

# **Ryerson University Accessibility Plan 2005-2006**

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## **PURPOSE OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities 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"

(S. 1)

As the Council of Ontario Universities' Guidelines for the University Sector states "...universities play a crucial role in ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to education and the opportunities that it provides."

In accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, universities are required to:

- . • Prepare an accessibility plan;
- . • Consult with persons with disabilities and others in preparing the plan; and
- . • Make the plan public.

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Another very important source of information was a consultation held with students with disabilities. Organized by the Access Centre, the group was very forthcoming in sharing with the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee their experiences as Ryerson students and the issues that they felt most needed to be addressed.

### **PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN 2004-2005 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

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activities designed to promote increased awareness of disability issues will be made available on request.

.e. Accessibility issues will be brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Committee as appropriate (e.g. the congestion of smokers at building entrances).

.f. Ryerson will advocate with the City for accessible intersections, as appropriate, through its representation on the BIA (Business Improvement Association)

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action that occurred but to provide a representative sample that gives the reader a good sense of the nature and extent of our accomplishments. Significant progress was made in all priority areas.

Not all objectives were addressed. Further, some accomplishments closely related to a

Georgian College Universal Design Manual and included this topic in the instructor orientation sessions.

.b. While the university did not acquire significant new technology, it implemented measures to enhance the use of available technology. For example, the Digital Media Projects (DMP) unit provided training in accessibility for online developers.

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software meet industry standards for accessibility. This was a consideration in selecting Blackboard as for web based course delivery.

**Priority IV: Admission and hiring practices will continue to be reviewed with respect to systemic barriers that may exist for students, staff and faculty.**

Some initiatives undertaken to meet objectives:

- .a. A Consultant has been hired to facilitate the development of a strategic plan for Employment Equity.
- .b. Thirty-seven Departmental Appointments Committees (DACs) each with a minimum of three members, received training in equity hiring, including the hiring of people with disabilities.
- .c. Human Resources staff received training in equity related areas.
- .d. Accessibility issues are referenced in admissions material and in human resources policies. Applicants are encouraged to disclose accommodation requirements for the interview process.

**Priority V: A best practices model will continue to be used in planning of all new construction, building rentals and major renovations.**

Some initiatives undertaken to meet objectives:

- .a. Campus Planning continues to work with the Access Centre to obtain input relating to acc(d in admis)-2(sions)-3( mate)4(ria)5(l and )aninTJETBT1 0 0 1 102.38 375d in admisg n adm





withstanding, it is the committee's perception that few people with disabilities are hired. Participation in student exchange programs and co-op programs is still very rare. Despite the improvements that have been made, students with some disabilities are still significantly disadvantaged, a fact that is likely to be reflected in their final academic achievement. The University will have to consider whether or not this should be taken

**promote accessibility and inclusion will be developed.**

Specific objectives:

1. 2.1 The Accessibility Plan will be circulated to the Ryerson community and information provided as to how to access it on the web.
2. 2.2 Steps taken to promote physical accessibility will be posted on the web in a way that can easily be accessed by the community.
3. 2.3 Periodic updates will be provided to the Ryerson community regarding other accessibility initiatives being undertaken or completed.
4. 2.4 The Ryerson community will be invited to communicate with the AAC regarding issues it feels the committee should be aware of.

1. **3. Standards for accessible meetings will be communicated throughout the Ryerson community.**
2. **4. Ryerson's public relations and recruitment materials will reflect the diverse nature of the Ryerson community, including positive portrayals of people with disabilities.**

Specific objectives:

1. 4.1 The AAC will work with the Ryerson's office of Public Affairs and with departments that create recruitment material to explore ways to include positive portrayals of people with disabilities.
2. 4.2 The AAC will suggest guidelines regarding the portrayal of people with disabilities in university material.

1. **5. Strategies to increase the number of students with disabilities participating in exchange programs and in co-ops will be explored.**
2. **6. Strategies to increase the number of students with disabilities accepted into graduate programs will be explored.**
3. **7. The University will adhere to the principles of Universal Design, to the maximum extent possible.**
4. **8. Support will be provided to enable faculty to meet the needs of all students including those with disabilities.**

Specific objectives:

1. 8.1 The Director and staff of the Access Centre will be available to meet with faculty groups as required.
2. 8.2 The Learning and Teaching Office will provide workshops and/or orientations on Universal Course Design.
3. 8.3 The DMP will provide workshops/consultations regarding the development of accessible on-line course material.