THE ACCESSIBLE PATH TO LEADERSHIP

ACCESSIBILITY

AT GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Status Report 2013

Demonstrating Leadership in the College Sector

Since 2005, George Brown College (GBC) has demonstrated and maintained leadership in the Ontario college sector concerning accessibility for people with disabilities. GBC was the first college in Ontario to recognize the need for and initiate a coordinated effort to bringing the accessibility agenda to the forefront. This agenda has made it possible to better serve our students, our employees and the employers who hire our graduates.

George Brown College's accessible path to leadership includes objectives such as preparing diverse learners for job success, better enabling the innovative economy and investing in high value and high performing partnerships.   Throughout our efforts to meet our Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) obligations and build an inclusive teaching and learning organization, we have kept these objectives and the following key milestones top of mind:

- 2005: **First College** to create and enforce an e-text captioned media policy.

- 2007: **First college** to establish a staff position to support the college in meeting its accessibility obligations under the AODA.

- 2007: **First college** to establish a series of regular progress reports and presentations to the Senior Management Committee on progress in meeting AODA requirements.

- 2009**: First college** to recognize the need for a sector-wide committee to support the college sector in creating accessible and inclusive learning environments.

- 2009: Contributed to the AODA Customer Service Standard (CSS) online training developed in partnership with Algonquin College and Colleges Ontario.

- 2009: **First college** to establish regular meetings to discuss AODA with representation from across the college sector. In 2012, this committee was formalized as a sub-committee of Human Resource College Committee (HRCC).

- 2010**: First college** to create a guide for faculty and all employees on creating accessible documents.

- 2010: **First college** to deliver Customer Service Standard training to student volunteers and student employees.

- 2010**: First college** to introduce technology to support communication disabilities at all of our service centers (Registration, Student Affairs, Learning Commons).

- 2012: **Project Lead** in developing an AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR). Toolkit and Section 16 Training Module for the entire college sector.

- 2012: **One of three colleges** sited by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario as a postsecondary institution demonstrating best practices in meeting the Customer Service Standards.
- 2013: **Project Lead** in the development of AODA, IASR e-learning for the entire college sector.

George Brown College has established a reputation among other colleges as a leader in:

- Understanding the breadth and depth of how the accessibility standards and their requirements apply to Ontario colleges.
- Providing relevant and reliable resources from established partnerships with national and international experts in areas pertaining to accessibility.
- Taking a strategic approach to meeting accessibility obligations and aligning implementation to the strategy.

Complying with the CSS and the IASR requirements under the AODA is a large task on many dimensions, with compliance deadlines stretching from 2010 to 2021. Given this, in 2007, George Brown College designated a full-time staff position in Human Resources to support the college in meeting its accessibility and AODA obligations. The AODA Coordinator position was formally established in 2009. The AODA Coordinator has been assigned responsibility for providing leadership and expertise in developing an accessibility strategy for the college, and for facilitating execution of the strategy by serving as a resource and advisor to support other areas in the college in meeting their AODA obligations.

The AODA Coordinator also offers opportunities to centrally coordinate initiatives that involve many areas of the college, thereby ensuring more efficient use of the college's resources. It also provides a key foundation for creating an inclusive, accessible environment that can align with and support the success of Strategy 2020.

Implementing the Customer Service Standards

George Brown College chose to adopt a strategic approach in working to meet the accessibility standards for customer service, which were passed into law in 2008 and for which the compliance deadline was January 1, 2010.

In 2009, George Brown College partnered with Algonquin College and Colleges Ontario to develop a sector-wide e-learning training module that all colleges could use to fulfill the training requirements under the mandated Customer Service Standards.

In addition to the developing the CSS training module, we worked to meet and exceed our obligations under the Customer Service Standard by:

- Creating a Customer Service Standard policy for George Brown College, and making it available in accessible digital formats.

- Developing a process whereby all employees and new hires through Human Resources would receive notification of their obligation to complete the online CSS training.

- Supplementing the online training with training manuals to provide an alternative format.

- Collaborating with Human Resources to set up a process to track completion of CSS training for new employees.

- Creating a notification process and templates for departments to use in communicating any facilities or service disruptions.

- Introducing a process to ensure that all student volunteers and student employees received training on the Customer Service Standard.

- Establishing a feedback process for customer service

- Developing brochures outlining the customer service process that was distributed across the college, including the Student Association, and made available at all student orientation sessions.

- Presenting summaries of our progress and AODA updates to the Senior Management Committee at least twice each year.

At the same time, a number of activities were initiated to lay the foundation for an accessibility strategy that would enable George Brown College to meet the requirements of the (then) pending AODA accessibility standards for information and communication, employment and the built environment. These activities included:

- Initiating an informal, sector-wide group with membership from all colleges to discuss and share information about current and pending AODA obligations.

- Producing and circulating a guide to faculty entitled "Creating Accessible Documents," to create increased awareness regarding how they could make information more accessible to students with disabilities. This guide was also made available to all employees.

- Creating and circulating a brochure that addressed language issues and acceptable terminology when referring to people with disabilities.

- Developing and circulating a brochure introducing the new, mandated feedback process for areas providing services to students or other third parties.

- Developing the first phase of an AODA web page, housed on the George Brown College website. This site serves as a hub for information related to accessibility and the accessibility standards, and as a portal for employees to access AODA-mandated training.

- Adding AODA-related information to the college-wide project request form to ensure proposed projects would consider accessibility requirements.

- Submitting a proposal to Colleges Ontario for funding to create a toolkit that could be used across the college sector to support pending IASR obligations.

These activities have brought us a long way towards meeting our obligations under the Customer Service Standards and laying a foundation for our expanded obligations under the IASR.

Implementing our Expanded Obligations under the AODA, IASR

Where We Are Now

George Brown College developed an AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Policy, and prepared a multi-year plan in accordance with our obligation under the AODA, and IASR. The policy provided the principle statements of our organizations' commitment to the obligations in this regulation and the multi-year plan outlines the framework of deliverables and activities over the next 3 to 5 years. The college is committed to reviewing the multi-year plan each year as progress is made and adding new initiatives as necessary. An annual status report will be prepared each year that outlines our achievements in meeting various activities identified within our multiyear plan and present the forthcoming academic year's commitments.

In this regard the college is pleased to release it first status report for 2012 – 2013.

AODA, Status Report 2012 -2013

In 2012 and 2013 (the reporting years to the Government of Ontario) the college had a continued obligation under the Accessibility for Customer Service Standard and the following obligations as they relate to the AODA, IASR, general, information and communication, employment and transportations standards:

Year	General Requirements	Information & Communication	Employment
2012		**s. 13** Emergency and public safety information	**s. 27** Workplace emergency response information
2013	**s. 3** Accessibility Policies **s. 4** Accessibility Plans **s. 5** Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. **s. 6** Self-serve kiosks	**s. 15** Education and training resources and materials, etc. **s. 16** Training to educators	

The college took a proactive approach to working on long and short initiatives that would meet the obligations and also contribute to all other facets of operations that intersected with the obligations under the standard.

Achievements

Accessibility for Customer Service Standard 2012 / 2013

- Continued communication of the CSS Policy to new employees, volunteers and third party providers on behalf of the college**.**
- Facilities Management continues to use signage that adheres to the obligation of the CSS to communicate disruptions temporary or otherwise.
- Facilities Management sends college wide emails in advance to all employees to communicate forthcoming changes.
- All new employees and volunteers received training.
- All training was moved to the colleges Staff Development learning management system.
- All managers received communication how to keep track of new hires to ensure training is completed.

Information & Communication 2012 / 2013

s. 13 Emergency and public safety information & s. 27 Workplace emergency response information

- George Brown College refreshed the College Emergency Procedures Manual and updated the information to include all new builds and the newly developed process for providing individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with a disability.
- The document was created in accessible word formation as well as in a manual format.
- There was a communication strategy developed to ensure that when the College wide communication occurred to employees of the new document that managers were prepared to answer any questions and or establish ay workplace emergency response plans as requested.
- The College determined that given the vast changes to the document and to the emergency and public safety processes with the college, that a full review would be conducted in 2013.
- As part of the changes to this process within the college, all new emergency and safety signage was ordered for all campuses and a new communication plan to deliver the information to students was created and deployed.

s. 3 Accessibility Policies & s. 4 Accessibility Plans

- The college prepared and received approval of the new AODA, IASR policy and multi-year accessibility plan.
- The policy and multi-year plan was posted on the AODA website and a communication strategy was developed to inform all employees of the new policy and the college's commitment to achieving accessibility.

s. 5 Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities

- Incorporate accessibility language integrated into procurement policies.
- Created accessibility strategy for procurement processes to ensure appropriate language used.
- Developed a strategy to communicate procurement policies and practices to employees and divisions.
- Established a Procurement Task Force to support procurement of accessible goods, service and facilities when practicable.
- Create a plan to ensure the accessibility process is adhered to across the entire college.

s. 6 Self-serve kiosks

- This obligation was threaded into our procurement process and communicated to all areas.

s. 15 Education and training resources and materials, etc.

- The Disability Services Office continues to provide support to students.
- Disability Services Office joined Alternative Educational Resources of Ontario (AERO) to provide e-text where available upon request.
- Developed an Accessibility Checklist when procuring resources such as databases (Library).
- Information on Accessible Library Services was created and uploaded on the Library webpage.

s. 16 Training to educators

- George Brown College leads a sector-wide project to develop training.
- Communication to all faculty and divisions that the training was available and mandatory.

s. 7 AODA, IASR Training

- George Brown College initiated and leads a sector wide project in the creation of an e-learning module to support Ontario's 24 Colleges in meeting this 2014 obligation.
- The training was completed, is in an accessible format and available in both English and French.
- George Brown college communicated all AODA training obligations to all employees of the college and deployed the AODA, IASR training in 2013.

Commitments 2013 – 2014

- The college will continue to support the integration of the Customer Service Training to all new employees and volunteers, including students who provide services on behalf of the college.
- The college will align the established feedback process with the newly required obligations under the AODA, IASR as it pertains to receiving and responding to feedback.
- Continue to communicate our emergency safety information and continue to refresh the manual upon any changes.
- Upgrade all signage around spaces.

- Develop a short video (with ASL) to be introducing to all students by faculty each semester.
- Continue collecting feedback from our members of the GBC, AODA Advisory committee.
- A sector-wide Procurement sub-committee has been struck to support the creation of a procurement toolkit that provides tools and resources to support the successful procurement or acquisition of goods, services or facilities taking into consideration accessibility standards.
- Continue to strengthen the communication of our procurement obligations across the college.
- Prepare a college wide strategy to further train our educators on adopting UDL.
- Continue our commitments to all of our training obligations.
- Develop a strategy to communicate our accessible feedback process across the college and further embed this approach in all our feedback processes.
- Deliver Web Accessibility Training to all miscellaneous owners of websites within GBC.
- A sector wide sub-committee has been proactively working on developing best practices to support all of the AODA, IASR Employment obligations. The College is committed to completing the requirements by the obligation deadline and develops a college-wide communication strategy.

Moving Forward

George Brown College has been active in preparing for our January 1, 2014 obligations. The college spearheaded the lead in the development of a sector-wide training module to meet the AODA, IASR section 7. The training modules was completed in September 2013 and deployed to all colleges on October 2013. George Brown College developed a communication strategy to raise awareness to all employees of the AODA training obligations and to set a deadline by which all employees were to have completed the AODA, IASR section 7 obligated training.

George Brown College continues to build partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including government, academic institutions, organizations of persons with disabilities, and international organizations, which contributes to our college maintaining a leadership position in AODA. Our continued involvement in global accessibility initiatives, discourse on the necessity for universal access for everyone and research enables the college to have the potential to provide persons with disabilities unprecedented levels of access to education, skills training and employment, as well as the opportunity to participate in the economic cultural and social life of their community.