
George Brown College Retirees' Association Meeting

Board Strategic Planning Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Call to order: Dianne Diniz called the meeting to order

Present: Dianne Diniz, Georgia Quartaro, Bob Cox, Debbie Plested, Laura Lothian-Bryant, Barb Dunlop, Jennifer Cooke, Joan Reynolds, Anne Mackenzie-Thompson

Regrets: Trish Robertson

Motion to approve the Agenda as circulated

Moved by J. Reynolds

Seconded by J. Cooke

Carried

Business arising from the Minutes

The online auction has reached 83.1% of the \$2000.00 goal which includes \$470 of cash donations. The “buy it now” was not used this year. An idea was suggested to have the next auction a month or so later in the year as people may be interested in making purchases for Xmas gifts.

There were 18 people registered for the Mahalia Jackson presentation. The Heygo presentation was cancelled.

The Meet and Greet was fully booked with 20 in attendance. The limited number able to register encouraged members to chat with others they did not know. There were positive comments with this first in-person event since Covid 19.

There was not time to plan a pre-Thanksgiving event but there are plans to have a prelude to the AGM, perhaps during the last week of November in the Distillery area. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Thank you letters have been sent to members who have donated to the scholarship fund but it was deemed not necessary to send letters to Board members.

Board meeting adjourned.

Strategic Planning committee meeting

Meeting was chaired by D. Diniz.

The Mission statement of the Association was read.

SurveyResults :

The survey sent out by B. Cox had 73 respondents and is the basis of the Strategic Planning session

The results of the survey were distributed by B. Cox to all board members.

Key results were:

1. 86% of our members want social activities to continue and for this to be the focus of the Association.
2. Members want to work with the College with regards to benefits for our members.
3. Members want the Association to respond to challenges faced by those considering retirement
4. Members want support for isolated members transitioning to retirement

A Toronto community senior's association based at GBC plans educational events. GBCRA has attempted to partner with this group without success. It was suggested listing their educational opportunities on our website if and when we can reconnect.

5. Forty percent of GBCRA members are interested in the scholarship fundraising.
6. Another comment was that we are not a diversified Board of Directors.
7. It was also noted that while the College supports GBCRA financially with \$4000 annually, members are looking for other benefits e.g., use of sports facilities, academic options for full and part-time courses.
8. It was noted that GBCRA supports 5 clubs but other club activities were suggested, ie. Dog walking, euchre, Mexican Train, travel, and studio space be made available to our members. In summary, it is evident that the membership is interested in events and activities but GBCRA requires members to volunteer, form a committee, sit on a committee, organize a new club or activity and share concerns with regards to aging. An idea was suggested to link to other similar organizations. Members feel that there is no strong link to the College after retirement.

Employees about to retire need expert information on when to retire, what benefits are available, how to complete the dental and medical paperwork.

Results of Board's SWOT Analysis

GBCRA Strengths

- Solidarity among Board members
- Strong connections between the Board and College personnel
- Flexibility of our board during the pandemic with several activity and event offerings online and in person
- A process in place for keeping in touch with members
- Strong financial status
- Make up of the board represents several GBC departments
- Administrative and faculty members are well represented but the support staff are unfortunately not well represented
- The membership reports a high level of satisfaction with the Association
- GBCRA offers consistency in its services to the membership and functions in an organized fashion
- The newsletter keeps members connected and provide pertinent information to the members

Strengths of our relationship with the College

- The College supports GBCRA financially
- The President is committed to meeting with the GBCRA Board four times annually
- GBCRA benefits from its relationship with the GBC Foundation
- The OPSEU unions support GBCRA initiatives

Weaknesses as an organization

- low support staff membership representation
- technology knowledge is limited
- difficulty in getting members to take on a Board position or portfolio
- there are no benefits to being on the Board offers no benefits ie, no perks

Weakness of our College relationship

- The Board's College relationships fade as our former GBC contacts retire or change

- GBCRA's relationship with the College is inconsistent; GBCRA is inevitably not a high priority
- there are no established meetings with groups in the College
- we have not convinced the College of GBCRA's importance to them
- there are some areas of the College where we lack a relationship e.g. technology
- lack of progress on our want list e.g. GBC email addresses

GBCRA Threats

- The workload is not evenly distributed; the burden of meeting all the objectives falls solely on the executive
- There are a lack of membership volunteers
- There is a possibility that ongoing funding from the College may not continue indefinitely
- The College does not have a structure maintaining information sharing
- Our relationship with the President and HR could change if their positions changed
- GBCR's relationship with the College keeps changing as positions change

GBCRA Opportunities

Update the database to categorize support, admin and faculty members

Grow the Convener base

A GBCRA retiree link should be on the first page of the GBC website

Committees rather than single individuals should be formed to plan events

Recruit conveners to establish events; eg. a euchre club

Review the survey at the AGM and to indicate to members that the Board needs their help

Encourage members to organize tours of their own interests

Arrange for scholarship recipients to attend at least one event throughout the year in person or online and discuss why he/she received it

Create additional databases based on members' areas of interest

Plan more in-person events to promote discussion among members

The AGM could become a working event to share opinions in smaller groups

Organize a committee to deal with vulnerable members

Have board members take on new conveners for club events

Make us findable on the GBC website

Opportunities with the College

- Maintain and strengthen the relationship with the President's Office and HR
- Have a formalized meeting with Sun Life, Finance and a GBCRA representative before meetings with staff considering retirement
- Include a GBCRA rep attend the Sun Life, Finances meeting with the employees considering retirement
- This is not done currently and those considering retirement are not well informed about the required paperwork that needs to be done or about retirement benefits, compensation etc.

Strategies and Future Goals

- Concentrate on establishing further support from members
- Sustain high level of activities and communications for members
- Recognize that many members do not reside in the city but are still interested in our activities
- We need a membership database that includes names, addresses, email addresses, departments where the retiree worked. This should be available to all of our membership
- Maintain both online and in-person activities; continue the GBCRA newsletter
- Establish an editorial board (committee) to take charge of the newsletter
- Restructure the Board to link committees and conveners to the Board
- Adhere to the GBCRA mission statement
- Assure a two-way conversation in the meetings with the GBC President; provide background information to the President
- Focus on gaining President's approval one issue at a time before shifting to any further request

Strategy Priorities

1. Review survey results at the AGM
2. Invite scholarship recipients to a GBCRA meeting and have them report via a short video on why these scholarships are so important
3. Put energy into the Association – increase number of volunteers, conveners, leadership roles within GBCRA
4. Have the GBC website improved to include the GBCRA as a front page link. Inform Emily Bain of this.
5. Develop a more robust method of encouraging membership and the enjoyment of being together
6. GBCRA Board members to call new members to inform them of GBCRA, of how we operate as a Board, its composition, and how events are planned
7. Evaluate our relationship with the President. This relationship should be built as stated in the organization chart of the College and not as a direct link with the President. We should be connected as well to the Foundation and to HR.
8. Review the survey for a list of respondents who are interested in specific areas

Further Suggestions

Serve on Board of Directors – Georgia to contact Julie Bulmash and Dianne to contact Crystal Kotow-Sullivan

Finding volunteers to serve on a committee e.g., Editorial – Bob to contact Lena Medaglia, Jennifer Cooke and Shirley Lesch (events as well)

Establish new clubs – Georgia to contact Diane Acey about art study group – perhaps this study space could be on Zoom

Create a Euchre club – D. Plested to contact Lesia Gryschuk and Felice Markowitz

Social Issues and Politics sessions – Bob to contact Patricia and Dale Hall

Fundraising projects – J. Reynolds to consult with Michael Cooke

Computer – B. Cox to contact Jim Nielsen

Retirement and Aging discussion group – J. Reynolds to contact Heather Rapaport from Academic Upgrading

AGM Planning

Develop notes for the 2022 online AGM

Use the survey results to solicit volunteers

Introduce new retirees

Further Notes

Consider the third week of November for an in-person new retirees' welcome; ask members to attend to honor the new members

D. Plested will contact Andrew Zalvin re increasing visibility of GBCRA on College website

Next Board meeting: Tuesday Oct. 18 12-2 pm

Adjournment