



STUDENT SUCCESS AT GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE
THROUGH A CULTURAL LENS

FOR RC-2020 – OCTOBER 2017

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George Brown College



Meeting diverse student needs

George Brown College prides itself on the diversity of its student population and the array of supports & services dedicated to encouraging student success.

Our student communities include:

- International/ESL (approx. 20% of students)
- New Canadians
- LGBTQ
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Those with Disabilities
- Low income
- First Generation
- Visible Minorities
- Indigenous

Focus Initiatives:

- **Black Student Success Network (BSSN)**
- **Indigenous Education & Services (IES)**



THE BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS NETWORK



ISSUE: Low Rates of Black Student Persistence

The college-wide Student Characteristic Survey in 2013-2014 revealed a high percentage of black students not persisting and therefore less likely to be retained.

- 26% on academic probation after 1st semester versus 15% in other ethnic groups
- 5 percentage point lag in persistence between semester 1 and 2 in 1st year compared to other students
- Lowest GPA (2.45) of all self-identified visible minorities at college in 1st year



RESPONSE: RESEARCH & ACTION

RESEARCH: STUDY COMMISSIONED (Winter 2016)

- 11 recommendations regarding student engagement, services and institutional change including: creating dedicated space, culturally specific academic and personal counselling.

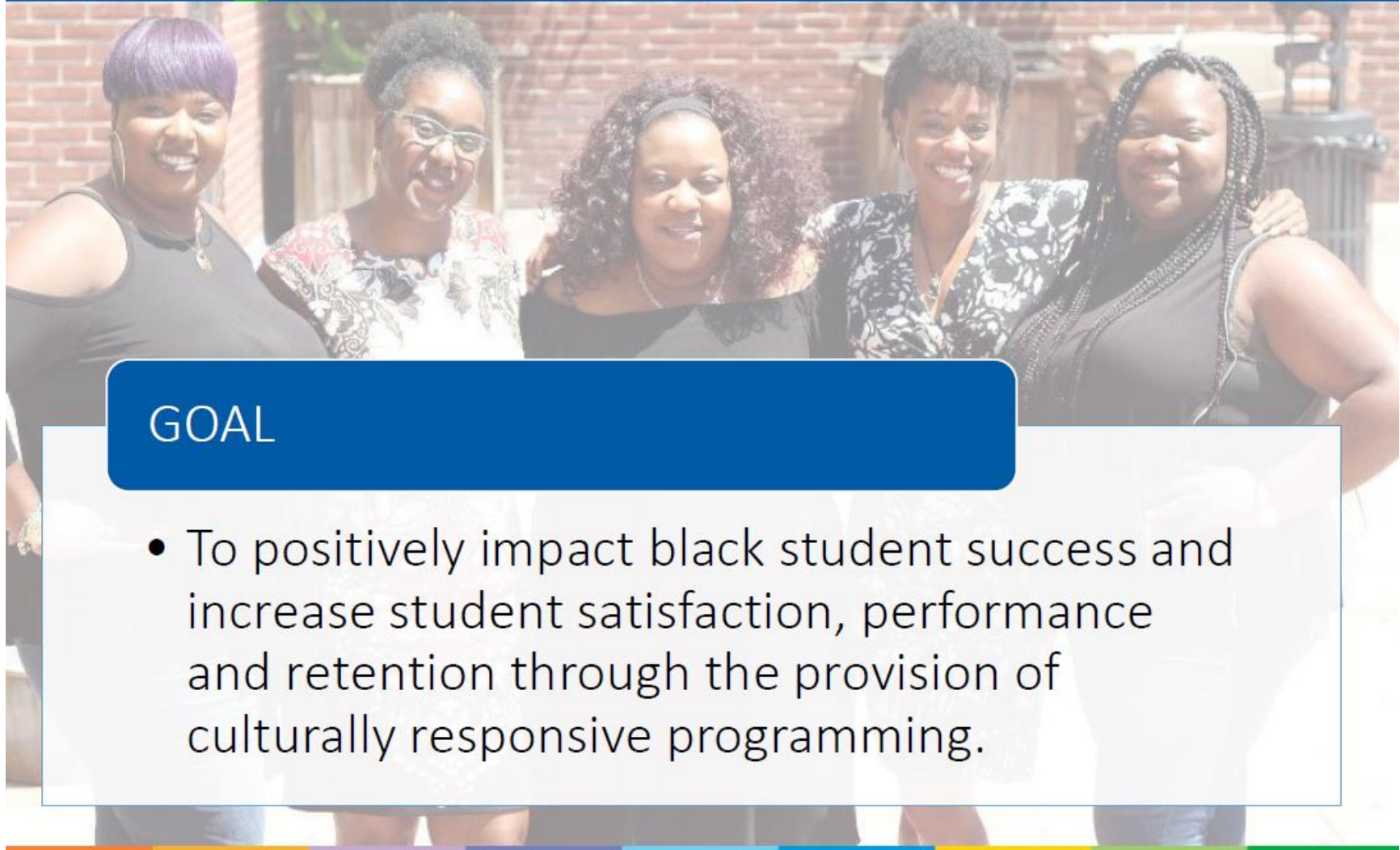
ACTION: BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS NETWORK PILOT (Fall 2016)

- BSSN launched as a pilot initiative in Community & Social Service Worker program
 - With oversight from inter-departmental staff/faculty team
 - And leadership from student-staff members responsible for developing and implementing culturally responsive programming in response to recommendations outlined in the study.





BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS NETWORK (BSSN)



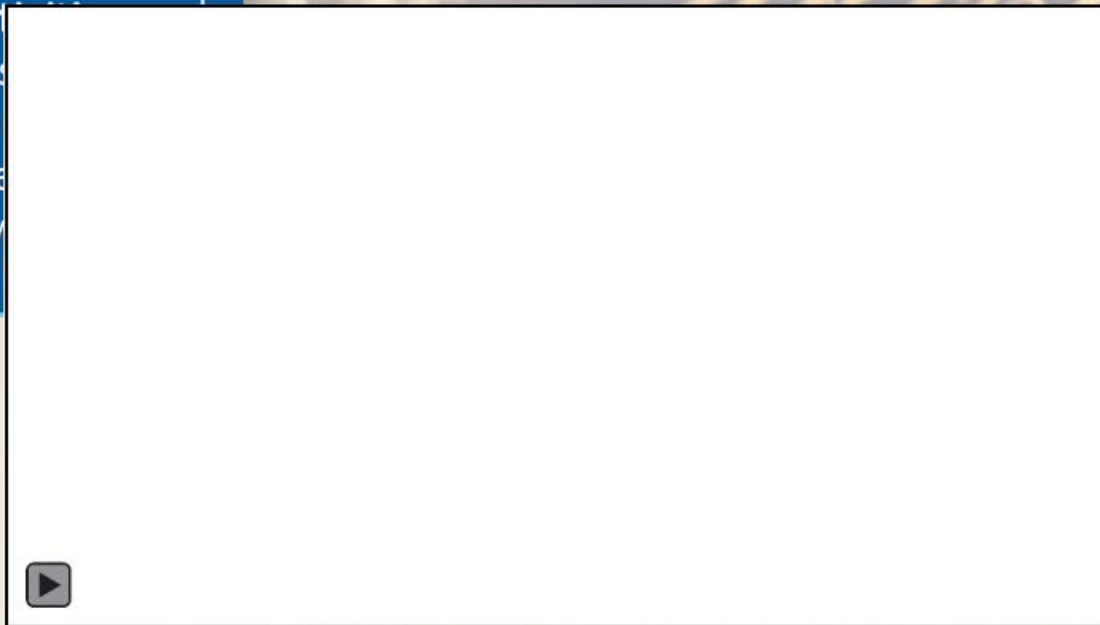
GOAL

- To positively impact black student success and increase student satisfaction, performance and retention through the provision of culturally responsive programming.



BSSN: ACTIVITIES, SUPPORTS & SERVICES

This brief video describes **BSSN services/activities** and provides insight into the impact of culturally relevant community on current



"BSSN is the best thing that ever happened to GBC!"
BSSN participant

Express our gratitude
Student Success
for and attending
Appreciation Gala

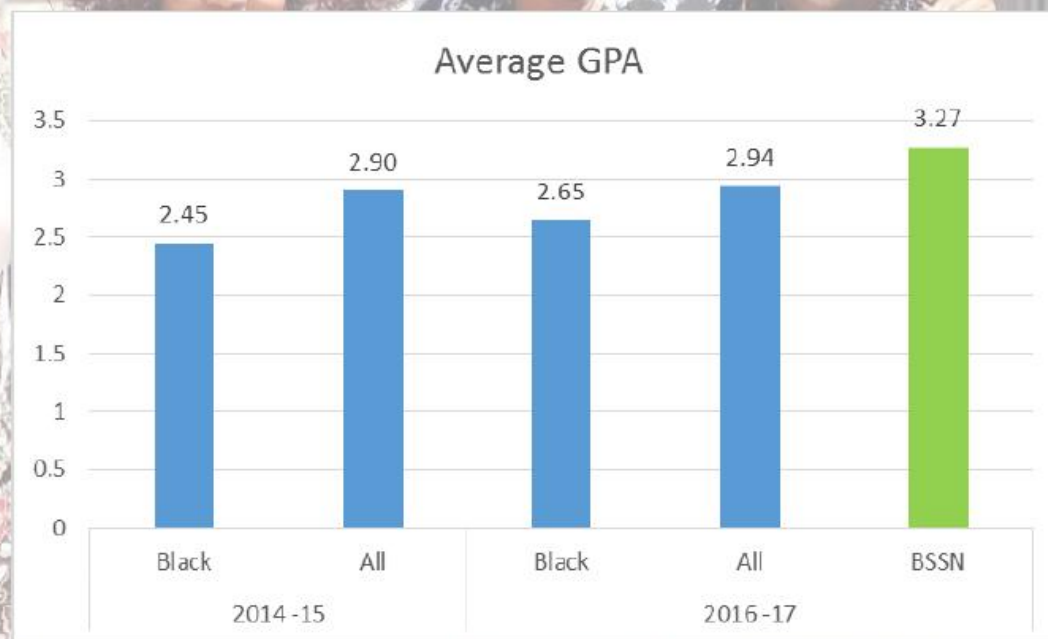


KEY OUTCOMES

- 92% of 1st year BSSN students were retained between 2016-17
- College-wide retention goal for 2016-17 academic year is 70%
(based on 1st year students who return to the same multi-year program the following year; this figure will be calculated in July 2018)

- 2016-17 marks the first year demographic data on black student retention (as opposed to persistence between semesters) has been made available.

Note: Student success and retention is multifaceted. These figures are positive indicators of progress but should not be read as a direct correlation between participation and outcome.



*Source: Based on data provided by the Registrar's Office *BSSN_AcademicProgress_2017002*



KEY OUTCOMES

HIGH PARTICIPATION RATES (according to Process Evaluation Survey, June 2017)

- 90% of respondents found BSSN spaces to be welcoming/safe
- 85% of respondents felt supports/resources were relevant/useful and improved their performance

LAUNCH OF BSSN COLLEGE-WIDE (October 2017)

- Official launch of BSSN college-wide
- Increased visibility (www.georgebrown.ca/bssn, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook)
- **295 new students joined BSSN as of September 30 2017** (more than double the pilot cohort)

POSITIVE INDICATION OF CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTENDANCE & RETENTION*

- 128 participants in the BSSN pilot (Fall 2016 – Winter 2017). 69 of those were 1st year students who persisted between semesters at an average rate of 85% across all programs consistent with previous Student Characteristic Survey results.
- 1st year BSSN participants registered in multi-year programs were retained at a rate of approx. 92%
- Average GPA of 1st year BSSN participants was 3.27

*Source: Based on data provided by the Registrar's Office *BSSN_AcademicProgress_2017002*



ONGOING CHALLENGES

1. DEFINING SUCCESS in a meaningful, culturally relevant way
2. ONGOING ASSESSMENT of barriers that contribute to Black student attrition
3. ONGOING RESEARCH of in-college supports to help Black students (particularly males) achieve academic success





INDIGENOUS EDUCATION & SERVICES

BRIEF HISTORY

- Residential Schools
 - Residential School Investigation and Report led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) which resulted in a series of calls to action including the Indigenous Education Protocols (IEPs)
- Ontario Colleges Response to the TRC
 - 24 colleges met with intent to establish a common understanding and to provide the senior leaders with up-to-date information regarding Indigenous educational activities nationally and provincially
 - Unanimous sentiment that 7 system-wide Indigenous outcomes were going to be written

INDIGENOUS STUDENT COMMUNITY

- Aboriginal Education Council (AEC)
 - Working with the Indigenous community for over 26 years
 - Operates in the place of a Program Advisory Committee
- Indigenous students population breakdown 2015-16
 - KPI identified approx. 800* students (200 of whom self-identified at application)
 - Represents approximately 3.1% of total student population

*65% of students completed the KPIs



Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICAN) – Indigenous Education Protocols

CICAN SEVEN PROTOCOLS (signed by 53 Canadian institutions)

- 1) Commit to making Indigenous education a priority
- 2) Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples
- 3) Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities
- 4) Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
- 5) Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators
- 6) Establish Indigenous-centered holistic services and learning environments for learner success
- 7) Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research



OUR RESPONSE: EXAMPLES

PROTOCOL COMMITMENT

CURRENT GEORGE BROWN ACTIVITY

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority

We have dedicated space at two campuses, have doubled the number of Aboriginal counsellors, and have increased outreach to students at the application, enrollment and orientation stages.

2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect indigenous peoples.

The President is a member of the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC). The CPLS Dean attends AEC meetings and is active in the Ontario Indigenous Peoples Education Circle and brings relevant issues/concerns to ACDT, AMC, and SMC.

3. Implement in curriculum

The number of Aboriginal Studies General Education and Liberal Studies courses has increased, both in the number of courses and the number of sections being offered. By 2017-18, we expect to be offering an Aboriginal Studies course in every Gen Ed block.



OUR RESPONSE: CONTINUED

PROTOCOL COMMITMENT

CURRENT GEORGE BROWN ACTIVITY

4. Support students and employees

Student supports are available through the two counsellors and rooms, as well as through public events such as guest speakers.

5. Commit to increasing number of employees

HR initiatives to attract more diverse employees; recent project to give one recent Aboriginal graduate a meaningful working experience.

6. Establish holistic services and learning environments

The Indigenous Education and Services unit provides personal and academic counselling, holds regular cultural events for students and for the broader college community, and ensures that indigenous history is recognized at college events (e.g., drummer, territorial acknowledgement).

7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination

The Aboriginal Education Council is active and is adding new members. The college is involved with the community through various Miziwe Biik training initiatives, OFIFC staff training, and the annual Pow Wow. Community feedback is solicited through the AEC and also more broadly through our Elder and indigenous staff and students.

GOAL

- IES works toward a similar goal as the BSSN to positively impact Indigenous student success, performance and retention through the provision of culturally-based programming college-wide.



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION & SERVICES (IES)

ACTIVITIES, SUPPORTS & SERVICES PROVIDED

- Personal and traditional counselling
- Organized events and individual interactions which offer teachings and information to Aboriginal students and other college staff and students
- Classroom presentations, ceremonial opening and closing prayers, smudging
- Spiritual leadership and ceremonial requirements for Pow Wow, convocation and other college events
- Indigenous knowledge, education, celebration and practice (naming, clans, sweat lodge), protocol observation

<https://www.georgebrown.ca/indigenous/>



KEY OUTCOMES

HIGH PARTICIPATION RATES of Indigenous Students in Cultural Events and Services

- High attendance at cultural events including: lunches, traditional ceremonies (moon ceremony), award ceremonies, art exhibitions, craft workshops, guest speakers and many others.

Highlight: Over 800 people attended the 9th Annual Four Sacred Colours Pow Wow (2017)

- In 2015-16 the Aboriginal Student Centers served an average of 21 students/day

LAUNCH of Indigenous Student Spaces

- **Sahkitcheway** (St. James Campus) – 1996
- **Wi Chi Hito Win** (Casa Loma Campus) – 2015-16

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Native Canadian Centre
- Native Skills Centre
- Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Gabriel Dumont Homes
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers
- Miziwe Biik Employment and Training
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto

Overcoming barriers that contribute to Indigenous student attrition

- Systemic racism
- Lack of academic preparedness
- Lack of community support (especially in an educational urban context)

Reflecting and valuing Indigenous experiences and ways of knowing

- This is not considered to be exclusively cultural. It is the Indigenous world view. Adapting Programming within the PSE sector to reflect an Indigenous world view is in its infancy and takes form differently in each institution.

Encouraging self-identification

- Many Indigenous students do not self-identify during the application process which leads to reduced funding.