

✓ DIVERSE LEARNERS

✓ PARTNERSHIPS

## Snapshots: Top global chef comes to George Brown

In October, George Brown College's Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts hosted world-renowned chef and restaurateur Alain Ducasse as part of its Culinary Cities of the World event series. Among the events that took place were an in-depth Q&A with the Monaco-based chef led by Food Network chef Chuck Hughes, and a French culinary market celebrating the cuisine of Paris and Lyon. During the event series, a new joint education initiative was announced between George Brown and Alain Ducasse Education that will provide culinary students the opportunity to complete part of their education at Ducasse's chef training centre in France. Here is a taste of the highlights of this three-day culinary affair:



Clockwise from top:

Chef School director John Higgins, Alain Ducasse, CHCA dean Lorraine Trotter, and Chuck Hughes are flanked by chef students.

At the French Culinary Market, Alexandra Feswick, a chef at The Drake Hotel, tells Ducasse about her culinary creation — a root vegetable tartine with foie gras on a crostini.

At a one-on-one interview led by Chuck Hughes, students, faculty and members of the public heard Ducasse discuss his career achievements, cooking philosophies and industry trends.

Ducasse visits the Cheese Boutique to experience one of the treasures of Toronto's culinary scene.

# Students experience municipal politics first hand

Students had a valuable opportunity to directly engage in the city's democratic process by taking part in a mayoral debate held at the Waterfront Campus.

Then-candidates John Tory, Doug Ford and Olivia Chow convened Oct. 8 to discuss a wide range of student issues at the college's Mayoral Town Hall. More than 500 people — mainly students but also faculty, staff and community members — attended the debate, and 2,800 people watched it via live stream on the college website. Students asked questions about topics such as affordable housing, transit and job opportunities.

"Holding this debate provided students with the opportunity to get a good sense of municipal politics and the electoral process," says Brian Stock, director of communications, George Brown College, about the debate, which was hosted in partnership with *The Globe and Mail* and *The Dialog*, George Brown's student newspaper.

Students at the college enjoyed multiple opportunities to get involved. Beforehand, they were invited to electronically submit their questions for candidates to the college. Of the 50 suggested, 10 that represented the most common themes were chosen by a panel of faculty, staff and representatives from *The Dialog* and *The Globe and Mail*. Meanwhile, students from the college's design training program Institutes Without Boundaries got to create a poster to promote the debate. And some classes at George Brown weaved the debate into their lessons on civics and politics.

Stock says at the 90-minute debate, students were energized by the opportunity to engage with the mayoral contenders and gain insights on the issues that mattered to them most. They learned from Tory that his primary concerns for students were the lack of information, affordability and access for post-secondary school graduates. Chow told the crowd the most important issues for students are "affordability and getting a job." Ford, meanwhile, also highlighted jobs and transit as the most important issue for students.

The debate enjoyed solid traction in the news media and on social media — it was mentioned in 87 news stories nationally and provincially, ran live on CP24, CP24.com and *The Globe and Mail* web sites, resulted 319 tweets, and was trending at #8 on Twitter maps for Toronto. On the college website, the webpage promoting the event received nearly 1,000 page views, and the post-event web story received 300 page views.

Says Stock: "It is only at the civic level that you can vote directly for the leader, so I think the students learned that it's worth getting involved in civic politics, because you can make your voice heard in a very direct way."



# CHCA-initiated cookbook expands diabetic-friendly meal choices

Dietary options for individuals with diabetes just became a whole lot more interesting, thanks to a first-of-its kind culturally specific cookbook published by a George Brown College professor and partly funded by the college.

*150 Best Indian, Asian, Caribbean and More Diabetes Recipes* is an internationally inspired cookbook that offers diabetic-friendly versions of a wide range of traditional ethnic dishes. Published last September by Robert Rose, the book features recipes for dishes such as butter chicken, stir-fried soy bean sprout, and Spanish orange and avocado salad that maintain their typical taste and appearance, but contain the nutritional value needed by individuals managing diabetes, particularly those from cultural groups at higher risk of developing the disease, such as Asians, South Asians and Hispanics.

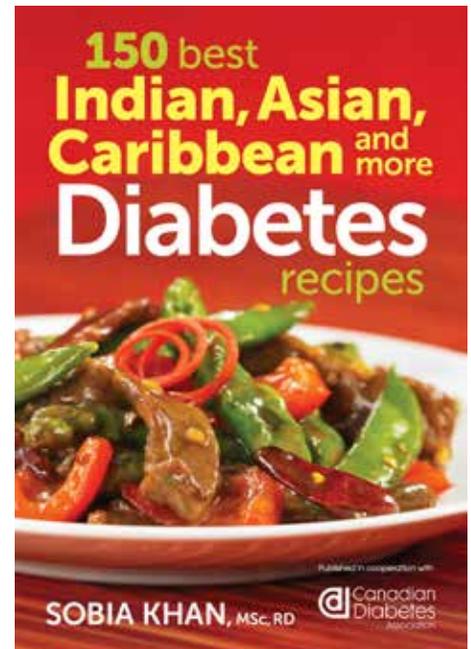
"People migrating to Canada from countries such as China and India who take on a westernized diet and lifestyle tend to be most at risk to gain weight and get diabetes. But we don't have a lot of culturally appropriate resources when it comes to food, so when they are cooking at home, they have no guidance on how to revamp their recipes," says author Sobia Khan, a nutrition professor in the college's Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts and a former dietitian. "This book takes the guesswork out of how to put together a traditional meal in a more healthy way."

In 2007, while teaching a course called Nutrition and Culture, Khan led a collaborative class project focused on creating a collection of culturally focused diabetic-friendly recipes. Equipped with seed funding from George Brown's Research and Innovation department, she and her students collected traditional ethnic recipes from family members, friends and



cultural groups in the community. They then tested and reformulated the recipes to comply with Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) nutritional recommendations for ingredients such as salt, fibre, carbohydrates and saturated fat, while staying true to each dish's traditional flavour. The recipes were then made publicly available online.

At that point, Khan saw the potential to further to develop the project into a more comprehensive dietary resource that she felt was missing for Asians, South Asians and Hispanics with diabetes. Over the next four years, with \$110,000 in funding from the federal government's Natural Sciences and Engineering



Research Council of Canada, she continued working with her students to gather, test and adapt conventional ethnic recipes. A total of 300 recipes were collected, which Khan narrowed down to 150 for the book. Most of the recipes can be made in fewer than 20 minutes, and each has a complete nutritional analysis as well as handy professional tips.

"This book is an educational tool that people can use to adapt their own recipes or to try some new ones," says Khan about the CDA-approved book. "It's also a useful resource for dietitians and other health care professionals to share with their clients or patients about how to better manage their diabetes."



When it comes to beating the stress of college exams and assignments, a dog is a student's best friend. That's the thinking behind a new George Brown College program that allows students to alleviate some of their school anxieties and become more calm by playing and cuddling with therapy dogs. The college has partnered with St. John's Ambulance to bring the dogs to the St. James, Waterfront and Casa Loma campuses once a month as part of its Healthy Campus initiative to promote positive mental health and wellness on campus. The students shown are among the several hundred who have already responded to the program, which was organized by staff from Student Academic Success Initiatives, WAVE Health Promotion and GBC Health, Wellness and Life Learning. Check the George Brown therapy dog schedule to find out about upcoming visits from the comforting canines.

# International students connect with alumni for Thanksgiving

For many newcomers to Canada, Thanksgiving is a foreign concept. But an innovative new George Brown College program enabled some international students to experience the primarily North American holiday for the first time.

Launched this past fall, the Thanksgiving Host-a-Student program helped international students wanting to celebrate the holiday to connect with college alumni willing to having them join their feast. Organized by Alumni Relations in partnership with the International Centre, the program is designed to expose students to this particular aspect of Canadian culture, and to also help them build their Canadian network.

"The international students had a chance to meet George Brown College alumni and learn about Canadian traditions. It was so meaningful for them and they loved sharing their wonderful culture with alumni, too. It's also a great way for students to network and get some career advice," says Anna Heychuk, events and volunteer coordinator in Alumni Relations.

In total, the program connected seven international students with four alumni families. Among those students was Nina Liu, a native of Shanghai, China who is in the second year of the Fashion Management diploma program. Liu spent the holiday with George Brown alum Mark McLellan, a 1983 Electrical Techniques graduate, along with his two kids and some of the family's friends at McLellan's Toronto home. After the turkey dinner — Liu's first — they exchanged presents, with Liu giving the children Chinese folding fans and bookmarks with Chinese paintings on them.

Liu says she enjoyed the chance to learn about the meaning of Thanksgiving, and to also share some of her own cultural traditions.

"Before I went there, I didn't know anything about Thanksgiving. Mark told me about its history — to celebrate the harvest," Liu says. "Mark also wanted me to introduce Chinese habits and culture, because they have never been to China. So I talked about the differences between my home country and Canada. I also taught the kids some simple words in Mandarin."

Since the dinner, Liu has stayed in touch with McLellan, and he connected her with a friend of his who offers a service of interest to Liu — Skype-based English classes for Chinese immigrants. With a plan after graduation to settle in Canada permanently, Liu is keen to further integrate into Canadian life, so she's grateful to have made the connection to McLellan through the program.

"I think it's a good thing for international students to get to know about Canadian life. We have experience in campus life, but off campus, it's hard for international students to build a new network, so this program is helpful for experiencing Canadian society," she says.



International student Nina Liu, right, enjoys Thanksgiving dinner with the family and friends of George Brown alum Mark McLellan.



International student Zilu Guo, centre, celebrates Thanksgiving with George Brown alum Chris Boland and his mother, Janet.

Chris Boland had a similarly positive experience when he opened his family Thanksgiving dinner to Zilu Guo, a second-year Business Accounting student, and Kanjie Zhang, a first-year Culinary Management student, both of whom are from China. At the celebration at his brother's home in Newcastle, Ont., Boland, a 1979 culinary program graduate from George Brown, says the women mingled comfortably with Boland's 20 or so family members, and were eager to learn about the holiday traditions, and also share their own.

"Thanksgiving for us is about getting together with family and taking the time to say, it's been a good

year, or that we're just happy to live in Canada. It's always nice to introduce others to that tradition," Boland says. "We also learned a lot about their culture. It's great to bring some new opinions to the conversation."

He says the students also appreciated the opportunity to learn about the employment experiences of the guests, some of whom work in fields related to the students' areas of training.

"I think the discussion about the different career paths was useful to them," Boland says. "Overall, it was a positive experience for everyone, in so many ways."

# Get to Know a George Brown Employee: Sushil Dawadi



## Sushil Dawadi

Merchandiser and staff trainer  
George Brown College Campus Store  
St. James Campus

**Can you tell us a little about what you do here at George Brown College?** I work as a merchandiser at George Brown College Campus Store at the St. James Campus. I am responsible for checking inventory, returns and ordering books. Furthermore, I am responsible for training part-time student staff members.

**How long have you been at the college?** Six years.

**What drew you to the school?** Many things — the location, the job standard, my work arrangement, the remuneration, etc.

**What do you enjoy about your job?** The diverse environment — I get to work with people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnic societies.

**What's your favourite part about what you do?** My favourite moment is when I get to help people to learn something new, and when I accomplish a goal assigned to me.

**What are some of the challenges of your job?** The turnover of part-time employees can sometimes be challenging, as I train them for their job, and when they are ready, we get new people. However, I like to help people learn new things, so I take this challenge as a positive factor to keep me on my toes.

**What are the biggest rewards of your job?**

The biggest reward of the organization I would say for me is that the college gives priority to internal staff before external candidates for internal job opportunities. This helps us to grow within the organization.

**What are three fun facts about you?** I was born in Nepal, the country of Mount Everest; I like playing the guitar; and I like playing video games.

**What drew you to your line of work?** I like working with people, and in retail positions, I have always been able to do so. In addition, I see huge room for my career growth within George Brown. How did you get to where you are today — what's been your secret to success? I work really hard. So far, positivity has been my secret to success.

**What is your favourite memory at George Brown College?** I was interviewed four times for the position I am currently in. I finally got hired the fourth time. After I was in the job for a couple of months, my manager told me that he made the right decision by hiring me.

**What are some of your interests outside the college?** I have always been very good at computer networking and repair. Although I don't have a professional degree in computer networking, I enjoy doing it.

**Is there anything we might be surprised to learn about you?** I am not sure if you will be surprised, but I am one among many who graduated and work at George Brown.

## Wireless internet network expands for GBC community

Members of the George Brown College community can now obtain free Internet connectivity at some other educational institutions where they may do their schoolwork or research, or attend academic events.

The college has joined Eduroam, a global internet roaming access service developed for the research and education community that is available at more than 150 institutions across Canada, and in more than 60 countries around the world. What this means for George Brown students, faculty and staff is that if they use the facilities of Ryerson University, the University of Toronto, OCAD University or York University, they will be able to easily access those institutions' wireless Internet connections.

"The most important benefit for students is convenience. While more and more stores, coffee shops and other places are offering free Wi-Fi, this is just one more service we can offer our students to help them in their course of study," says Paul Ruppert, chief information officer at George Brown.

Taking advantage of this perk is as easy as logging in with your college email address and password. You will then have access to Wi-Fi in the public spaces of these institutions, according to their hours and terms of use.

"For students who travel to, or study at, another institution, it is a convenience to have access to wireless networks," Ruppert says, adding that another benefit is that "for conferences, seminars and other events held at George Brown, it is convenient for guests from other institutions to have access to a network without having to set up special access codes or passwords."



Every once in a while, it is important to look beyond our own institution and consider system issues and directions. That's what we did recently at the annual Colleges Ontario Committee of Presidents strategic planning retreat. We heard from our new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Reza Moridi, who spent quite a bit of time with us sharing his thoughts and learning more about the college system.

Minister Moridi spoke about the importance of developing a workforce with the right skills and knowledge for our economy. He also called out the Wynne government's goal to attract more international students, and the importance of the strategic mandate agreements colleges and universities all submitted this year as the basis for helping his ministry prioritize and direct resources.

As a former researcher, the minister stressed that his decision-making will be based on hard data, such as graduation rates, student satisfaction rates and evidence-based market needs, to help inform any new capacity investments. He signaled a shift to ensure increased focus on quality and student outcomes. While I'm sure minister Moridi will benefit from increased exposure to the college system as he progresses in his new role, he has already signaled some important directions for us.

As the leaders of Colleges Ontario and the 24 presidents sat down to

formulate a new strategic plan for the system from our association's perspective, I was reassured that we all seem well aligned regarding our shared mission, and that the goals of the system clearly reflect the priorities we've established here at George Brown. While there are many specific initiatives planned, the high-level directions we discussed include:

**Providing the right training and credentials for tomorrow's labour force**

Colleges will continue to advocate for modernizing our credentials framework to reflect international standards and labour market requirements. We also need to advocate for improved pathways and better labour market information. There will continue to be advocacy for possible implementation of three-year degrees, expansion of four-year degree programs and approval to offer stand-alone nursing degrees. We will also advocate for having apprenticeship managed more directly by colleges.

**Developing the next generation of innovators**

This direction will include improving support for entrepreneurship and applied research. The system will seek funding for college industry chairs to promote industry innovation, and work with our federal counterparts to improve Statistics Canada's reporting of employment outcomes for graduates.

**Investing in teaching and learning excellence**

All colleges acknowledged the fundamental need to further invest in human capital, new technologies, equipment and repairs if we're to ensure students continue to be taught in effective and relevant environments. We also need to expand our collaboration in delivering programs and services. Colleges Ontario will also begin to argue for a college tuition fee framework that is distinct from universities.

**Providing strong community leadership**

As we know from our own mission statement, colleges are closely aligned with the economic and social needs of our communities. We will continue to work with governments, community leaders, students and others to promote a stronger alignment between colleges and labour force needs. This will involve working with industry organizations such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters to support these goals.

**Increasing opportunities for student success**

To help close the skills gap and reduce poverty, we will advocate for funding to help more people from vulnerable

communities acquire the professional qualifications they need to achieve long-term success. We will also explore collaboration opportunities to deliver online learning, and lobby the province for a long-term commitment to support improved mental health services in our colleges.

As you can see, there are many elements in these plans, and a broader vision of our role and mandate. We'll need to continue to be agile and adaptable. While change can be a challenge, we should remain confident that our own strategy remains highly relevant, and that we're well positioned to support our students be successful in their current and future academic journey.

FLASHBACK



Image courtesy of the George Brown Archives

After CHCA's recent sensational culinary events, which celebrated fine Parisian food and featured internationally renowned chef Alain Ducasse (see page 1 of newsletter), it's worth remembering George Brown's more modest roots in the cuisine arena. Taken in October 1976, this photo shows the college's food technology showcase Willy Brand Demonstrates on the Canadian National Exhibition grounds. It's clear that culinary endeavours at the college have come a long way.

