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# Accessibility | 2013- Plan | 2015

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As part of Laurier's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, the 2013-2015 Accessibility Plan outlines how Laurier intends to identify, prevent, and remove barriers of all types to persons with disabilities. The plan describes Laurier's accessibility-related goals, and the policies, practices and strategies that will be utilized to achieve them. The plan also acts as a document through which Laurier can communicate its accessibility-related initiatives to its multiple locations and to the community at large.

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## What Accessibility Means and Why it Matters at Laurier

Accessibility means providing barrier free environments and services to enable people of all abilities to fully participate in every aspect of day-to-day life. In particular, accessibility enables and empowers people with disabilities to lead their lives with independence and dignity, and encourages integration and equal opportunity.

But accessibility also benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities.

An accessible Laurier will mean that our campuses are able to foster engagement from the widest possible range of participants and in so doing build and encourage a talented and diverse workforce and student body. An accessible Laurier will mean stronger relationships with the communities in which our campuses are situated and a richer culture of diversity and inclusivity. **An accessible Laurier means that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve academic excellence and take part in a culture that inspires lives of leadership and purpose.**

There is more to accessibility than the addition of a few ramps and door openers—barriers, like disabilities, come in all different forms. Barriers can be visible and physical, but they might also be less obvious. In addition to the architectural barriers around us there are barriers related to policies, communications, and attitudes that need to be identified, removed, and prevented. It takes more than just power tools to build an accessible environment; our language and our actions have a big impact in making Laurier an inclusive University.

### For Example...

Laurier is currently working on updating its signage and wayfinding systems. By taking into account the needs of people with vision loss and learning disabilities, Laurier is striving to make its signage and wayfinding as clear and easy-to-read as possible. We're doing this by using tactile signage, high-contrast colours, and by placing signage in logical and consistent locations. These considerations also mean that new students will experience greater ease finding their classes, visitors to Laurier will feel more confident attending on-campus events and, in the event of an emergency, all campus-users will have better directional signage to point them toward safety.

## About the Laurier Accessibility Plan

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This plan is intended to be a guiding document that outlines Laurier's strategies, goals, and initiatives toward becoming a barrier-free University.

The contents of this document were developed with input from Laurier's Accessibility Advisory Committee and the recommendations have been guided by the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and by feedback from nearly 1000 students, staff, and faculty.

The people at Laurier play many different roles that make up the organization; we are educators, service providers, employers, and students. Acknowledging that accessibility is everyone's responsibility, this plan aims to clarify how people in each of these roles are working to make Laurier a more accessible place.

### **Key sections of this document include:**

Information about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and Laurier's compliance with the legislation

- A summary of Laurier's policies that are related to accessibility
- Goals and strategies for compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
- Information about resources available at Laurier and in our communities

### **Framework**

This plan uses the social model of disability to address accessibility issues and initiatives. In the social model there is a distinction made between disability and impairment; impairment refers to a physical, sensory, or intellectual difference and disability refers to the limits people with differences face because of the structures in our society. Though the social model simplifies some of the complex issues around disability, it remains an effective tool because it calls attention to the way in which barriers in society can be disabling, therefore emphasizing the idea that ***accessibility is everyone's responsibility.***

<b>Medical Model</b>	<b>Social Model</b>
Being disabled is negative.	Being disabled, in itself, may be neutral.
Disability resides in the individual.	Disability arises from interactions between the individual and society.
The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual.	The remedy for disability-related problems is a change in the interactions between the individual and society.
The agent of remedy is the professional who affects the arrangements between the individual and society.	<b>The agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society.</b>

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## **Laurier Accessibility Advisory Committee**

Guided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001, the Accessibility Committee strives to ensure that all buildings, programs and services are accessible to persons with all types of disabilities. The Committee is made up of senior administration and 4 working groups (one for each standard) made up of front line staff and faculty. The Committee works to ensure that Laurier is an accessible community by responding to identified disability-related barriers and by promoting standards which incorporate accessibility at all levels of the organization including (but not limited to) residence life, student services, employee safety, and the classroom. The Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for approving the AODA implementation plan.

### **Commitment**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will respond to new legislative requirements and to feedback throughout the academic year related to newly identified barriers. The Committee will respond to each issue identified and will (if required) invite the individual to the accessibility committee discussion table.

### **Membership of the Advisory Committee Includes:**

- VP, Finance & Administration
- VP, Student Services
- VP, Academic
- AVP, HR
- AVP, Physical Resources
- AVP, Academic Services
- Director, Campus Operations, Brantford
- Manager, Parking
- University Librarian
- Special Constables
- University Secretariat
- Employment Equity & AODA Officer
- Manager, Diversity & Equity Office
- Manager, Accessible Learning Services
- GSA
- WLUSU

### **What's Next**

An Accessibility Advisory Sub-Committee will be formed to provide guidance to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. This committee will consist of members with disabilities, or members who have had disabilities, in order to ensure that accessibility concerns are examined by individuals with lived experience of potential barriers that might exist in the workplace. This committee will work with the AODA Officer to provide goal-oriented feedback to the Accessibility Advisory Committee focused on the barriers faced by staff and faculty with disabilities.

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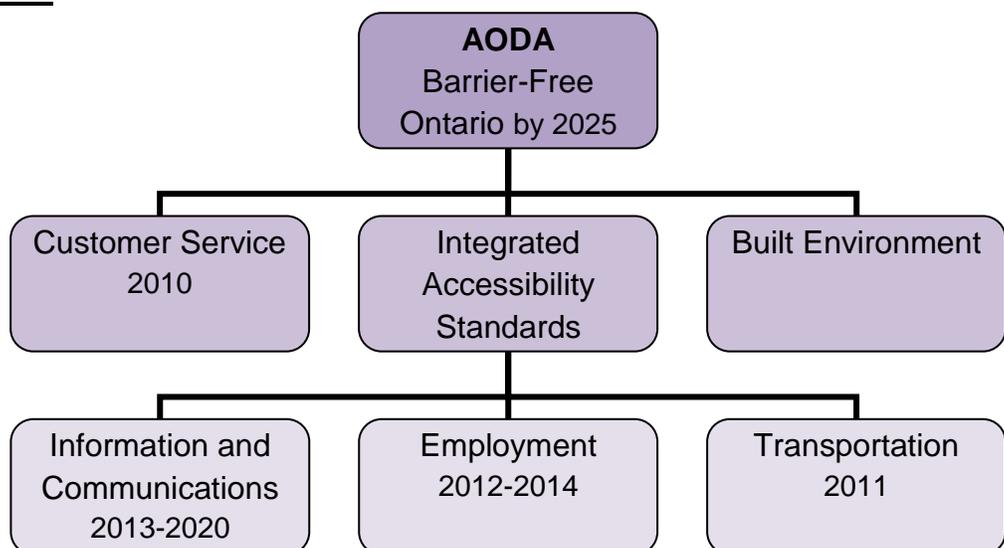
### **The AODA at Laurier**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) was created to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards. Standards are focused on 5 key areas: customer service, employment, information and communications, transportation, and the built environment. The goal of the Act is to make the province of Ontario fully accessible by 2025.

“...The Accessibility Committee aims to support Laurier in demonstrating strong leadership in all matters of accessibility. Given that this is an issue of diversity, inclusivity and justice, it is incumbent upon us to surpass the minimum requirements of compliance and seize every opportunity to place Laurier among the most accessible and inclusive universities in Canada.”

-Laurier's Customer Service Policy Statement

## The AODA



### Customer Service Standard

Laurier has been offering training on how to provide strong customer service to persons with disabilities since 2010. Since this time, thousands of Laurier staff, faculty, student staff and volunteers have participated in the training. The training is offered in a variety of formats from interactive online modules, to more in-depth in-person training. The training is based on the Council of Ontario Universities training program, which was customized to fit the Laurier environment by the Diversity & Equity Office. The training content includes:

- Myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes about persons with disabilities
- How to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- Information about assistive technology, support persons, and service animals

The training has challenged departments to re-evaluate how they offer services, and has broadened the institutional knowledge on what it means to be accessible.

### Commitment

Laurier has developed a Customer Service Policy to ensure adherence to Customer Service Standards. A summary of the policy can be found below and the policy can be found in full online at [wlu.ca/accessibility](http://wlu.ca/accessibility).

<sup>1</sup>The dates shown here are for large designated public sector organizations. Compliance dates for individual standards under the listed headings vary.

## **Customer Service Policy: Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities (Policy 8.10)**

Laurier's customer service policy was approved in February 2010. It is reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the AODA Officer and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. It outlines Laurier's practices regarding customer service. In it, Laurier commits to:

- Communicating with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability,
- Serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services,
- Informing employees, volunteers and others on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal,
- Welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal or a support person and permitting the support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Laurier's goods and services, to attend at no extra charge when an admission fee is applicable,
- Providing notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities,
- Training all persons to whom the policy applies in a way tailored to suit the types of interactions each person has with their customers; training will include information about the aforementioned policies; and,
- Encouraging and responding to feedback through different channels (in person, in writing, in electronic format, by telephone)

“This initiative [the customer service policy] is informed by the principle of fostering a culture where disability has a presence; and its diversity in people, ideas, and sensibilities is affirmed and acknowledged as contributing to the Laurier community in a seamless manner.”

- Policy 8.10

## Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Information and Communications, Employment, and Transportation standards have

Goal & Timeline	Strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purchases made by employees of Laurier will take into account the needs of people with disabilities</b></li> <li>• <b>2013 and ongoing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed accessibility criteria procurement and purchasing practices &amp; develop a check and resource guide for purchasing accessible goods</li> <li>• Share these resources online and communicate them to managers, deans, and others who make purchases for the University</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training will be delivered on the Accessibility Requirements of the IASR and the Human Rights Code (HRC) as it pertains to persons with disabilities</b></li> <li>• <b>2014 and ongoing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate information about standards and the HRC into customer service training</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Laurier's website will be accessible (Conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA Standards)</b></li> <li>• <b>2013-2014</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback to web strategists and web-services on WCAG requirements and other accessibility needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre, the Diversity and Equity Office, and the Library</li> <li>• The chosen web-services firm is responsible for ensuring conformance to WCAG AA Standards</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faculty will be trained in Universal Design for Learning</b></li> <li>• <b>2013 and ongoing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form working group to review training resources and tailor them to the Laurier culture</li> <li>• Establish the best means of conveying the information to encourage take-up and engagement from faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AODA officer, the ALC, and TSS are responsible for organizing, developing and delivering training</li> <li>• Faculty are responsible for participating in training</li> </ul>

## What is an Accessibility Commitment Statement?

An Accessibility Commitment Statement is simply one or two sentences that states your department, club, or group's commitment to accessibility and welcomes visitors or participants to make any accommodation requests they may have, including for example, requests for alternate formats, or questions about available assistive devices.

Accessibility Commitment Statements may be included on websites, event posters, marketing material, or registration pages.

Here's one example:  
 "DEPARTMENT NAME is committed to providing inclusive programs and services to all students. Please contact NAME at CONTACT INFO if you require an accommodation due to a disability."

been streamlined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR came into effect in June, 2011, with compliance dates being rolled out over the next several years. The following are our goals and strategies for compliance.

### Accomplishments

Language has been added to provide the appropriate contact information for people seeking accessible formats of documents in multiple venues. This means that people seeking emergency plans, workshop descriptions, and job descriptions have a clear point of contact should they require an accessible format; these things contribute to fair and equitable safety, professional development, and employment practices. Furthermore, sample accessibility commitment statements have been posted online to [wlu.ca/accessibility](http://wlu.ca/accessibility) so that departments across our campuses can send a clear and consistent message about the importance of accessibility and welcome any accommodation requests.

At [wlu.ca/accessibility](http://wlu.ca/accessibility) you will also find materials to help you create accessible word documents, pdfs, and websites—these materials help encourage compliance with the AODA's Information and Communications Standards.

## **The Built Environment**

The Standards related to the Built Environment have not yet been finalized by the provincial government. The initiatives in this area have been guided by an audit of the built environment on the Waterloo campus, conducted by AccessAbility Advantage (Winter 2012) as well as by feedback provided to Physical Resources, Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management (SHERM), the Diversity and Equity Office, and by comments collected from students, staff, and faculty from all WLU locations who responded to the Accessibility Survey (Fall 2012).

The number one priority when it comes to making improvements to the existing campus environment is access to safety; this includes clear egress routes, safe and even walking surfaces, sufficient lighting, accessible directional signage, and stroboscopic fire alarms.

The top three Built Environment Barriers identified by the students, staff, and faculty who participated in the Accessibility Survey are related to the difficulties students have navigating the campus without the use of stairs, doors without automatic door openers or doors that are heavy, and chairs in lecture halls that are uncomfortable, broken, or too small.

## **Accomplishments**

- An Individualized Emergency Response Plan Template has been developed to address the safety needs of employees with disabilities.
- The AODA Officer and manager of the Diversity and Equity Office are members of the interior and exterior signage committee, providing input related to accessibility to ensure accessible criteria are incorporated into all signage updates.
- Feedback regarding accessibility requirements has been provided to the architects designing the new Global Innovation Exchange building.

The AODA Officer works closely with physical resources on all new building projects to ensure that accessibility is forethought, not an afterthought. When accessibility criteria and features are considered from the start, less time and money are spent restructuring our built environment later. This means that the AODA Officer is involved whenever a building is being built or renovated to ensure that the architects and designers consider how spaces are used by persons with disabilities.

***Did You Know...***  
 SHERM provides ergonomic assessments for faculty and staff to address individual needs  
 Visit [wlu.ca/sherm](http://wlu.ca/sherm) to find out more.

### **Initiatives**

In the winter of 2011-2012 AccessAbility Advantage took a cross-disability perspective to perform an audit of the built environment on the Laurier Waterloo campus in anticipation of the AODA Built Environment Standards. Recommendations included making signage more consistent with easy-to-read high-contrast lettering and Braille, adding tactile walking surface indicators, mirrors, and contrasting edges in stairwells and other improvements to facilities such as washrooms.

### **Built Environment Continued**

In the spring and summer of 2012 many improvements were made based on the results of the audit:

- Automatic door openers have been added to several locations on the Waterloo campus, including at the entrance to the career and co-op centre, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Dr. Alvin Woods building, to deans' offices in the Schlegel Centre and Dr. Alvin Woods building, and to washrooms in the science building, the c wing of arts, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of athletics
- Washrooms, change rooms and showers in the Athletic Centre have been renovated to meet accessibility standards
- Contrasting strip has been added to the main staircase in the Athletic Centre

### **What's Next**

- The Fire Safety Officer is committed to supporting people's requests for visual fire alarms (ongoing)
- The updates to the Athletic Centre will include a new, accessible service counter (Expected Summer, 2013)
- Recommendations have been made to physical resources on the next improvements to be made to the built environment (2013-2014), including the addition of automatic door openers, tactile walking surface indicators, and contrasting stair edges

### **Employment**

Language has been added throughout the recruitment, assessment, and selection process, to inform staff candidates of the availability of accommodations and alternate communications. By 2014 the goal is to have this language included on faculty postings and throughout the faculty hiring process.

### **What's Next**

- Training and resources on recruiting diverse candidates including persons with disabilities will be provided to Faculty Hiring Committees and to Human Resources Generalists

## **Wilfrid Laurier University Policies**

In addition to the customer service policy, **Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities (8.10)**, Laurier has a policy on **Academic Accommodations for Graduate Students with Disabilities (2.3)**, **Academic Accommodations for Undergraduate Students with Disabilities (2.4)** and an **Employment Accommodation Policy and Procedure (8.7)**.

These policies emphasize

- The duty to accommodate;
- Confidentiality;
- Individualization; and,
- Partnerships (for students: between the student requiring accommodations and the ALC, Program Directors, Instructors) (for employees: between the employee requiring accommodations, administrators, managers, and unions)

Laurier's **Employment Equity Policy (8.4)** is another policy which helps ensure that Laurier provides an accessible and equitable working environment.

### **What's Next**

- In 2013 Procurement Services will develop a statement of commitment to accessibility which will be included in their relevant materials, including the Purchasing Card Procedures manual and in the Request for Proposals process
- In 2013 policy 8.10, Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities will be updated to include information about the duty to provide accessible transportation and accessible formats upon request
- In 2013, the Employment Accommodation Policy and Procedure will be updated to help streamline the accommodation process for faculty and staff; the updated Policy and Procedure will also incorporate the relevant sections of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (for e.g. it will address individualized accommodations for safe evacuations)

## Accessibility in Action: Mental Health at Laurier

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According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague and 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime. Many people at Laurier have identified stigma and ignorance about mental health issues as a barrier to them socially, academically, and professionally.

### Mental Health Goals

- A University environment that models mental wellbeing via its staff and environment, thereby fostering success for all students
- Faculty and staff who feel supported and knowledgeable when supporting a student presenting in crisis/with mental health needs
- Making mental health part of our institutional discourse
- Creating cross-functional and diverse teams that improve our collective ability to support students, share best practices and respond to challenges

### Leadership and Roles of Support

Laurier Has:

- Counselling Services: Professional counsellors with expertise in treating student issues, who provide consultation, short-term counselling and crisis support free of charge to all registered students
- As part of Counselling Services, professional support co-ordination for students who may require additional short-term or transitional assistance<sup>2</sup>
- A Counselling Consultant within the Faculty of Arts (as part of a part-time pilot position)

"I have found Laurier's Counselling Services incredibly helpful in overcoming my anxiety and improving my self esteem. Although it can be a hard first step to come to counselling I'm very glad I did and I would recommend it to anyone. The atmosphere is very welcoming and I felt comfortable telling my counsellor anything without judgment."

*[Testimonial, April 2012]*

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<sup>2</sup> Currently a pilot position, funded by external donation.

- A Residence Life Counsellor who specializes in addressing the needs of first-year Laurier students and who is available to support Dons and Res Life Area Co-ordinators
- A full-time Mental Health/Student Support Team Leader to lead Laurier's institutional mental health strategy
- A Mental Health Student Support Team working to improve the mental health of all members of the Laurier community, decrease stigma on campus, increase communication and collaboration, increase access to services and supports and develop innovative service delivery options
- A Nutritionist to help support the Student Nutrition Action Committee
- A Health & Disability Advisor for faculty and staff

### **Mental Health Initiatives and Accomplishments**

**Stigma Reduction:** Counselling Services is working to reduce the stigmas associated with mental health and raise awareness about specific issues through "Talking Mental Health" on Radio Laurier, through the publication of an associated column in *The Cord*, and a through a Counselling Services blog: <http://counselling-wlu.tumblr.com/>. The bi-weekly radio show and *Cord* column deal with topics such as homesickness, loneliness, working through stigma, adjusting to University, peer pressure and more

**Awareness Raising:** Burst Your Bubble is a student volunteer group that strives to create mental health awareness on campus and decrease the stigma associated with mental illness. Burst Your Bubble does this through participation in the Diversity Certificate Program, by bringing in guest speakers and mental health agencies from the community, and through other awareness events

**Training:** The Mental Health Student Support team received a \$40,000 grant from the Bell "Let's Talk Community Fund" to help support a mental health and awareness-training program for faculty, staff and students

**Community Building and Suicide Prevention:** The performance, *The Gospel According to Josh*, was organized on by the Mental Health Student Support Team to address mental health related stigma and raise awareness on suicide prevention.

### **What's Next**

- Assess current campus and community resources in order to streamline resources and ensure students receive the right support (2013-2014)

- Build collaborative partnerships with community members/agencies to identify and address service gaps for students (2013-2014)
- Co-ordinate services in order to be able to better serve students seeking help or resources (2013-2014)
- Create an interactive campus resource map (Winter-Fall 2013)
- Create an anti-stigma/mental health awareness video (Winter 2013)
- Participate in a research study on campus mental health to help assess needs (Winter-Fall 2013)
- Provide Suicide Prevention Training for student leaders, faculty, and staff
- Participate in the Smile Epidemic's A Happier Campus Project, a program that explores the social benefits of sharing gratitude and reinforcing gratitude through social media (Winter 2013)

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## **Accessibility in Action: The Accessible Learning Centre**

The Accessible Learning Centre (ALC) works to ensure that students with disabilities are provided accommodations that put them on a level playing field with their peers. By offering a variety of services and resources delivered in a respectful, confidential and professional manner, the ALC supports and encourages students' independence and self-determination.

### **Initiatives**

- The ALC and their peer helper team host an annual Accessibility Awareness event during the winter term to raise awareness about disability issues and provide information to the Laurier community about the ALC
- Staff from the ALC, in partnership with the AODA Officer, have formed a working group to review resources and strategize around how to provide training to educators on accessible teaching methods (Sec. 16, IASR); this group wants to help Laurier go above and beyond compliance with AODA standards by supporting a creative, integrated and multi-pronged approach to training
- The ALC is providing support to the Diversity and Equity Office in the creation of short, informative videos to be used in different training scenarios as needed

## Myths and Facts about the Accessible Learning Centre

The Accessibility Survey (Fall 2012) revealed that negative attitudes and stigma toward persons with disabilities persist at Laurier. Many of these attitudes stem from misinformation about what it means to have a disability and receive accommodations.

### Three ALC Myths and Facts

1. **MYTH:** *Any student can access an accommodation they desire based on self identified need with no formal documentation.*

**FACT:** Verification of a disability must be made by an accredited practitioner qualified to diagnose the condition and registered under the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Medical Examiners Act. Documentation should include a diagnostic statement and a description of the functional limitations, in particular those that have an impact on performance in a university environment. Interim accommodations can be put into place based on “screening” tools and/or information from physiotherapists or psychotherapists. Formal documentation that communicates a diagnosis is required for further accommodation.

2. **MYTH:** *Students with disabilities are not expected to meet the same academic requirements as other students.*

**FACT:** This is a stereotype that stigmatizes students with disabilities. For example, students with learning disabilities are intelligent and have abilities to learn, despite difficulties with processing information. Students with other types of disabilities, such as physical, medical conditions, mental health or sensory, are also not affected intellectually but often face functional barriers in the learning environment. Students with disabilities can and do succeed when solid coping skills and strategies are developed and assistive technology made available.

3. **MYTH:** *All requests for any extensions in course work, petitions and/or deferrals are approved by the Accessible Learning Centre.*

**FACT:** Faculty approve these requests. Consultants and students have open dialogue about progress and impact the disability barriers are having on academic performance. Accommodations are implemented to address the disability, not the student’s level of preparedness. Consultants will actively review with the students what they have done to meet course requirements in order to legitimize/support the request/need.

For more myths and facts about the ALC please visit their website at <http://waterloo.mylaurier.ca/accessible/info/aboutus/alcmythsfacts.htm>

## **Accessibility in Action: The Laurier Library**

The faculty at the library go above and beyond AODA requirements to help make Laurier a barrier-free University.

### **Here are a few highlights from the library:**

- The library has created a permanent accessibility committee with membership across a variety of library departments including references, collections, systems, Brantford, and text services
- Individual quiet study rooms in the library are available for students registered with the ALC
- They have initiated a project to identify vendor's accessibility statements for the library's online databases to determine how each database interfaces with adaptive technology
- They have a wide variety of video tutorials with closed captions online to explain how to get started at the library, how to find books, journals, and articles, how to evaluate sources and improve searches, and how to properly use and cite sources
- Students registered with the ALC may receive extended loan periods if required
- They have developed a policy to supplement University Policy 8.10 (Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities) for situations that are library-specific

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## **Feedback**

### **Goals**

To have a university environment in which the channels for communicating feedback about accessibility are always open and concerns are addressed in a timely manner in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people.

### **Process**

Feedback regarding accessibility-related issues can be directed to the department offering a good or service directly, or to the Employment Equity and AODA officer. There is also an online feedback form available at [wlu.ca/accessibility](http://wlu.ca/accessibility). All feedback is taken seriously, addressed by the AODA officer and directed to other parties if necessary.

### **Initiatives: The Accessibility Survey**

In total, 985 people responded to an accessibility survey (Fall 2012), including 779 students, 142 staff, 51 faculty members and 13 people who are a combination of the above roles. There were responses from Laurier Kitchener, Waterloo, Brantford and Toronto. Of the respondents, 11% identified as persons with a disability. These responses have helped us guide the content of this plan as well as shape our initiatives over the next couple of years.

### **What's Next**

**Sharing Feedback:** In 2013 the barriers and suggestions for removal that were identified in the accessibility survey will be shared with key stakeholders on campus who have an impact on Laurier's accessibility, including Physical Resources, the ALC, Counselling Services, the Mental Health Student Support Team and Teaching Support Services.

**Encouraging Feedback:** Through the [wlu.com/accessibility](http://wlu.com/accessibility) website and through training, departments will be encouraged to include a feedback process when hosting workshops, training, or events in order to obtain consistent and timely feedback specific to different areas.

**Facilitating Feedback:** In 2013 Laurier staff and faculty members with disabilities or with lived experience with disabilities will be invited to take part in an Accessibility Advisory Sub-Committee. This committee will aid the Accessibility Advisory Committee in fulfilling the purpose of the AODA 2005 by providing vision and direction towards the removal of barriers for staff and faculty with disabilities. This may include reviewing Accessibility Standards and related materials and providing input into policies, practices and procedures developed to meet the intent of the AODA standards.

**Contact Us:**

Employment Equity & AODA Officer  
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Waterloo, Ontario- N2L 3C5  
Phone: 519-884-0710 x.4469 Fax: 519-884-7786  
E-Mail: [accessibility@wlu.ca](mailto:accessibility@wlu.ca)  
Web: [wlu.ca/accessibility](http://wlu.ca/accessibility)

## Appendix I. Resource Guide

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### Resources that can be found online at [www.wlu.ca/accessibility](http://www.wlu.ca/accessibility):

- Standard Sample Accessibility Commitment Statements
- Accessible Event Planning Checklist
- Accessibility Guidelines for Print Materials
- How to Create Accessible PDFs, Documents, and Websites
- AODA Customer Service Brochure
- Service Disruption Sign
- Off-campus Resource Guides for Kitchener-Waterloo and Brantford
- Information about Accessible Public Transportation in Kitchener-Waterloo and Brantford

### Resources on campus:

- Accessible Learning Centre  
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 3086  
Brantford Phone: (519) 756-8228 ext. 5871  
E-mail: [accessible\\_learning@wlu.ca](mailto:accessible_learning@wlu.ca)  
Brantford E-mail: [lbaccessiblelearning@wlu.ca](mailto:lbaccessiblelearning@wlu.ca)  
Web: <http://waterloo.mylaurier.ca/accessible/info/home.htm>  
The Accessible Learning Centre assists students with disabilities in reaching their full academic potential by providing academic accommodations that maintain academic integrity and level the playing field. Services offered include the provision of alternative formats, exam accommodations, learning strategies, note-taking, student support and tutoring.
- Career Development Centre, Resources for Students with Disabilities  
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 4495  
E-mail: [careercentre@wlu.ca](mailto:careercentre@wlu.ca)  
Web: <http://lauriercc.ca/career/students/disabilities/workplace.htm>  
The Career Development centre can provide information and materials related to the RBC Career Transition Program for Students with Disabilities, finding a job and your rights in an interview, facts about disclosure options and accommodations, and links to external resources on workplace accessibility.
- Counselling Services  
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 2338  
E-mail: [counselling@wlu.ca](mailto:counselling@wlu.ca)  
Brantford E-mail: [csbrantford@wlu.ca](mailto:csbrantford@wlu.ca)  
Web: [www.mylaurier.ca/counselling](http://www.mylaurier.ca/counselling)  
Brantford Web: <https://www.lbstudentaffairs.ca/student-support/counselling.htm>  
Counselling Services provides personal counselling free of charge to assist Laurier students with a wide range of concerns including anxiety, depression, stress, roommate tensions, parental and

family conflict, drinking and drug use, homesickness, surviving a breakup, grief, self-confidence, self-harm, eating and body image difficulties and sexual orientation and identity. Counselling services also offers crisis services, counselling groups and extensive self-help resources.

- **The Diversity and Equity Office**  
 Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 4469  
 E-mail: [accessibility@wlu.ca](mailto:accessibility@wlu.ca)  
 Web: <http://waterloo.mylaurier.ca/diversity/info/home.htm>  
 The Diversity and Equity Office includes the Association of Black Students, the Multi-Faith Resource Team, the Rainbow Centre, Burst Your Bubble, and the Centre for Women and Trans\* People. The DEO can provide resources and training related to the AODA and related to accessibility more broadly, including resources and information related to diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- **Health Services**  
 Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 3146  
 Web: <http://waterloo.mylaurier.ca/health/info/home.htm>  
 WLU Health Services is available to any part-time or full-time student at WLU. They provide services to all full or part-time students and to staff and faculty for WSIB issues. Services include massage therapy, chiropractic services, STI testing and more.
- **Human Resources**  
 Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 2007  
 Human Resources is made up of different departments, many of which play a role in Laurier's accessibility and equity initiatives. Departments of Human Resources include Employee Relations, Benefits and Compensation, Learning and Organization Development, Payroll, Pension and Retirement Services, Employee Health and Well-Being, and Diversity and Equity. The Employee Health and Well-Being department has a Health and Disability Advisor who works with employees requiring accommodations due to a disability. Human Resources reviews the Sick Leave & Disability Management Policy and the Employee Accommodation Policy.
- **Library Accessibility Services**  
 Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 3477  
 E-mail: [jschnurr@wlu.ca](mailto:jschnurr@wlu.ca)  
 Web: <http://library.wlu.ca/accessibility/>  
 The Laurier Library provides research assistance, video tutorials, and accessible workstations. Adaptive Technologies at the library include large screen monitors, Optelec Reader, a high speed scanner, a self-serve scanner, Kurzweil and Zoom Text, Jaws, and height-adjustable work stations.

- Safety, Health, Environment & Risk Management (SHERM)  
Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 2874  
Web: [http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp\\_id=159](http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp_id=159)  
SHERM integrates health, safety and environment into the University's culture and by guiding the community in achieving due diligence. SHERM manages the university's overall health and safety program with the goal of preventing occupational injuries and illness. SHERM also supports the installation of visual fire alarms on campus.
- Student Health and Development  
Phone: (519) 884 0710 ext. 2864  
Web: <http://waterloo.mylaurier.ca/development/info/home.htm>  
The Student Health and Development Centre is a wellness, resource centre with the mission of providing services primarily outside the classroom setting that will aid in the development, health and overall personal and academic success of both undergraduate and graduate students. The Centre has resource material related to depression, body image, nutrition, spiritual growth, men and women's health issues, and other wellness concepts. The dietician's office is also located in the centre.

#### Other Resources:

- Council of Ontario Universities Accessibility Toolkit (General)  
Web: <http://cou.on.ca/policy-advocacy/accessibility/accessible-toolkit-homepage>  
The Accessibility Toolkit is an online platform that provides common tools, resources and adaptable templates to assist universities in meeting the goals and requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).
- Council of Ontario Universities Educators' Accessibility Resource (EAR) Kit  
Web: <http://cou.on.ca/policy-advocacy/accessibility/educators--accessibility-resource-kit>  
The EAR Kit is the product of a partnership between the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto, York University and the Government of Ontario through the EnAbling Change Partnership Program. The toolkit is designed to support educators in creating accessible learning environments for students.

**For regularly updated lists of off-campus resources in the Kitchener-Waterloo and Brantford regions please visit [www.wlu.ca/accessibility](http://www.wlu.ca/accessibility).**

## Appendix 2. Improvement Reports 2003-2012

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The Laurier Accessibility Committee is responsible for planning how annual funds (\$75,000.00) from facilities renewal are spent each year to address renovation and repair. As per the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities guidelines, the funds must be spent on physical campus accessibility costs.

### Improvements 2003-2004

1. All accessible washrooms have been upgraded. This includes wrapping pipes, lower or installing new towel dispensers, replacing or repairing gravity closures, etc.
2. New automated door openers have been installed at the following locations:
  - exit facing St. Michael campus in the atrium wing
  - 1<sup>st</sup> floor access to Art C wing (new addition) – near accessible washrooms
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor access to Art C wing (new addition) – near accessible washrooms
  - main level internal door between Arts C Wing and Peter’s Building (ramp leading to the elevator area in Peter’s Building)
  - internal doors at atrium wing and Paul Martin Centre
  - internal doors at atrium wing and Arts E wing (near Tim Horton’s)
  - main door into Health Services

Individuals can now move independently between the Dining Hall, Art A and C wings, Paul Martin Centre, Peter’s Building and Schlegel Centre, DAWB, Fred Nichols Campus Centre and St. Michael campus. Also, everyone can now easily enter Health Services.

3. New Braille signage was ordered for all accessible washrooms along with select faculty and departmental office including Human Resources, the Registrar, Student Awards, Accessible Learning, Dean of Students, etc. .

### Improvements 2004-2005

1. St. Michael campus:
  - a) Replaced ramp at front entrance (previously wooden and steep)
  - b) Installed automatic doors at rear entrance
  - c) Updated accessible washroom by replacing toilet and lavatory, replacing door knob with lever handle and adjusting height and location of soap and towel dispensers
2. New Braille signage is being added to Schlegel and Peters Buildings.
3. Automatic doors were installed at junction between the Aird Building and the Dining Hall.

### Improvements 2005-2006

1. Main floor washrooms in Grad River Hall, Brantford Campus, were retrofitted for accessibility.
2. Automatic doors were installed at the Aird Building exit to Parking Lot 10.
3. Slip-resistant flooring and interior support bars were installed in all campus elevators.
4. Braille elevator buttons and brailed floor numbers were installed in seven (7) elevators at the Waterloo Campus and in three (3) elevators at the Brantford Campus.

5. Braille signage was added to remaining offices, classrooms, labs and faculty offices at the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.
6. Several finishing items were completed within the male and female change rooms in the Athletic Complex. Work included adding non-slip flooring in front of all shower stalls and repositioning soap and towel dispensers near the accessible washroom stalls.

### **Improvements 2006-2007**

1. Seminary retrofitted the existing male washroom to meet barrier-free standards.
2. Northdale Campus Male and Female washrooms were upgraded to include one accessible sink with lever style faucet, angled mirror and coat hook, and D style handle in accessible washroom stall. The towel and soap dispensers were repositioned to an accessible location.
3. High contrast yellow paint was refreshed or added to all external stairs' nosing to assist individuals with visual impairments.
4. The Brantford Campus completed the majority of the bathroom improvements in the Odeon Building. Modifications included wrapping pipes, repositioning soap dispensers and adding the international symbol of accessibility. Braille signage to indicate accessible washrooms was pending at the time of this report.
5. Athletic complex finishing items and shower improvements included the addition of non-slip flooring in front of all shower stalls, the repositioning of soap and towel dispensers near accessible washroom stalls.
6. A barrier-free entrance to the Athletic Complex gymnasium was installed. The installation included automated doors.

### **Improvements 2007-2008**

1. Installed additional handrails at existing stairs on Waterloo, Brantford and St. Jerome's campuses where required.
2. Completed an accessibility audit of all campuses. The creation of a sub-committee to develop a long-term plan to address upgrades and to plan and respond to the forthcoming Built Environment Standards under the AODA 2005.
3. Installed automated opener for main door to Brantford's Accessible Learning Centre.
4. Installed additional ramps on Waterloo, Brantford and St. Jerome's campuses as required.
5. Installed automatic doors on main doors to computer labs (Waterloo Campus).
6. Installed voice announcement systems in existing elevators, where required.

### **Improvements 2008-2009**

1. Accessible learning raised their profile through increased focus on the MyLaurier portal, an accessibility awareness week and the creation of the "Focus On" profile.
2. Updated guide map with accessible ramps, entrances and parking was created and posted on the main Laurier web site.
3. Two accessible computer stations were installed at the Centre for Co-operative Education and Career Development.
4. Digital scanner was purchased.

5. Zoom text software and Kurzweil 3000 were purchased and installed.
6. A variety of awareness initiatives were implemented.
7. The feasibility of using e-mail communications to book appointments with Counselling and Health Services was investigated. Currently, this has not been implemented.
8. Student Service Support Team was created to support students who are in crisis.
9. Sub committees for the 5 AODA standards were created to address AODA compliance.

### **Improvements 2009-2010**

1. Secure funding for an AODA Officer; Officer hired July 2010.
2. Creation of an action and implementation plan to ensure compliance with new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
3. Education and training initiatives started to ensure awareness of disability issues.
4. Redesign of the quad area to increase accessibility (green space between the Dining Hall and MacDonald House).
5. Plan which addresses access issues in older buildings (e.g. Brantford, Journalism House and Wilkes House).

### **Improvements 2010-2011**

1. Reorganization of the Accessibility Committee to include an Accessibility Advisory Committee made up of senior management and 4 working groups to analyze the 4 remaining AODA standards.
2. Created a plan for ensuring new renovations and built environment projects are assessed with accessibility in mind.
3. Created an Accessibility @ Laurier website which compiles accessibility related information from various areas on campus into one site.
4. Updated the Workplace Accommodation Process to increase proposed Employment Standard requirements.
5. Created a variety of “best practice” documents to improve customer service for persons with disabilities.
6. Trained in-class, 78% (over 2300 people) of the Laurier representatives on the Customer Services Standard.

### **Improvements 2011-2012**

1. AccessAbility Advantage conducted a Built Environment Audit on the Waterloo campus.
2. Updated Accessibility @ Laurier website to include Kitchener/Waterloo and Brantford resource guides .
3. Automatic door openers have been added to several locations on the Waterloo campus, including at the entrance to the career and co-op centre, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Dr. Alvin Woods building, to deans’ offices in the Schlegel Centre and Dr. Alvin Woods building, and to washrooms in the science building, the c wing of arts, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of athletics.
4. Washrooms, change rooms and showers in the Athletic Centre have been renovated to meet accessibility standards.

5. Contrasting strip has been added to the main staircase in the Athletic Centre.
6. Language has been added to new employee onboarding checklists to raise awareness about individualized fire evacuation plans.
7. Updated job postings to include language about the availability of alternate formats.

## Appendix 3. Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

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**Accessibility:** A general term used to describe the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, environment) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to ensure it is barrier-free to persons with a disability and, by extension, highly usable and practical for the general population as well. (As defined in the Ontario Public Service Accessibility Plan).

**Accommodation:** The act of making an adjustment to a policy, practice, or environment to meet the needs of a person with a disability. Unlike accessibility, accommodation is a reactive or individualized adaptation. There is no set formula for making accommodations.

**ALC (The Accessible Learning Centre):** A centre at Laurier committed to assisting students with disabilities to reach their full academic potential. The ALC facilitates learning strategies and accommodations for students with disabilities while maintaining academic integrity.

**AODA (The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act):** The purpose of the Act is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025 in relation to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment, facilities, structures and premises. The AODA came into force on June 4, 2005. (As defined in the Ontario Public Service Accessibility Plan).

**Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. (As defined in the AODA).

**Disability:** Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement.

- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*. (As defined in the AODA).

**Duty to Accommodate:** Refers to the responsibility to provide accommodation in a manner that respects general principles such as dignity of the person, individualization, integration and full participation.

**IASR** (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation): The Ontario Regulation which establishes the accessibility standards in the areas of information and communications, employment, and transportation. These standards came into force in 2011.

**SHERM** (Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management): SHERM develops, promotes and implements best practices in loss prevention, mitigation and operational risk management and manages the University's overall health and safety program with the goal of preventing occupational injuries and illness.

**Universal Design:** Universal design helps to ensure a high degree of building accessibility. It is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

**Universal Instructional Design (UID):** Universal instructional design helps to ensure a high degree of accessibility to subject matter and instruction. In terms of learning, universal design means the design of instructional materials and activities that make the learning goals achievable by individuals with a wide variety of learning styles or needs. Universal Instructional Design does not compromise academic rigor or integrity. It may also be referred to as Universal Design for Learning.