2010 - 2011 Accessibility Report

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Commitment to Accessibility

In 2010, the President's Executive Committee (PEC) of Algonquin College made the decision to create the Algonquin College Accessibility Office under the guidance of Human Resources to ensure that the College meets its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This office is currently staffed by one full time position seconded from the Centre for Students with Disabilities. The decision by PEC to fund this office illustrates the College's commitment to accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

Algonquin's support of students with disabilities is well established. The Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD) is seen as a centre of excellence in the province. The CSD, with the support of college administration, has lead a number of provincial initiatives that have resulted in significant improvements in disability services in Ontario including the Reduced Tuition Fee Policy for Students with Disabilities, the creation of the Interpreter Fund to support deaf and hard of hearing students and the recently announced enhanced funding for apprentices with disabilities.

The enactment of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has brought about a paradigm shift in the way the College system views accessibility. The AODA has challenged us to think about accessibility in much broader terms. No longer should accessibility of post-secondary institutions be seen as simply an issue of supporting students with disabilities, and physical access to buildings, but rather, should be seen as part of the way we do day to day business. Accessibility to the College system now includes access to all the goods and services the college provides.

Prior to the AODA in 2005, the onus for receiving an accommodation due to a disability rested on the shoulders of individuals with disabilities, and was primarily dealt with on an individual, as needed basis. Today, the responsibility for ensuring equal access to all members of the college community is a corporate responsibility. We have moved away from a process that responds to individual needs, to a system that anticipates the needs of everyone, and supports the

principles of universal design. Accessibility is no longer an afterthought, but rather a vital part of our strategic plans.

Algonquin is committed to increasing access to its programs and services through collaboration with key stakeholders and frequent review of policies and practices to ensure access for all. Algonquin's commitment to accessibility goes beyond legislated standards and serves as a role model for other institutions.

Current Status of the AODA

On June 3, 2011 the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR) known as Ontario Regulation 191/11 (AODA 2005) was enacted. This integrated regulation came into force on July 1, 2011.The IAR harmonizes the Information and Communication Standards, Employment and Transportation Standards into one regulation. The Built Environment Standard will remain on its own. The IAR is designed to streamline the standards and to make the reporting requirements more manageable.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Standards	Current Status
• Customer Service Standard	Legislated
• Built Environment	Pending Legislation
• Integrated Accessibility Regulation	Introduced June3, 2011
• Information and Communication	Legislated
• Employment	Legislated
• Transportation	Legislated

Algonquin's Accessibility Committee

The AODA Committee oversees the accessibility initiatives of the College and supports the efforts of the Accessibility Office. The mandate of the committee is to provide advice on significant initiatives that improve and enhance accessibility; to develop and implement policies, communication and educational initiatives that promote and enhance accessibility on all campuses.

The committee meets on a regular basis and is comprised of representatives from the following areas of the College:

- Human Resources
- Learning Resource Centre
- Centre for Students with Disabilities
- Physical Resources
- Ancillary Services
- Academic Development
- Information Technology
- Student Association
- Advancement

Employment Standards Working Group

In 2010 the AODA Committee established the Employment Standards Working Group (ESWG). This working group is responsible for the development of resources required to comply with the Employment Standards. The committee is comprised of faculty with disabilities, support staff with disabilities and Human Resources personnel and is chaired by the Accessibility Advisor. The initial task of this committee is to develop resources that will provide employees with disabilities critical information on safety and emergency preparedness as required by the AODA Employment Standards. Legislated compliance with this regulation is January 1, 2012.

Accessibility Highlights 2010 – 2011

Accessible Customer Service Standard (CSS)

With the deployment of the Accessibility at Algonquin College website, www.algonquincollege.com/accessibility-office Algonquin College is in full compliance with the CSS. Service disruptions that could impact a person with a disability are posted to this website. Disruptions that have been posted include such things as notification of elevators out of service, renovations to washrooms to improve accessibility, and changes in hours of service due to special events. Social media tools such as Twitter are being used to ensure individuals that could benefit from this information receive it in a timely fashion.

Training to new employees on how to provide accessible customer services to clients with disabilities continues. Through the use of *Accessible Services for Colleges – Customer Service Standard* the College has provided training to over 3443 College administrators, faculty and support staff since the training was implemented in 2010.

Student Support Services and the Registrar's Office have purchased Ubi Duos, communication devices that promote more effective communication with individuals that are deaf, or hard of hearing.

Through funding and the leadership of the Student Association, 10 fully accessible printer kiosks were designed and built by Algonquin carpentry students. These accessible printer kiosks were strategically placed throughout the College. These printing kiosks provide students with barrier free access to printing terminals.

Through the leadership of the Parking, Lockers, Coin-Ops and Card Services (PLCCS), accessible lockers were purchased and are being installed in locations close to accessible entrances and Para Transpo drop off points. The PLCCS has also created an accessibility map that shows the location of all accessible washrooms and entrances. This map can be searched by building and by floor providing students' quick access to this information.

Accessible Information and Communication

The College continues to anticipate the impact the Information and Communication standards will have, and the way in which we communicate and share information. A number of proactive measures have been undertaken. In 2010 – 2011, the College went through a rebranding process which included an update to the College's website. Following the leadership of the Executive Director of Advancement, the website was designed to comply with the WCAG 2.0, at Level AA (other than captioning and descriptive video) which ensures the College meets and surpasses the Information and Communication standards well in advance of the legislated obligation to do so.

The College has launched an accessible multimedia project, recognizing its responsibility to provide multimedia resources which are captioned and contain descriptive video for individuals with sensory disabilities. For several years now, the Centre for Students with Disabilities has accommodated students who required this form of support upon request. However, again, recognizing the College wide obligation to ensure public multimedia resources are fully accessible, the Accessibility Office launched an Accessible Multimedia Pilot project. This pilot project will identify the most cost effective way to provide multimedia resources containing captions and descriptive videos. In addition, a number of employees are being trained to edit these resources to ensure accuracy. A digital repository has been developed to house these resources so they can be accessed easily and in a timely fashion by anyone requiring them.

Understanding that the Information and Communication Standards go well beyond the College's responsibility to support students with disabilities, the Accessibility Office has implemented an accessible document training program. Phase one of this program identified key support staff positions in all areas of the College to receive training on how to create accessible documents. These key support staff have been asked to ensure that all public Algonquin documents used internally and/or externally are accessible. Training sessions focused on how to create accessible Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents. To further support and sustain this training initiative, webinars on how to create accessible documents have been developed and are posted to the Accessibility website www.algonquincollege.com/accessibility-office

Accessible Employment

In anticipation of the requirements emerging from the Employment Standards, the College has established the Employment Standards Working Group, a sub-committee of the AODA Committee. This working group is in the process of developing an Emergency Information and Evacuation Guide for Employees with Disabilities. This guide provides employees with disabilities, and their managers, information they need to develop individual emergency evacuation plans. This

new resource has been developed in conjunction with Human Resources, Health and Safety as well as employees with disabilities. Upon request, employees with disabilities can now receive a one-on-one orientation session focused on emergency preparedness.

The Accessibility Office has worked closely with United Way Ottawa on the creation of the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN) Ottawa. The Accessibility Advisor sits on the employers' working group for this new business leadership network, and has provided a number of presentations to community partners on the impact of the new legislation and organizations' obligations under the AODA. On October 24, 2011 the Employment Accessibility Resource Network formally launched the Business Leadership Network of Ottawa. This launch took place at City Hall.

Built Environment and Transportation

This year, the College began construction on several new major buildings including the Algonquin College Centre for Construction Excellence, a new student commons and a new building on the Perth and Pembroke campuses. The physical accessibility of these new building has been front and centre during the planning stages. Consultants were hired to evaluate design plans and recommend changes that would enhance accessibility and meet the upcoming Built Environment standards where it was financially feasible to do so. Electronic door openers will be installed in the majority of common areas, other areas will be wired for future door openers, making it easier to do so and more cost efficient.

Construction of new buildings has required that we carefully consider the location of the accessible entrances to the College as well as the drop off point for Para Transpo. The Accessibility Office has worked closely with all involved in accessible transportation to ensure that access to our buildings is maintained.

Renovations to improve accessibility

The following renovations to enhance accessibility and remove barriers where completed in 2010 - 2011:

- Signage continues to be improved. A Way Finding consultant has been engaged and has made recommendations for signage that will go into all new construction. New signage will meet or exceed requirements under the Built Environment Standards. When financially feasible, signage in older building will be brought up to standards.
- Over a dozen new electronic door openers were installed across the campus.
- 22 accessible water fountains have been installed across the campus
- Four washrooms on administrative floors of the C Building have been completed; in addition improvements have been made to enhance accessibility of several additional washrooms throughout the campus.
- Eight height-adjustable desks were purchased from the Learning Environment Funding (LEQ) and located where most needed.
- Common area furniture was installed at 3 nodes in P Building. Locations were designed to allow easy wheelchair access.
- A new Mobile Learning Centre was created in C 102. Space was designed to allow easy access for wheelchairs. Accessible workstations were provided.
- Accessible workstations installed in Rotunda.
- Renovations were made to the access of the C Building courtyard which included new door openers and a ramp to the common green areas of the courtyard.

Policies and Procedures

During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, while reviewing all College policies the President's Executive Committee decided to add a new section heading for Accessibility. All new policies regarding accessibility will be filed under this category. Two new accessibility policies were adopted by the Presidents Executive Committee this year.

- AC02: Client Service Standards for Persons with Disabilities
- AC04: Notification of Service Disruption for People with Disabilities
- AC01: Students With Disabilities was revised and updated.

Centre for Students with Disabilities

The Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD) continues to provide leadership in the identification and resolution of issues concerning accessibility to college education for applicants and post secondary students with diagnosed disabilities. The CSD uses a collaborative approach partnering with students, faculty and staff, parents, and the community to create dynamic, client-driven services.

Reporting to the Office of the Director of Student Support Services, the CSD supports the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the College's Policy AC 01.

The goal of Algonquin's Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD) is to provide high quality disability support services that improve student engagement and retention by enhancing student learning and success. An extensive survey was conducted on over 1800 of our students with disabilities that were served this year. The results indicate that students who worked with staff at the CSD had a retention rate of 86.3%. Only 13.7% of students withdrew/failed in their studies, which is well above the provincial college retention rate.

The Centre for Students with Disabilities continues to be an active participant on the AODA Committee, to advise the college community on issues pertaining to barrier-free access.

Community Outreach

Throughout this year, the Accessibility Advisor has worked with a number of community organizations to ensure that the College stays abreast of accessibility issues in the Ottawa area and to share with local partners the work that is being done at the College to enhance and support accessibility. These community organizations include the University of Ottawa, the Ottawa Carleton School Board, the City of Ottawa, United Way Ottawa, the College Committee on Disability Issues, and the External Advisor Committee for the Centre for Students with Disabilities.

In addition, the Accessibility Advisor has partnered with the AODA Coordinator of George Brown College and Colleges Ontario to develop resources that will assist all 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario comply with the Act.

Goals for 2011 – 2012

- PEC approval of an accessible multimedia policy
- Focus on raising awareness for the Integrated Accessibility Standards and the College's obligations through focused professional development presentations for senior college administrators
- Active participation in the planning and development of an AODA conferences with Ottawa AODA partners
- Continuation of the Accessible Multimedia Project
- Continuation of hands on training on accessible document production
- Continued collaboration with architects and builders regarding the physical accessibility of all new construction
- Continued improved Way Finding