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Wilson  
Chief Returning Officer



# PART I

## THE ELECTORAL EVENT





The 2021 Spring Elections of the Student Association of George Brown College was held from April 5-9, 2020.

***ELECTION OFFICIALS***

Chief Returning Officer	Charles Wilson
Deputy Returning Officer	Venessa Douse
Elections Committee	Rosalyn Miller Sagar Sharma
Legal Advisor to the CRO	William Reid, LLB Ben Millard, LLB

***IMPORTANT DATES***

Nominations Open	
Nominations Close	March 18, 2021
All Candidates Meeting	March 22, 2021
Campaigning begins	March 23, 2021
Extended Nomination period for the Liberal and Preparatory Studies Educational Centre Representative	March 23, 2021 to March 29, 2021
Voting Opens	April 5, 2021
Voting Closed	April 9, 2021
Validation of results (for all elections by the Business Educational Centre Representative)	April 9, 2021
Validation of results (for the Business Educational Centre Representative)	April 12, 2021

## ***NOMINATED CANDIDATES***

### **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & INTERNAL**

Parmvir Brar  
Urvish Patel

### **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & EQUITY**

Sri Krishna Rajan  
Aasreen Sood

### **DIRECTOR OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Bharavi Desai  
Rohan Khullar  
Urdhva Shukla

### **ARTS, DESIGN AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Isha Patil  
Kanav Bhatia  
Rajdeep Banesinhbhai Dodiya  
Saujatya Ghosh  
Shehzad Contractor

### **BUSINESS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Naman Bafna (withdrew)  
Pallavi Jatian  
Chahat Pusha  
Ekjot Singh

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Sarah Anderson  
Jaimini Dave

### **CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Birkawal Singh Anand  
Tasneem Khan  
Dishant Patel (withdrew)  
Dhruv Shah

## **HEALTH SCIENCE EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Dhwani Bhalavat  
Senthil Thevar

## **HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY ARTS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Anushka Chopra  
Dhwani Panchal

### ***ELECTION DISCIPLINE***

In the course of the election the Chief Returning Officer issued its discipline process once during the election process, it was used as follows:

Naman Bafna (File 2021W-03)	assigned 4 demerit points for a social media violation, assigned 20 demerit points for giving a false statement to the Chief Returning Officer, and assigned 20 demerit points for obstruction of the Chief Returning Officer.
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This since this matter involved an automatic appeal, the appeal was perfected however the candidate withdrew from the election before appeal was heard and upon request of the Chief Returning Officer, the appeal was stayed. The demerit points were not withdrawn as part of the agreement.

### ***OTHER RULINGS OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER***

The Chief Returning Office made a number of other rulings during the Course of the Election:

**Board of Directors v. Naman Bafna** (file 2021W-01)  
Dismissed by ruling of the Chief Returning Officer.

**In the matter of the request for vacation pay of Sri Krishna Rajan** (file 2021W-02)

Settled and referred to the normal human resource practices of the Student Association by endorsement of the Chief Returning Officer.

## **DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER**

The Chief Returning Officer declared one emergency during election process:

Declaration of March 11, 2021 regarding questions regarding the accuracy of the voters list.

## **ORDERS OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER**

There were two orders of the Chief Returning Officer made during the course of the election:

Declaration of the CRO regarding the Preparatory and Liberal Studies Educational Centre made on March 23, 2021.

Declaration of the CRO delaying the validation of the Business Educational Centre made on April 9, 2021.

## **CAMPAIGN EXPENSES**

### **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & INTERNAL**

Parmvir Brar	\$0.00
Urvish Patel	\$0.00

### **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & EQUITY**

Sri Krishna Rajan	\$40.00
Aasreen Sood	\$0.00

### **DIRECTOR OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Bharavi Desai	\$0.00
Rohan Khullar	\$0.00
Urdhva Shukla	\$0.00

### **ARTS, DESIGN AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EDUCATIONAL CENTRE**

#### **REPRESENTATIVE**

Isha Patil	\$0.00
Kanav Bhatia	\$40.00
Rajdeep Baneshinhbhai Dodiya	\$0.00
Saujatya Ghosh	\$0.00
Shehzad Contractor	\$0.00

## **REPORT THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER PART I THE ELECTORAL EVENT**

**BUSINESS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Naman Bafna (withdrew)	
Pallavi Jatian	\$0.00
Chahat Pusha	\$0.00
Ekjot Singh	\$0.00

**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Sarah Anderson	\$0.00
Jaimini Dave	\$0.00

**CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Birkawal Singh Anand	\$0.00
Tasneem Khan	\$0.00
Dishant Patel (withdrew)	
Dhruv Shah	\$0.00

**HEALTH SCIENCE EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Dhwani Bhalavat	\$0.00
Senthil Thevar	\$0.00

**HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY ARTS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE**

Anushka Chopra	\$0.00
Dhwani Panchal	\$0.00

**VALIDATED RESULTS**

**Director of Communications and Internal**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Parmvir Brar	604	604
Urvish Patel	851	851
Rejected by the CRO*	360	360
<b>Total</b>	<b>1815</b>	<b>1815</b>

**Director of Education and Equity**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sri Krishna Rajan	815	815
Aasreen Sood	680	680

**REPORT THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER  
PART I THE ELECTORAL EVENT**

Rejected by the CRO*	320	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>1815</b>	<b>1815</b>

#### **Director of Student Experience**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Bharavi Desai	646	646
Rohan Khullar	596	596
Urdhva Shukla	189	189
Rejected by the CRO	384	384
<b>Total</b>	<b>1815</b>	<b>1815</b>

#### **Arts, Design and Information Technology Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Isha Patil	90	90
Kanav Bhatia	100	100
Rajdeep Banesinhbhai Dodiya	48	48
Saujatya Ghosh	42	42
Shehzad Contractor	141	141
Rejected by the CRO*	35	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>456</b>

#### **Community Services and Early Childhood Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sarah Anderson	91	91
Jaimini Dave	29	29
Rejected by the CRO*	18	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>138</b>

#### **Construction and Engineering Technologies Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Birkawal Singh Anand	18	18
Tasneem Khan	106	106
Dhruv Shah	91	91
Rejected by the CRO*	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>245</b>

#### **Health Sciences Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dhwani Bhalavat	136	136
Senthil Thevar	59	59

Rejected by the CRO*	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>203</b>

**Hospitality and Culinary Arts Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Anushka Chopra	76	76
Dhwani Panchal	93	93
Rejected by the CRO*	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>199</b>

**Business Educational Centre Representative**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Poll 99</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pallavi Jatian	242	242
Chahat Pusha	54	54
Ekjot Singh	171	171
Rejected by the CRO*	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>517</b>

**\*Rejected by the CRO is the term used in the electoral counting system for blank ballots (electors which did not vote in this race).**

**VOTER TURNOUT**

**2021 voter turnout**

EDUCATIONAL CENTRE	NUMBER OF VOTES	TOTAL VOTERS	PERCENTAGE VOTED
Art, Design, and Information Technology	456	3731	12.2
Business	517	4550	11.4
Community Services and Early Childhood	138	2116	6.5
Construction and Engineer Technology	245	3124	7.8
Hospitality and Culinary Arts	199	2611	7.6
Health	203	2605	7.8
Preparatory and Liberal Studies	57	1144	5.0
Overall	1815	19881	9.1

**Historic voter turnout**

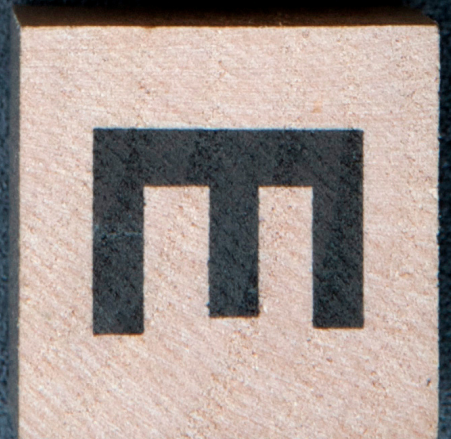
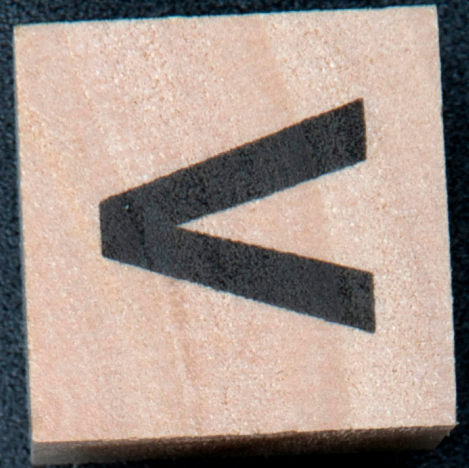
<b>2021</b>	9.1%	<b>2020</b>	4.7%
<b>2019</b>	9.7%	<b>2018</b>	7.25%
<b>2017</b>	6.54%	<b>2016</b>	6.53%



# PART II

RETROSPECTIVE REPORT

EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED



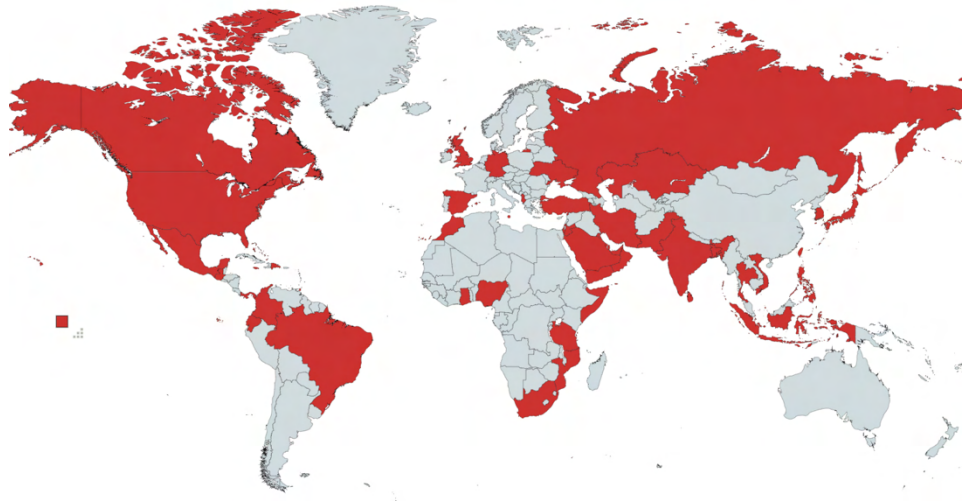


## INTRODUCTION

As always, I am grateful for the support of those around me in the administration of this election. I could not ask for better support than I received this year from our election staff, our election committee and the entire Student Association Staff. This election is truly a team effort, and I am grateful for my team.

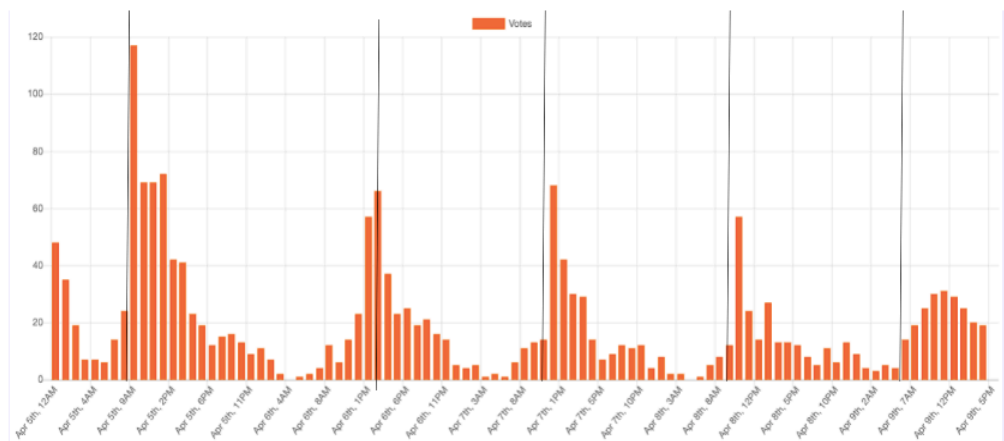
This is the third election that the Student Association has had in the course of the pandemic.

In the course of the last few elections, we have entirely switched to online balloting, and our election has become global. During the 2021 Spring Elections, we received votes in over 50 countries (see figure 1). While I long for a return to an ordinary election, I am sure that elements of the election the elections over the last few years would remain.



Voter turnout during these abnormal elections has been at par, if not greater than previous elections. This election saw 1815 votes which accounted for approximately 9.1% voter turnout. While it may not be a record high, it is among the top voter turnouts of my time at the Student Association. This is due to several factors, I believe. First of all, a wide

variety of candidates does drive voter turnout up. Further, I think that the messaging of the system-generated emails sent out aided in voter turnout. This election cycle, the



## REPORT THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER PART II THE ELECTORAL EVENT “EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED”

election emails took on a conversational voice, focusing on why a student voice should vote in this election and everything the Student Association does for the George Brown College student body. The following chart shows voter turnout with the lines indicating when the voter software system sent out an email. As you can see, after the email was sent out, there was an increase in voting within the following three hours.

I believe that the electoral system is at a crossroads. It was only four years ago when we were using only paper ballots and had hundreds of posters printed. Three elections of the last 13 months have only been digital show how quickly we have transformed the electoral system. This was done under crisis. As we move toward a new normal, there are elements of the electoral system which should remain changed. Still, other parts should be considered and evaluated to create a more robust electoral system.

***RECOMMENDATION 1  
STRUCTURAL EVALUATIONS***

I have previously stated that I have a deep concern regarding the positions of Director of Communications and Internal and Director of Operations. The role of Director of Communications and Internal has seen seven different incumbents in the last four years. While I am always able and willing to run a by-election or a board appointment process for this position, the Student Association is more robust and better-run when this position is stable. The Board needs to evaluate this structure to ensure better that this position is stable going forward.

The position of Preparatory and Liberal Studies Representative has largely not been elected in the last few general elections. This is due largely to the academic progression of this program, I am recommending that the Board reviews this position to ensure it can appropriately filled going forward.

***RECOMMENDATION 2  
ELECTORAL SYSTEM***

Over the last few elections, we have seen more candidates running for less position; a discussion needs to be taken to determine if the first past the post system most appropriate system to use for the Student Association elections going forward. To this end, I recommend that Ranked Ballots be used going forward.

To fully understand this recommendation, here is a quick overview of the two options:  
**FIRST PAST THE POST** (the current system )is defined as follows:

**REPORT THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER  
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“EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED”**

The First Past The Post system is the simplest form of plurality/majority system, using single-member districts and candidate-centred voting. The voter is presented with the names of the nominated candidates and votes by choosing one, and only one, of them. The winning candidate is simply the person who wins the most votes; in theory he or she could be elected with two votes, if every other candidate only secured a single vote.

**AN RANKED BALLOT** (the proposed system - for review and discussion)

Elections under Ranked ballots are usually held in single-member districts, like FPTP elections. However, RB gives voters considerably more options than FPTP when marking their ballot paper. Rather than simply indicating their favoured candidate, under RB, electors rank the candidates in the order of their choice, by marking a '1' for their favourite, '2' for their second choice, '3' for their third choice and so on. The system thus enables voters to express their preferences between candidates rather than simply their first choice.

RB also differs from FPTP in the way votes are counted. Like FPTP, a candidate who has won an absolute majority of the votes (50 percent plus one) is immediately elected. However, if no candidate has an absolute majority, under RB the candidate with the lowest number of first preferences is 'eliminated' from the count, and his or her ballots are examined for their second preferences. Each ballot is then transferred to whichever remaining candidate has the highest preference in the order as marked on the ballot paper. This process is repeated until one candidate has an absolute majority, and is declared duly elected. RB is thus a majoritarian system.

*These definitions are adapted from the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network.*

**RECOMMENDATION 3**  
**THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

I am recommending a review of the composition of the Election Committee. In a board of 12 and an election committee of three can be composed solely of the Board can easily create accusations of conflicts of interest. Further, since the Elections Appeals Committee and the Elections Committee merger, the potential impact of a potential conflict of interest is magnified. I can envision two ways in which the elections committee could be expanded (1) by expanding the membership to one college alumni who previously served on the Board of Directors; or (2) adding members of the college community to the elections committee to provide an external view.

**REPORT THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER**  
**PART II THE ELECTORAL EVENT**  
**"EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED"**

**RECOMMENDATION 4**  
**INTERGRADATION WITH STUDENT GROUPS**

A better focus of creating integration with student groups need to purposefully made and fostered throughout the year. The reality is that there are large group of student leaders who have not ran for SAGBC office. I would challenge the Board and Executive to seek out student groups including student leadership groups, groups for students in equity seeking groups, and others to attempt to get more candidates for the Board of Directors and to ensure that diverse voices are heard on the Board of Directors.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**  
**RETURN TO NORMAL ELECTION**

As we proceed towards normal, there are lessons which can and should be learned from the last three election. To this end, I recommend that the next election held under normal circumstances:

- 1) limit the number of posters available for candidates to put on campus to 15 for executive members and 5 for educational centre.
- 2) renew and clarify the rules regarding social media, with a view of limiting the role of the CRO and DRO as referee of the social media rules.
- 3) use a limited number of polling stations which can be ran through the SimplyVoting software with limited circumstances where paper ballots can be used, mainly to resolve electors who are not on the list and wish to vote.
- 4) use an online nomination form, with the possibility of having signatures done online or via paper.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**  
**DIVERSITY ON THE BOARD**

The Board as it has been constituted has been largely homogeneous, and without diversity. I am recommending to the Board that they launch a campaign to encourage diverse candidates to seek office to ensure a healthy diversity on the board going forward.



