



April 9, 2025

City of Toronto Planning & Housing Committee
phc@toronto.ca

Dear Planning and Housing Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members,

Re: PH20.7 – Toronto’s Academic Housing Strategy

I am writing to express George Brown College’s support for the City of Toronto’s Academic Housing Strategy.

As President of George Brown College, an institution that serves thousands of students each year, I observe firsthand the need for more affordable, accessible, and secure housing options for students in Toronto.

The challenges our students face in securing stable housing, particularly international students, and those from equity-deserving communities, have only grown more acute in recent years. This report provides a meaningful, data-informed, and collaborative framework to begin addressing these challenges.

Responding to the housing challenges for our students is a top priority for George Brown College. In 2024, we engaged with thousands of students to develop a student housing demand study and increase our understanding of the needs of our students. We opened our first student residence, “The George” near Front Street and Cherry Street, in 2016 with 504 beds. There is a significant waitlist for beds at The George every year, and we are advancing opportunities to build new on-campus beds despite the rising costs for land, construction, and financing in recent years.

I believe there is an opportunity for collaboration between George Brown College and the City of Toronto to address these student housing needs and to support the City’s efforts in ameliorating existing housing challenges. We are committed to working with the City of Toronto to explore opportunities to expand our student housing capacity and we look forward to engaging directly with the City on these opportunities.

I commend the City of Toronto for its partnership-based approach in developing this strategy, including committing the time and resources to visit each of our three campuses to speak directly with students about housing. I also appreciate the recognition that post-secondary institutions cannot solve these issues alone, and that a coordinated effort between all governments, academia, and the private and non-profit sectors is essential.



At George Brown College, we believe that access to education and training is essential for Toronto to prosper and thrive, and it is also more important than ever for our local economy. Safe and affordable housing is foundational for accessing the benefits of education.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to cooperate, collaborate, share data, explore innovative solutions, and advocate for the needs of our student community. Together, we can build a brighter future for all students, ensuring they have the stability and support they need to succeed.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Fearon", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Gervan Fearon
President
George Brown College

Copy to:

- Leslie Quinlan, Senior Vice President, People Enablement and Experience, George Brown College
- Michelle McCollum, Vice President, Facilities and Sustainability, George Brown College
- Daniel Woolfson, Director, Campus Planning and Development, George Brown College
- Michael Thomas, Director, Government Relations, George Brown College