



The University of Western Ontario's
Accessibility Plan

September 2005 to August 2006

Prepared in accordance with the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001*

30 September 2005

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The University of Western Ontario's Annual Accessibility Plan
September 30, 2005

Introduction

In December 2001, Ontario passed the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (the "Act"). The purpose of the Act is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the Act mandates that every university, including The University of Western Ontario ("Western"), prepare an annual accessibility plan.

This is the third such plan to be prepared on behalf of Western.

Objectives

The purpose of an accessibility plan is to document barriers to accessibility that have been removed to date and identify those barriers that will be removed in the coming year. A plan must also identify how the barriers will be removed and present a plan for identifying and removing barriers in the future, and preventing the development of new barriers. Plans must be made public and accessible to allow for input from the broader community.

The purpose of this plan is to update the report, prepared in September 2004, and available at http://www.uwo.ca/equity/WODAC/WODAC_index.html.

Western's Commitment to Accessibility Planning

As is stated in *Making Choices*, the University's current Strategic Plan,

Western is also committed to increasing its representation of First Nations, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. In the current environment, excellence requires that Western be an attractive destination for the full diversity of young faculty, including those from all the groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program, to which the University is a signatory.

With regard to its administrative staff, Western also establishes the following commitment in *Making Choices*: to "Ensure that our hiring is supportive of applicants from diverse backgrounds, including the designated groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program".

The University of Western Ontario has been committed to accessibility planning for some time now and has recommitted itself to such planning under the Act. With the formation of Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee ("WODAC"), Western has committed itself to meeting its obligations under the Act, as well as to achieving the following goals:

- The continual improvement of access to University premises, facilities and services for all persons with disabilities;
- The participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans; and
- The provision of quality services to persons with disabilities.

Barrier-Removal Initiatives in 2004-2005

1. Physical and Architectural Barriers

During the past year, the student-funded Campus Accessibility Review and Enhancement Committee ("CARE"), formerly the Accessibility Development Committee ("ADC"), continued efforts to address barriers on campus that have been identified by students. While the accessibility enhancements are focused on improving student experience, there is a beneficial impact for all members of the university community and for visitors to campus. Improvements relating to physical and architectural barriers include:

- Six ergonomic chairs for the Learning Opportunities Lab in the Weldon Library;
- One railing added to the ramp leading to the western door of University College (cost shared with University).

CARE also established a discretionary fund for the Student Development Centre's Services for Students with Disabilities ("SSD"). This fund also SSD to address and complete urgent requests for capital projects.

The Department of Physical Plant, which plays a large role in addressing physical barriers identified on campus, has also displayed a strong commitment to addressing physical barriers that are brought to its attention and to maintaining accessibility-related improvements such as door openers. In addition to addressing issues as they arise, Physical Plant continues to make available the amount of \$50,000.00 per year in its budget to direct toward projects to increase accessibility on campus. It should be noted as well that additional sums are committed by other departments on campus, and that making accessibility an integral part of all budgeting processes is to be encouraged.

Initiatives involving Physical Plant this year included:

- Installation of a chair lift at the Faculty of Education Library. This lift accommodates a greater variety of chair sizes and weights, including scooters. The lift may be operated independently (e.g. without library staff assistance) with assigned keys;
- Installation of accessible door operators at Faculty of Education Library and the University Community Centre;
- Door widening to comply with code requirements for the Spencer Engineering Room 2100;
- New barrier-free entrance door and interior ramp at University College;
- New door and door operator on the first floor of Social Sciences floor;
- Installation of an accessible washroom on the second floor of the Weldon Library.

The Barrier-Free Access and Safety Committee (the “BFASC”) continues to be involved in the review of plans for all new buildings and all major renovations to existing buildings on campus to ensure that barriers are addressed at the planning and design stage, and that no new barriers are created. Accessibility standards set by the University often go beyond the standards found in the Ontario *Building Code* (which are acknowledged as a base only) and it is an expectation that contractors bidding on and completing work at the University will meet these higher standards. It should also be noted that Physical Plant regularly engages the services of **Designable** Environments (Consultants in Accessibility and Future Care Planning) to review these projects. Work done by the BFASC and the Consultants in the past year included reviews of the following projects:

- Clinical Skills Lab in South Valley Building;
- Renovations to the second floor of the Law Building (this area includes administrative office space and the legal clinic);
- Renovations to the Biological & Geological Sciences Building (B&G) beginning fall 2005 (accessible washrooms included);
- On-going construction on the Western Road Residence (to open fall 2006) to offer 5 barrier-free suites.

The Campus General Sidewalk and Parking Lot Upgrades Projects have also initiated barrier removal projects over the past year including:

- Modification of the existing blue phone (safety phone) access at the south end of the TD Waterhouse parking lot to provide for barrier-free access;
- Existing grass areas at bus stop locations along University Drive were modified with concrete sidewalk to provide access.

Over the past year, many university members have been trained on the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Although the focus of the training is preventing crime on campus, participants are also trained in accessibility considerations. When participants conduct CPTED audits of various campus buildings, they will also make accessibility recommendations, as appropriate.

Accessibility Assessment

Over the summers of 2003 and 2004, a campus accessibility assessment was undertaken by faculty members and graduate students of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Occupational Therapy to evaluate the physical accessibility of buildings at the University of Western Ontario and to recommend ways to improve physical accessibility for students, faculty, staff and visitors.

This is a significant undertaking on a campus the size of Western. Thirty-one buildings were assessed using the University Campus Accessibility Measure and the data analyzed by graduate students. In July 2005, a report detailing the accessibility of four buildings deemed to be the highest priority (Stevenson-Lawson, University Community Centre, Social Sciences Building, and University College) was finalized and presented by the graduate students as part of their requirements for the degree of MSc(OT). This report makes prioritized recommendations for improvements to the four buildings. A copy of the Accessibility Assessment report is included in the Appendix.

Over the summer of 2005, further work the accessibility assessment was begun order to complete an assessment of some of the buildings that were unavailable for earlier assessment, due to renovations, construction, or other reasons. These buildings include the Graphics Building, Law Building, McIntosh Gallery, North Campus Building, Services Building, TD Waterhouse Stadium, and the Medical Sciences Building.

The process of data analysis for the remaining buildings will continue and a further report is expected at the end of July 2006.

2. Information and Communications Barriers

Initiatives to remove information and communication barriers across campus in the past year include:

- A new Campus Accessibility Map was made available on the University website at: <http://www.uwo.ca/maps/accessmaps/>;
- Western's Duty to Accommodate Guidelines, designed to be of assistance to faculty and staff, were approved and communicated to the community by posting on the University's website and media coverage: <http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/home/splash/accommodation.htm>;
- Western Libraries' website fully meets Level-AAA conformance to the accessibility guidelines set forth by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The site features dynamically generated text-only versions of all pages. This process ensures the text-only versions are always up-to-date and available to those who require them. In addition, access keys enable users to access features on the Western Libraries website more quickly, including navigation items and jumping directly to the content. Many of these features are hidden throughout the site and are easily accessible to people using the proper screen reading software;
- Western Libraries website also includes such accessibility features as table summaries, less reliance on image maps, easy navigation by way of the keyboard and proper use of markup language where appropriate. A complete list of all accessibility features may be found in the Western Libraries Accessibility Report: www.lib.uwo.ca/accessibility/report.html;
- A presentation in May 2005 entitled "Incorporating Principles of Universal Design into Teaching" as part of the Spring Perspectives on Teaching series, sponsored by the Teaching Support Centre;
- In July 2005, the findings from the Accessibility Assessment (four buildings deemed to be the highest priority) were presented at the Seventh Annual Occupational Therapy Conference on Evidence Based Practice.

3. Attitudinal Barriers

This type of barrier is the most difficult of the barriers to identify and address. Western is fortunate to have a large number of interested and concerned individuals in its community who regularly take on the task of educating others about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in our community, both formally in the work that they do and informally.

Some initiatives completed in the past year to move forward in addressing these barriers include:

- The CARE committee introduced a new award (The Disabilities Advancement Award), scheduled to be awarded in the 2005/06 academic year, to recognize community members who support and encourage accessibility and accommodation practices;
- Residence Life members participated in the event, “Wheelchair for a Day”. Able-bodied representatives spent a day navigating around Western to gain understanding of the barriers faced by persons who use a wheelchair. Their observations were reported in the *Western Gazette*;
- The Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) announced the funding of the new Commissioner for Students with Disabilities position. The University Students Council (representing undergraduates) has had a similar position for many years;
- Rehabilitation Services offered the *Mental Health Works* workshop. Facilitated by speakers from the Canadian Mental Health Association, this day-long presentation offered information and advice about how to ensure persons with mental illness achieve full participation in the workplace;
- The Duty to Accommodate Guidelines were announced and communicated to the university community.

4. Technological Barriers

Efforts to remove technological barriers on campus are on-going. Various departments continue to take steps to acquire adaptive technology on an as-needed basis. Support for these initiatives is given to departments and individual employees by Rehabilitation Services.

In addition, however, several initiatives of the CARE Committee in the past year addressed the following technological barriers for students on campus:

- Upgrades to and the purchase of new equipment for the Weldon Access Lab were funded. The Weldon Access Lab is available to all students who are registered with Services for Students with Disabilities and who require any of the following: Assistive Technology, paper form enlargement, screen readers and enlargers, text to speech and speech to text, height adjustable workstations, a quiet, private place in which to study and do research, etc.

- A HP iPAQ to be used for the training of and borrowing by students with disabilities
 - Dragon Naturally Speaking
 - Microsoft Office 2003
 - WinXP upgrade from WinME. Students are more familiar with WinXP.
 - JAWS upgrade
 - Open Book upgrade
 - 21" LCD monitor to bring the Zoomtext station up to standard
 - Upgrade CRT monitors to 19" LCD
 - Security related software as the Weldon Access Lab is primarily an unmonitored lab with restricted access;
- A workstation for a blind student was funded. The workstation, intended to meet the needs of one student over the past year, will be used by Services for Students with Disabilities for other students in years to come. Purchases for the workstation included:
 - A computer
 - JAWS (screen reader software)
 - Open Book (document reader software)
 - A scanner
 - A Braille printer
 - A regular printer
 - A Braille (notetaking device)
 - 4 track GE tape recorder;
- As previously mentioned, Western Libraries achieved Level-AAA conformance to the accessibility guidelines set forth by the W3C. Western Libraries is a leading example of technological accessibility with respect to their on-line systems.

Information Technology Services ("ITS"), specifically through the Senate Subcommittee on Information Technology ("SUIT"), continues its efforts to ensure all Western's official departmental websites meet barrier-free web accessibility standards, as set out by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Access Initiative (WAI).

5. Barriers Created by Policies or Practices

With an organization the size of Western, there are a great number of policies and practices, both formal and informal, which require review. By promoting Western's obligations pursuant to the Act, it is anticipated that many of these will be reviewed by the appropriate departments, and barriers will be identified and brought forward, either by those departments or by individuals impacted. Resources such as Staff Relations, Rehabilitation Services, Services for

Students with Disabilities and Equity & Human Rights Services are available to receive concerns and provide advice. These resources also continue to review policies and practices as part of their work on campus.

Some specific initiatives in the past year undertaken to address policy or practice barriers include:

- As mentioned above, the Duty to Accommodate guidelines were implemented and communicated. The guideline is designed to be of assistance to staff and faculty on campus;
- A one-time funding of up to \$20,000 was committed to by the Human Resources department. Already, \$10,000 of this funding has been provided to WODAC for an upcoming Hearing Accessibility Audit to be completed over the next couple of years.

Plan for Removal of Barriers in 2005-2006

What follows is a list of recommended actions to be undertaken in the upcoming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers at Western.

1. Physical and Architectural Barriers

- Continue the work done by the BFASC to review all new projects and major renovations to ensure accessibility.
- Improve signage in the form of the International Symbol of Accessibility to mark all accessible entrances, elevators, washrooms and routes through buildings.
- Increase the number of unisex accessible washrooms in buildings on campus.
- Increase the number of accessible entrances to buildings.
- Repair and improve any accessible entrances as needed. Plans this year include:
 - Modification of the west doors to Althouse College to provide barrier-free access to and from the parking lot;
 - Repair and rebuilding of the ramp at the entrance to Delaware Hall residence.

- Work with faculties and departments to remove clutter and obstacles when they render passageways narrower than the 1800 mm (approximately 6 feet) to enhance accessibility and safety.
- Continue to diligently maintain the condition of external routes (curb cuts, conditions of sidewalks and snow clearance) to facilitate safe access. Specific plans this year for the Campus General Handrail and Stairs Project include:
 - Replace areas of old substandard pedestrian railing;
 - Replace the railing along the pathway at the rear of Alumni Hall (running from Power Plant lot east to Kent Drive).
- Continue to incorporate accessibility considerations through the training and subsequent audits undertaken by the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) team.
- Continue to address physical barriers as they are identified by members of the community. The community currently has a number of different committees and departments that may be approached with concerns. Discussions are currently underway to improve communication and/or amalgamate the work done by these various committees and departments in order to better serve our community and respond more effectively to concerns regarding physical barriers.
- Continue to support the completion of the Campus Accessibility Audit and address barriers as they are identified. Careful review and attention will be given to the barriers identified and recommendations proposed for the four priority buildings identified in the July 2005 Accessibility Assessment.

2. Information and Communications Barriers

- Continue to communicate about the Duty to Accommodate guidelines. Plans are to continue communication through the assistance of campus media (*Western News*) and increased information on Western's website.
- Improve the amount of information available on Western's website regarding accessibility issues on campus and make this information more visible to website users. One specific goal this year is to produce web-based maps for internal accessible routes of Western's buildings.
- Establish clearer contact or contacts for individuals who experience accessibility concerns at Western that will allow for a more co-ordinated response and centralized information gathering.

- Support the Hearing Accessibility Audit which is scheduled to commence in September 2005.

3. Attitudinal Barriers

- Continue to improve understanding and awareness of mental health and mental illness across campus, especially among managers and supervisors, through further education and training initiatives.
- Bring learning opportunities to campus which bring together persons with disabilities from across the Western community, their supporters and administrators to discuss accessibility issues, highlight existing barriers and brainstorm ways to remove and prevent further barriers.
- Completion of the employment equity guide for use by those responsible for staff hiring and promotion, which would include considerations for hiring and promoting persons with disabilities.
- Continue to develop and present various educational programs across campus. A duty to accommodate workshop for staff and faculty is currently being developed by Equity & Human Rights Services and Services for Students with Disabilities. While this workshop is intended to support accommodation for students, a similar type of workshop is also being considered for the duty to accommodate needs of staff and faculty.
- Considered a focussed awareness campaign in support of persons with disabilities on Western's campus. With the target audience of faculty, staff, students and visitors, such a campaign would involve promotional materials, cross-department co-operation, and media coverage.

4. Technological Barriers

- Continue to respond on an as-needed basis to requests for adaptive technology to assist members of the community.
- Continue to monitor and ensure all official Western websites are accessible according to standards approved by ITS.

5. Barriers Created by Policies or Practices

- Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee has been restructured and as of September 2005, will become a "working group" and will encourage greater participation from university members who

have disabilities. The restructuring of WODAC will provide members with the opportunity to bring forward issues from the university community, brainstorm solutions and then take the appropriate action to resolve the issue.

- Western continues to explore options and costs for accessible on-campus transportation in response to concerns and limitations raised by members of the community. Research was done over the past year and it is expected that issue will continue to be addressed over the coming year.
- Consider a review of the existing policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.
- Consider collaboration with the City of London's Accessibility Committee.
- Communicate about the new Ontario legislation when it is passed and Western becomes aware of its roles and responsibilities arising under that legislation.

Review and Monitoring Process

Contained in last year's report was a recommendation by WODAC that its mandate be clearly established. It had become apparent that work needed to be done to develop a clear review and monitoring process, and that the role of WODAC needed to be more clearly defined. There are a number of departments, groups and individuals on campus who share in the responsibilities outlined by the Act. WODAC agreed that a coordinated approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers is most preferable. As a result of discussions and reflections on the role of WODAC, the committee was restructured as of September 2005.

Over the coming year, WODAC will take a more active role in identifying and addressing barriers. It hopes to develop a clearer and more integrated process for those who identify accessibility issues and forge relationships between departments, groups and individuals that will assist in finding a reasonable and timely resolution to accessibility concerns. WOCAC will discuss implementing a more formalized annual review process which would include a clearer identification of accountabilities and timelines for work to be done. This identification of short term and long term goals will be reflective of the obligations that are anticipated under the forthcoming Ontario legislation. We look forward to the upcoming year and to our "new" WODAC and the work that it will undertake in its new form.

Appendix A

Members of WODAC

The following members of the University community served as members of WODAC from September 2004 (or earlier) to the date of this report:

Committee Member	Department	Contact Information
Joan Aldis	King's University College	433-3491 x4316
Farid Arbi	Professional and Managerial Association	661-2111 x85735
Frances Bauer	Ombudsperson	661-3573
Brian Borowski	Information Technology Services	661-2111 x86033
Claire Callaghan Melanie Burnard	Western Libraries	661-2111 x84820
Barbara Lent	Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry	661-2111 x88780
William Cliff	Huron University College	438-7224 x294
Wendy Dickinson	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-3031 x88616
Veronika Elsie	HR, Staff Relations	661-3783 x85580
Brenda Davis	Staff Association	661-2111 x83028
Flemming Galberg	Physical Plant and Capital Planning	661-2111 x88880
Gail Hutchinson	Student Development Centre	661-2111 x85946
Lisa Klinger	Occupational Therapy	661-2111 x88963
Ruta Lawrence	Housing and Ancillary Services	661-2111 x85978
Bruce Morgan	Brescia University College	432-8353 x28289
Eric Johanssen Kelly Wilson	University Students' Council	661-3574 x83574
Merran Neville	Information Technology Services	661-3976 x83976
Kathryn Esaw	University Students' Council	
Valerie Smith	HR, Occupational Health and Safety	661-2111 x84742
Deborah Stuart	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-2147 x82147
Jennifer Schroeder	Equity & Human Rights Services	661-3334
Jane O'Brien (Chair)	Associate Vice-President (Human Resources)	661-4261

Appendix B

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The University of Western Ontario Accessibility Assessment

Michele MacIntosh, Stephanie Taylor, Lisa Klinger, and Linda Miller

This project is an evaluation of the physical accessibility of the four most commonly used buildings at the University of Western Ontario: Social Sciences Centre, Stevenson Lawson Building, University College and the University Community Centre. The current findings are part of an ongoing assessment of Western's campus accessibility, and are based on data collected using the University Campus Accessibility Measure. Using the information gathered, and in consultation with Services for Students with Disabilities, a priority system was developed to assist the Division of Physical Plant & Capital Planning Services in enhancing accessibility on campus. Recommendations for the removal of existing barriers, and ensuring that new buildings are being built barrier-free are included in this report.

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was passed into law in December of 2001. The purpose of the ODA is "to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province" (Ministry of Education, 2005). Ontario colleges and universities are required, under the ODA, to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to individuals with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2005). The 2001 ODA is being replaced by Bill 118, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (Office of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2005a). Bill 118 is "an act respecting the development, implementation and enforcement of standards relating to accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodations, buildings and all other things specified in the Act for persons with disabilities on or before January 2025" (Office of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2005b). Bill 118 will make barrier removal and prevention mandatory once accessibility standards are enacted and requires that accessibility standards be developed (Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, 2005).

Michele MacIntosh and Stephanie Taylor are MSc (OT) candidates in the School of Occupational Therapy at The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Lisa Klinger and Dr. Linda Miller are faculty members of the School of Occupational Therapy at The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

By creating barrier-free environments, Ontario universities can enable each student, faculty, and staff member to participate in their desired occupations on campus, including academic and leisure activities. The University of Western Ontario's Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee [WODAC] was created in order to meet the obligations under the ODA. In their Annual Accessibility Plan for September 2004 to August 2005, the University of Western Ontario indicated a variety of ways in which they plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers on campus (WODAC, 2004). It is intended that the present report will provide the university with detailed information on the accessibility of campus buildings to further assist them in their commitment to improving access.

The University of Western Ontario is one of the largest universities in Ontario, offering more than 60 degree and diploma programs for approximately 31,978 full time and part time students (The University of Western Ontario, 2004). In 2001-2002, 808 students accessed Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and, of those students, 85 had a mobility impairment. This number was significantly increased from

numbers reported in 1998-1999 when only 47 students with a mobility impairment utilized SSD (WODAC, 2003). This increase in the number of students requiring physically accessible buildings reinforces the need for the university to take measures to improve accessibility on campus. Physical barriers may restrict access to some parts of campus or may place excessive demands on students with mobility impairments in terms of time and effort. This can lead to students being late for class or feeling too physically exhausted to participate once they reach their destination. As a result, their academic performance may suffer (J. Preston, personal communication, November 19, 2004).

Additional consideration should also be given to students, faculty and staff who have temporary impairments and are therefore not registered with SSD. Also, the above statistics do not take into consideration visitors to the school who might require a physically accessible campus. The university has a great deal to offer, not only to its students, faculty and staff, but to the community as well. Conferences, sporting events and celebrations are but a few of the activities held on campus, which attract visitors on a regular basis. Thus, there is no way of calculating how many people require physically accessible venues at any given time. It can therefore be assumed that it will always be a greater number than is recorded.

The last accessibility audit of the University of Western Ontario was completed over a decade ago (WODAC, 2003). In order to identify current barriers, the University of Western Ontario began an accessibility assessment of its campus buildings in July of 2003. The first phase of the University of Western Ontario accessibility assessment was data collection, which began during July/August 2003 and was continued in July/August of 2004. Using the University Campus Accessibility Measure (UCAM), data was collected on the physical accessibility of 31 campus buildings. Data on 14 of these buildings was collected in the summer of 2003, and the remaining 17 buildings were completed in the summer of 2004. Four occupational therapy students from the University of Western Ontario analyzed the data on five buildings in 2003-2004 (Bainset et al., 2004). These buildings included Chemistry, Biological & Geological Sciences, Stevenson Lawson, University College, and Western Science Centre (Bains et al., 2004). Due to the number of buildings left to be completed and the preliminary nature of the original analysis, two additional occupational therapy students from the University of Western Ontario continued the analysis in 2004-2005, resulting in the present report.

This report covers the physical accessibility of four campus buildings. The campus buildings analyzed herein are: Stevenson Lawson Building, University College, University Community Centre, and the Social Science Centre. At a meeting conducted in February, 2005 with partners in this assessment, including faculty supervisor, Professor Lisa Klinger MSc, OT Reg. (Ont), School of Occupational Therapy; Jennifer Schroeder, Director, Equity Services; Dr. Deborah Stuart, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities; Dave Riddell, Associate Vice-President (Physical Plant and Capital Planning); Flemming Galberg, Director, Facilities Engineering; and a number of Western's architects, the four buildings included in this report were identified as the priority, as they were the most frequently used by students. It was also decided at that time that University College and the Stevenson Lawson building would be re-done in the format developed this year in order to provide Physical Plant with similar guidelines for each of the four identified buildings.

Methods

In order to assess the buildings in a logical and functional manner, the University Campus Accessibility Measure was utilized, tempered by clinical judgement. This led to the development of an essential pathway layout, which follows a logical progression of entering and utilizing the building for intended uses.

Measurement Tool

The UCAM was developed by The Research Alliance for Children with Special Needs in 2003. It was created from a need for a comprehensive and up to date review of the physical accessibility of school environments. The measure was considered a necessity, due to the large impact that the physical environment has on individuals with disabilities (Young, Bartlett, & Miller, 2003).

The UCAM was developed from the original Physical Accessibility Measure for Schools (PAMS), which concentrates on the elementary school system. The UCAM has been adapted from the PAMS assessment to suit a university campus, and focuses on five main categories: 1) Mobility to and outside of the building,

2) Mobility within the building, 3) Accessibility and mobility within classrooms, 4) Accessibility of activities of daily living, and 5) Mobility in common rooms.

The UCAM was developed with the most current measures available: if resources such as the National Building Code of Canada, 1995, Ontario Building Code, and the Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines (Frye, Frye, & Sandilands, 2000) conflicted with measurements, the dimension that allowed for the most accessible space was integrated into the tool. This ensures that the physical environment can be accommodating to the largest population possible (Lee et al., 2001).

However, it needs to be stated that the UCAM assesses the physical environment only. Thus, it does not focus on creating a barrier free environment for all types of disabilities. Specifically, it does not take into consideration visual or hearing impairments, or cognitive and learning disabilities (Young, Bartlett & Miller, 2003).

Prioritization

The creation of the above-mentioned essential pathways was not sufficient in terms of providing the university with practical feedback and recommendations concerning physical accessibility. In order to present the detailed results of the UCAM in a functional manner, a prioritization system was developed. Three main contributions informed this system: relevant research, in vivo assessment, and discussion with advisors from Services for Students with Disabilities.

Summary of Findings

Through the integration of the collected data, the following priority system was developed:

Class A

These are items that must be changed or adapted to ensure the safety and accessibility of primary pathways through the physical design of a building and its furnishings.

Class B

Designated to changes that should be made. These are not as urgent as the A-list changes, and are geared more towards quality of life issues and accessibility beyond the primary pathways.

Class C

This category covers what can be done if time and funds are available. These are issues that deal with inconveniences.

Class X

This is designated to changes that are not feasible unless there were to be a major reconstruction.

Recommendations

Two sets of recommendations have been developed to assist in removing barriers to accessibility on the University of Western Ontario campus, and in ensuring that all new buildings are built barrier-free.

General Recommendations

These general recommendations should be taken into consideration for every building, and are designated as "A" priorities. These recommendations are based on consultation with Services for Students with Disabilities and clinical reasoning, but are not based on the measurements in the UCAM.

The general recommendations include the following:

- All doors on major pathways require automatic openers
- There should be one accessible unisex washroom in each building or one fully accessible male and female washroom
- Signage should be posted both outside and inside of buildings to mark the location of accessible entrances and the route of major accessible pathways within the building
- An evacuation plan for each building should be developed and communicated to students, staff, and faculty with disabilities and to relevant personnel without disabilities
- In order to ensure safety; a well-lit area of refuge should be created with proper directional signage

- An alarm system with a visual signal to notify students, faculty and staff who are hearing impaired of an emergency should be installed in each building
- All accessible entrances should be well maintained, and remain unlocked during hours of operation.

Recommendations Based on the UCAM

The following is a summary of the “A” priority recommendations for the buildings completed, based on the UCAM measurements:

- Handrails missing from stairways need to be added
- Ramps that are steeper than the recommended guidelines need to be corrected
- Elevator emergency communication systems should be made accessible for all users
- Horizontal and vertical grab bars that are missing in designated washroom stalls should be installed
- Automatic doors should be programmed to stop opening or closing if there is an object in their path
- Indicator stripping on stairs must be made flush with the tread to decrease tripping hazard
- Floor surfaces in shower areas must be textured to decrease the risk of falls.

The following is a summary of significant recommendations at the “B” priority level:

- Doors that cannot be opened with a closed hand require the hardware to be replaced
- Doors that are too heavy should be replaced or equipped with automatic openers
- Stairways require indicator stripping that contrasts with treads to indicate level changes
- Elevator controls that are too high should be made accessible for all users
- Designated washrooms should be furnished so that faucets, soap and toiletry dispensers can be operated with a closed hand and are within reach for individuals using a wheelchair
- Desks and chairs that are height adjustable should be available in classrooms designated as accessible
- Common rooms should be equipped with separated, height adjustable chairs and tables
- A number of lockers should be modified so that shelves and coat hooks are at an accessible height and they can be opened with a closed hand
- Essential rooms and services that can only be accessed by stairs should have ramps installed
- Check-out counters and work stations should be provided that are at an accessible height for individuals using a wheelchair
- Public telephones should be modified to provide adequate depth and height to enable individuals using a wheelchair to gain full use of the telephones
- Adequate space should be provided under the washroom sinks in accessible washrooms to enable individuals using a wheelchair to approach and use the sink
- Showers should be equipped with folding or fixed seating
- The number of designated accessible seats in auditoriums should be increased and there should be adequate signage indicating seating location for individuals using a wheelchair .

Recommendations concerning “C” and “X” priorities are beyond the scope of this paper, but have been provided to the Division of Physical Plant to use at their discretion.

Conclusions

Based on criteria in the University Campus Accessibility Measure, this evaluation shows that Western meets and exceeds standards for accessibility in many areas. This measure also reveals opportunities to decrease physical barriers on campus to enable equitable use for all students, faculty, and staff.

The majority of these barriers can be overcome. In order to assist with improving the physical accessibility of the campus buildings, the above-mentioned priorities were developed.

It is the intent of this report to be a functional and practical guideline to enable full participation of all students, faculty and staff at the University of Western Ontario.

Future Directions

This report forms part of the results of an ongoing assessment of the physical accessibility of buildings on the University of Western Ontario campus. A continuation of the report will be provided at this time next year, with as many of the remaining buildings as possible being assessed. There are currently 27 buildings remaining that have been measured with the UCAM and that need to be analyzed.

The development of a tool to assess the accessibility issues not addressed in the UCAM is required. This tool would address issues such as signage and primary pathways, as well as the needs of individuals with sensory and perceptual deficits in addition to individuals with mobility impairments.

In addition, the quantitative data collected using the existing tools could be further enhanced by incorporating the daily experiences of individuals with disabilities who utilize the University of Western Ontario. Therefore, it is suggested that focus groups be conducted with students, faculty and staff, to gain insight into the functional impact of disability on campus participation.

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Appendix C

Annual Accessibility Plan- King's University College September 2005-August 2006

Submitted to: Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee
The University of Western Ontario

Submitted by: Mary Carol Watters - Dean of Students
Joan Aldis - Coordinator of Counselling & Student Development
and Services for Students with Disabilities

Date: September 26, 2005

This report addresses:

1. measures taken to remove barriers on the campus of King's University College
2. measures to be taken in the current year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities including faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of the public.

Barrier- Removal Initiatives in 2004-2005

- An accessibility audit was completed. All buildings, walkways, grounds and parking areas were assessed and barriers identified. The accessibility audit was reviewed by the Director of Physical Plan, Director of Human Resources, Dean of Students, and the Coordinator, Counselling & Student Development and possible solutions and priorities were established.
- Renovations were completed in the Alumni Court Residence in August, 2005. The changes included:
 - ❖ Installation of automatic door openers at the front entrance, main floor washroom and student room
 - ❖ Upgrade of main floor washroom
 - shower, sinks and handrails
 - ❖ Upgrade of student room
 - widened doorway, lowered shelving units
- One (1) laptop, two (2) tape recorders and (1) digital recorder were purchased
- A new part-time position was created in the Office of the Dean of Students to provide alternative-to-print material and learning skills support for students with disabilities.
- Maureen Moore, Disabilities Assistant, completed American Sign Language, Phases I and II of Level One.

Plan for Removal of Barriers in 2005-2006

- Purchase two (2) accessible computer workstations: one (1) for the Cardinal Carter Library and one (1) in the Counselling & Student Development Area.
- Develop a fire safety plan for persons with disabilities.
- Continue to ensure that barriers are identified and removed (per original report 2003-2004 and annual institutional priorities) and that accommodations, where required, are arranged in a timely manner.

Appendix D

Huron University College
Ontarians with Disabilities Act Report

June 2005

In August 2004, a comprehensive accessibility audit was undertaken as part of the self-study portion of the accreditation for the Association of Theological Schools. This four day process included a measurement of every door, every hallway, every washroom and classroom, every facility Huron University College offers with regard to accessibility and acceptable thresholds of mobility for persons with impairments. This study was the most comprehensive of all the studies done before now, and a full report of almost 200 pages was delivered to the College with copies being distributed to the Dean of Theology and the Principal, with an executive summary on the state of facilities at Huron.

Huron University College remains committed to a barrier free environment for all students, regardless of disability. As noted in our audit, all recent construction includes ramps and door openers, consistent with or exceeding the Ontario Building Code. Residence rooms are accessible by elevator, and the new Southwest Residence building has completely level access, although there is not covered access to the rest of our campus.

The Library has one issue resolved this year, in that the main library door had no opener and strike plate. This is now in the process of being rectified and will be completed by fall 2005.

The main residence (O'Neil/Ridley and Hellmuth) entrances are not accessible to wheelchairs, however the main student entrance (via info desk) grants access to all the main building residences and elevators, with a minimum of inconvenience. Future upgrades to these particularly aged buildings should include upgraded facilities for the disabled.

Issues to be addressed in the future

Administrative Wing - The Administrative Wing is accessible on the ground level (one classroom, Student Activity Centre and Student Council Offices as well as Professor's Offices on this particular level, one classroom, mailroom, and other administrative offices, Diocesan Archives. New signage is in place, although it does not include braille text for the visually impaired.

Access to the Library stacks and main desk is by the elevator on this level. A telephone is supplied for calling the desk to have library staff assist with the elevator.

Southwest Residence - is fully accessible

West Wing - Fully Accessible through the Information Desk Entrance and the Elevators to Valley Wing.

Valley Wing - The Valley Wing is fully accessible and the change in fixed seating in the newly refurbished amphitheatres will leave space for Wheelchair access..

Visual Impairment - We are in need of braille signage or some form of brochure for

the visually impaired. This is the plan for the next few years.

Hearing Impairment - While we have had no student self-identify for issues of hearing impairment, it is understood that a residence room could be retrofitted for devices as necessary.

Learning Disabilities - Students with Learning disabilities self-identify as required, and are tested according to the Student Development Centre programmes. Diagnosed students are accorded appropriate resources and accommodation according to their documented disability.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Appendix E

Brescia University College Accessibility Summary

Over the 2004-2005 year, Brescia undertook the following barrier removal projects:

- Installation of two accessible ramps. One to the Registrar's office and the other to the back of the main residence;
- Installation of wheelchair access to the business office.

Brescia's plans for 2005-2006 include:

- Installation of three accessible washrooms;
- Installation of an elevator in St. James.