

# How George Brown College consolidated touch points on its three campuses in downtown Toronto

Prior to WaitWell, George Brown College had inconsistencies and disconnects when it came to serving students. However, a more consolidated approach to student services as well as the desperate need for virtual services was accelerated by the pandemic. Now, students can expect a unified, time-efficient experience on all three campuses.



# George Brown College

George Brown College (GBC) has 3 campuses located in downtown Toronto. Their student population comprises 22,000 full-time students, 3,106 part-time students and 52,851 continuing education registrations. GBC is the choice of many students worldwide, with 40% of the student body being international students. This means that accessibility is essential for them when it comes to serving the student population. Currently, there are 174 full-time programs across the GBC campuses, as well as

different services at each location. Before the pandemic, GBC was struggling with student service delivery. Specifically, they needed help with the disconnect between campuses and service locations. Pre-pandemic they had two integrated Student Service Centres and one new Student Success Hub that launched in 2019. The goal of this new hub was to promote a student self-serve model with peer and professional support.

## The Transition Period

The pandemic exposed many challenges for GBC when it came to serving the student body. Like many organizations, services had to be transitioned online in the Fall of 2020 as students were no longer permitted on campus.

With this transition, the volume and duration of calls increased even though there was a loss of support staff. This resulted in slower response time from all areas of student support such as advising and student services. The transition also made it difficult to manage and keep track of simple or complex student advising requests from multiple points of contact ie; email, phone and voicemail.

Within a few months, there was an immediate need for departments to offer virtual service desks. In the interest of speed, departments began implementing different solutions that were rolled out as quickly as possible. This caused confusion and a lack of coordination across the college as well as differing student experiences.

Open houses, and student tours, were also a big concern for GBC as they needed a way to eliminate physical lineups when prospective and current students were

allowed back on campus. Overall, GBC needed a solution that consolidated student touch points, managed lineups, helped staff do more with fewer resources, made it easier for staff to keep in touch with students in-person and virtually and have a database of each point of student contact so students could receive better support.

Dave Scott, Manager of Domestic Recruitment and Entry Advising at GBC said, “We had an upcoming Open House running at all three campuses and after witnessing the long lineups at the orientation we wanted to explore a way to offer a better experience for the Open House attendees, most of whom we knew would be interested in a tour.

With this large anticipated demand we were hopeful that with a queueing system in place, attendees could sign up for a tour, explore the campus and meet George Brown reps until they were contacted that their tour guide was ready to lead them on a tour.”

# Unifying the student experience

GBC decided to conduct an in-house audit of the piecemeal state of the virtual service desk solution; they discovered that different virtual queues systems had been adopted across 8 different departments. This resulted in major inconsistencies and disconnect for their student services across all campuses.

GBC reached out to WaitWell in the summer of 2022 in the hopes of finding a solution that would work across their various departments and campus locations to unify the student experience, offer multiple means of reaching staff, and provide consistent data.

In September 2022, WaitWell rolled out at the Virtual Service Desk. This location allows students to access services from anywhere and meet with staff members virtually, specifically via MS Teams. Currently, GBC has expanded WaitWell's use to 10 locations across the 3 campuses including campus tours, financial assistance and even admissions. With their campus-wide license, GBC will roll out to all areas that deliver 1:1 service and despite the fact that students are

back in person, a reality of the pandemic is a shift to students expecting the option for online service.

Having only one solution across a college has many benefits including a positive and unified student experience. However, one of the biggest benefits for George Brown is the transfer feature. WaitWell allows universities and colleges to transfer students from one location to another so they are helped by the right person and don't have to wait in line again.

Rhoda Ramos, the Senior Manager of Student Success Service Integration at GBC said, *"The ability to transfer a student from one service location to another as needed came up as a benefit in our stakeholder discussions. As well, the Centre for Business for example felt that they needed a better way to redirect questions that required support from a Student Success Hub Information Specialist or the Registrar's Office."*



# WaitWell has improved student service efficiency

GBC currently has a hybrid service delivery model, and wants that to continue in the future. A hybrid model helps students access services from wherever they are and at the same time helps staff have a more flexible work-life balance.

Ramos said, “We have received positive feedback from our staff using WaitWell and we’ve worked through fine-tuning some of the configurations in our queues that make more intuitive sense for them. It has also provided our team with more insight to reporting on our service delivery.”

WaitWell not only enhances the student experience at GBC but also contributes to increased operational efficiency. For example, the Financial Aid team has reduced the amount of time it takes to process a financial assistance inquiry by 20% in under a year. They have also seen a reduction in the average amount of time it takes to complete a registration service request by 9 minutes per visitor.

Since its implementation WaitWell has helped thousands of students receive service more efficiently. WaitWell has changed the way GBC delivers student services and has made the transition after the pandemic simple and innovative.

Now, students can expect a unified experience, whether they want peer mentoring or need help registering for a class.

