Accessibility Plan.

FALL 2023

snəẃeyəɬ leləm̓.

Langara.

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Introduction

snəẃeyəɬ leləm̓ Langara College acknowledges with respect our location on Musqueam unceded traditional territory. Our relationship with Musqueam is reflected in our use of the name snəẃeyəɬ leləm̓, which means *house of teachings* and was given to the College in 2016 by Musqueam, and in the incorporation of the Musqueam symbol river grass in the College's coat of arms.

> *Students are the heart of our institution, and providing them with accessible, affordable, high-quality education that moves them forward on their path to further education or a career is our goal. With one of the lowest per credit tuition fees in Metro Vancouver at $101.41, we provide remarkable value to students and their families. For every $1 in tuition diploma students invest, they can expect to receive $1.50 back in higher lifetime earnings; even more if they complete one of our bachelor's degree programs.*
> langara.ca/about-langara/welcome/community-impact

Langara College started in 1965 as part of Vancouver Community College and in 1970, it opened its West 49th Avenue campus. On April 1, 1994, Langara College was established as an independent public college and is now also known as snəẃeyəɬ leləm̓, *house of teachings*, a name given to us by the Musqueam First Nation.

Langara College's creation was part of a provincial plan developed in the early 1960s designed to create a system of community colleges to provide open access to post-secondary education. The goal of the plan was to offer all British Columbians a range of post-secondary educational opportunities: "To combine the ideal of providing suitable higher education for all students who can benefit from it with the ideal of equality of opportunity for all students throughout the Province" (Macdonald, 1962). These ideals of equity, inclusion and access continue to inform and direct all the activities of the College.

Langara's vision, mission and values also inform the work of this plan:

Vision
Langara College is Canada's premier pathways college

Mission
Langara College provides diverse learners with the academic and experiential foundation for further education, career success, and professional and personal development.

Values

EXCELLENCE
We strive for excellence – for our students, in teaching and learning, and in all aspects of administering the College.

COLLEGIALITY
We welcome and include diverse people and perspectives, collaborating in mutual respect and dignity.

INNOVATION
We are forward thinking and open to new ideas, approaches, and technologies.

INTEGRITY
We act in the interests of our students, with honesty and transparency, and are responsible stewards of public resources.

Our Accessibility Story

At Langara, our employees, faculty, and staff are at the heart of our organization. People and Culture (P&C) is committed to providing an accessible environment for all members of the College community that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive and one that enables our diverse employees to reach their full potential.

We strive to ensure all our practices, policies, and programs are accessible. Where a barrier exists, or a policy or practice has adverse consequences for an individual or a protected group, the College is committed to reasonably accommodate that individual's difference, up to the point of undue hardship. Accommodations may entail modifying employment requirements, rules or policies which could be considered discriminatory due to the negative effect on an individual or protected group, and/or modifying barriers that restrict access or full participation across the employee lifecycle. Recently, for example, P&C has integrated language into all postings and event invitations to encourage applicants and attendees to identify their accommodation needs to ensure appropriate support is provided. In addition, P&C has adopted the practice of sharing interview questions in writing to candidates during virtual and in-person interviews. All processes with respect to recruitment and onboarding are being closely reviewed to further improve accessibility for all applicants.

People and Culture also frequently provides lunch and learn sessions on the Duty to Accommodate to help ensure leaders are informed and able to support employees who may request or require an accommodation, and appreciate the duty to inquire when they observe changes in behaviour and performance.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Building on the foundation of open access, Langara has continually sought to address barriers for students with disabilities. Some of those initiatives are detailed below

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

When Langara became an independent institution, services for students with disabilities were arranged through the Counselling department. Rebranded in May 2018, the Accessibility Services department (formerly Disability Services) has been providing services to students with disabilities since 2002. Accessibility Services works with students with disabilities to arrange appropriate support services, and academic accommodations to mitigate barriers that arise at the intersection of functional limitations and the educational environment. We help students access courses, programs, and services, including the Learning Technology Lab, and assist with funding applications for StudentAid BC directed programs, and Langara bursaries and scholarships. Accessibility Services works closely with various departments on campus to ensure students have equal access to all learning opportunities and environments. We do this in part by participating on multi-disciplinary committees and through special project teams designed to improve accessibility.

CENTRE FOR ACCESSIBLE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION RESOURCES (CAPER-BC)

CAPER-BC is a province-wide service delivered by Langara College and funded by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. CAPER-BC provides alternate format course materials for students in public post-secondary institutions who cannot use conventional print. In addition to supporting students, expert CAPER-BC staff and the Accessibility Librarian support Langara College by participating on various committees and working groups dedicated to advancing accessibility at the institution

Projects to Support Students with Disabilities

From 2014 to 2023, Langara has accessed annual Ministry funding designed to pilot innovative initiatives to increase the success of people with disabilities in the educational environment. The College has focused the funding on four projects: Universal Design for Learning; Mental Health initiatives; Learning Strategist Program; and an Assistive Technologist Project.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

In addition to the Ministry funded UDL project, Langara's Teaching and Curriculum Development Centre (TCDC) is committed to supporting faculty in applying a UDL approach to foster student learning and engagement, alleviate learning barriers, reduce the need for academic accommodations, and create an inclusive educational environment.

In 2021 Langara's members of TCDC and EdTech departments formed a Universal Design for Learning Working Group (UDLWG). With membership from across the institution, the purpose of the UDLWG is to promote Universal Design for Learning initiatives within the Langara community and in partnership with the broader community of practice. We support using the principles of Universal Design in teaching and learning at Langara offering flexible opportunities without being prescriptive.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

In 2017, a working group consisting of students, executive leadership, faculty, support staff and student services employees was established to collaborate with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) BC Division to support the development of the College's first mental health strategy. In keeping with the CMHA's Healthy Minds|Healthy Campuses systemic approach to improving mental health and wellness in post-secondary, this project looked across the entire campus, students, and employees, whilst acknowledging the increase in the number of students self-identifying a mental health condition with Accessibility Services and an increase in visits to Counseling and Health Services by students seeking mental health supports. The project sought to implement mental health and wellness tools and resources to build resiliency, reduce barriers, and positively influence the learning environment for students with disabilities. Langara is currently in the process of updating its mental health framework.

LEARNING STRATEGIST PROJECT

From 2018 to 2020, an interdisciplinary working group, consisting of Accessibility Services, Teaching and Curriculum Development Centre, Library and Learning Commons, International Education, Student Engagement, Indigenous Education and Services and other student services, staff developed and implemented a Learning Strategist program. The program addressed students with disabilities and other academically at-risk student groups, such as domestic and international students on academic probation and suspension. Students participated in one-to-one and group sessions with a Learning Strategist, who provided tailored support to meet student goals on topics such as effective time management, study methods and techniques, test taking strategies, and positive mental health habits.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY LAB

The Learning Technology Lab (LTL) was created in partnership with Accessibility Services, the Library and IT in 2013. Located in the Library, the Lab provides all students free access to a variety of assistive software, such as JAWS, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and ZoomText; and equipment including computers, a CCTV, OCR scanner, and adjustable tables, chairs, and keyboard trays. Since the inception of the Assistive Technologist project, the LTL provides an accessible space for the Assistive Technologist to meet with students for technology training and troubleshooting.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIST PROJECT

In partnership with Accessibility Services, and the Library and Learning Commons, the Educational Technology department (EdTech) has sought to address accessibility issues related to technologies used by students on campus. An Assistive Technologist was hired to provide one-to-one support to student users of assistive technologies, helping to ensure access to courses and course materials as well as other online spaces and digital resources, including library resources and the College's registration system. In addition, the AT manages a Closed Captioning pilot project to assist Accessibility Services and instructors in facilitating Closed Captioning accommodations. The AT also works with the College's Learning Technologist to design and develop a series of workshops and asynchronous learning resources for instructors to support the creation of accessible course content and to adopt accessible tools and technologies. Other initiatives stemming from the Assistive Technologist Project include:

- An online welcome and orientation course for student users of assistive technologies that help students gain familiarity and expertise with our learning management system before they start their first class at Langara.
- Assistive technology guides for employees.
- ReadSpeaker for Brightspace. In December 2022, Langara integrated ReadSpeaker, a text-tospeech tool, into its learning management system, Brightspace. The integrated toolbar automatically appears on content pages, quizzes, assignment folders, and discussions, enabling users to hear text read aloud. This tool offers students the choice of reading, listening, or both simultaneously.

FACILITIES

Our Facilities team has been applying the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) principles and CSA B651-18 Accessible Design for the Built Environment Standards on all new renovations at the College. This includes having appropriate circulation for mobility device users, selecting ADA compliant fixtures (Americans with Disabilities Act), and installing new equipment and signs at appropriate locations and heights.

Facilities planners use Universal Design principles:

PRINCIPLE 1
Equitable Use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

PRINCIPLE 2
Flexibility in Use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

PRINCIPLE 3
Simple and Intuitive Use. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

PRINCIPLE 4
Perceptible Information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

PRINCIPLE 5
Tolerance for Error. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

PRINCIPLE 6
Low Physical Effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

PRINCIPLE 7
Size and Space for Approach and Use. Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

In addition, to address visual accessibility, Facilities planners follow guidelines for colour contrast and font size for new signage and ensure there are high contrast paint colours between doorways and walls, and between walls and flooring. Facilities also manages an ergonomics program to conduct ergonomics assessments for employees and provides guidance and support for adapting the workstation to the user. Facilities employ adaptive design principles when evaluating a workspace, customizing accessories, replacing office equipment to accommodate the user, enhancing workspace usability. Langara still has a long road to travel to ensure accessibility and access for all. We are, however, eager to begin mapping our journey with our Accessibility Plan.

Message from Leadership

We are pleased to provide executive sponsorship for the creation of Langara College's first Accessibility Committee and the development of our Accessibility Plan. As described in Our Accessibility Story, above, Langara has long committed to supporting accessibility for our students and employees and to provide services to ensure that barrier-free post-secondary education is possible for all members of our community. The work that is outlined in this evolving plan will permit Langara to address provincially mandated accessibility standards while sharing in the development of best practices with others in our sector. This plan serves to increase our focus on addressing and reducing barriers to students, employees, and community members.

We want to acknowledge the contributions of the Accessibility Committee, representing members from across the College, in helping us to begin this important work. We recognize that we are only in the earliest phases of the implementation of the Accessible BC Act. We look forward to the ongoing development of this plan and the many actions that will result from this plan to reduce barriers for our community.

Langara College Executive Leadership Team

Message from the Accessibility Committee

This Accessibility Plan is the first step in the work to meet the expectations of our community, and in compliance with the new *Accessible BC Act*. Following the direction of the first standard, the Accessible British Columbia Regulation (B.C. Reg. 105/2022), Langara College has now created its first Accessibility Committee, and has approved our initial plan. Over the coming years we anticipate the development of several new standards to address the many barriers that people living with disabilities encounter every day. Through our Accessibility Plan and the advisory work of our Accessibility Committee, Langara College is committed to the process of engaging our community in feedback to the plan, identifying barriers across the College for students, employees and members of the public, input into our progress, and continuing to build on our plan to remove barriers to inclusion.

As co-chairs, we thank the many willing and passionate participants of our initial Accessibility Committee, and the dedicated work of the Accessibility Plan Working Group, who made the development of this plan possible. This work has only just begun.

Joy Walcott-Francis
Co-chair

Debbie Schachter
Co-chair

Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

We recognize the contributions of the Accessibility Committee, comprised of 40 members representing students and all services and functions of the institution. We also acknowledge the support we received from our colleagues at many institutions across the province who contributed suggestions, frameworks, and processes to develop our first Accessibility Committee and this Accessibility Plan.

Definitions under the *Accessible BC Act*

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility means that all people can participate equitably in their communities through work, play, and other daily activities.

Accessibility is important for everyone and enables participation for all people with disabilities.

Accessibility is about removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Under the *Accessible BC Act (the Act)*, an organization must establish a committee to:

a.   assist the organization to identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization, and

b.   advise the organization on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

An accessibility committee must, to the extent possible, have members who are selected in accordance with the following goals:

a.   at least half of the members are
    i.   persons with disabilities, or
    ii   individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities;

b.   the members described in paragraph (a) reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia

c.   at least one of the members is an Indigenous person;

d.   the committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Under the Act, an organization must develop a plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

An organization must review and update its accessibility plan at least once every three years. In developing and updating its accessibility plan, an organization must consider the following principles:

a. inclusion;
b. adaptability;
c. diversity;
d. collaboration;
e. self-determination;
f. universal design.

In developing its accessibility plan, an organization must consult with its accessibility committee. In updating its accessibility plan, an organization must

a. consider any comments received under section 12 [public feedback], and
b. consult with its accessibility committee.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

1. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the identification, removal, or prevention of barriers.

2. Without limiting subsection (1) of the Act, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations under that subsection in relation to any of the following:

a. employment;
b. delivery of services;
c. the built environment;
d. information and communications;
e. transportation;
f. health;
g. education;
h. procurement.

ACCESSIBILITY PRINCIPLES

In developing a proposed accessibility standard, the provincial accessibility committee must consider the following principles:
   a. inclusion;
   b. adaptability;
   c. diversity;
   d. collaboration;
   e. self-determination;
   f. universal design.

BARRIER

A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be;
   a. caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and
   b. affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

DISABILITY

Means an inability to participate fully and equally in society because of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier, bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019#section1.

PERMANENT DISABILITY

Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to pursue studies at a post-secondary school level or to participate in the labour force and that is expected to remain with the person for the person's expected life. StudentAid BC Appendix 8 - Disability Programs Application and StudentAid BC Accessibility Program User Guide, page 2.

PERSISTENT OR PROLONGED DISABILITY

Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to pursue studies at a post-secondary school level or to participate in the labour force and has lasted, or is expected to last, for a period of at least 12 months but is not expected to remain with the person for the person's expected life (StudentAid BC Appendix 8 - Disability Programs Application)and StudentAid BC Accessibility Program User Guide, page 2).

MINISTRY

The Ministry responsible for post-secondary education in British Columbia.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

An organization must establish a process for receiving comments from the public on;

    a. the organization's accessibility plan, and

    b. barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

An educational approach to teaching and learning that provides flexibility and choices in the way students access, engage in, and demonstrate their learning. Taking a UDL approach opens the possibilities to a variety of teaching and assessment methods and helps to remove barriers to student learning and create more equitable opportunities for students to succeed.

Framework Guiding Our Work

Accessible BC Act-Principles

Under the new Accessible BC Act, public institutions are required to create an Accessibility Committee and to develop an Accessibility Plan. In this work, the principles under which we will be developing our plan are as follows:

INCLUSION

Inclusion means making social and physical environments open to all human beings, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, religion, or other personal factors. Accessibility without incorporating inclusion allows a mitigation effort to be made without considering the social implications. For example, retrofitting a ramp to a back entrance would not allow an individual using a mobility device to enter through the main entrance with everyone else. This extends to service and communication provisions that respect and allow people with disabilities the choice of how they communicate and that individuals feel included by seeing themselves represented in society and in promotional images.

ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability often refers to building design which will accommodate reduced ability without the need to substantially modify the existing structure. This means that the space is readily adjustable and retrofittable. In terms of service, adaptability means that the service provided can be adjusted to meet the needs of someone requiring some additional support or alternate format.

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to different characteristics in a group of people. This could include ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, culture, income, and countless other domains.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is the action of two or more people working together to produce something. The work to develop this framework was accomplished through the collaboration of the Accessibility, representing students and employees of the College.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination refers to the concept that each person has the ability to make their own choices and manage their own lives. It relates to "Nothing About Us Without Us", which refers to the principle that PWDs are an active part of the decision-making about participation and equalization of opportunities for PWDs.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN (UD)

UD aims to ensure that the design of products and environments are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The seven principles of UD are: equitable use; flexibility in use; simple and intuitive use; perceptible information; tolerance for error; low physical effort; and size and space for approach and use.

Other Legislation

Other existing legislation that informs our work to improve accessibility and address systemic barriers include the following:

• UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
• Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
• Accessible Canada Act
• BC Human Rights Code
• Accessible BC Act
• BC Building Code

Existing Policies Related to Accessibility at Langara

Langara College has a number of policies that support the work of making the College accessible,including:

• D410 – Respectful Learning and Working Environment
• D1007 – Respectful Workplace
• B3008 – Human Rights
• E1005 – Services for Students with Disabilities

Our Approach

At Langara, we take both a collegial and UDL approach to our work. This means we begin with seeking the input of the broadest representation from the College community, including our Accessibility Committee, opportunities for input and feedback from the community at large, and reflecting the information gathered this Plan and the actions we will take to operationalize this plan.

About Our Committee

Initial Focus of Committee

This committee of employees and students was brought together to contribute to and provide recommendations for the development of the first Accessibility Plan for the College. Committee members bring their lived experience and broad and diverse perspectives – specifically representing individuals with disabilities – to the understanding and impacts of barriers that exist at the College. To meet ministry requirements to complete a plan by September 2023, the committee met both in person and online from March through July 2023.

Recruitment

The committee was recruited through a survey shared widely across the College, requesting specific representation from individuals with disabilities, as well as individuals representing services to students with disabilities. We also sought Indigenous representations, students, and individuals representing individuals from equity-seeking groups. The recruitment survey remained open for 2 weeks, resulting in responses from 55 individuals (including the co-chairs). Applications were screened according to the required representation from the Act. From the applications received, the co-chairs ensured broad representation across all services and departments of the College, with the initial membership totalling 42. Over the subsequent months, several individuals withdrew from the committee due to personal circumstances or departures from the College, and we anticipate an annual recruitment process to ensure a continued broad representation of members.

Committee Members

Kiki Armstrong, *Administration and Finance*

Patricia Aroca-Ouellette, *Department of Chemistry*

Vanessa Barron, *School of Management*

Emily Betz, *Department of Biology*

Ruth Bruhn, *Theatre Arts at Studio 58*

Gina Buchanan, *People and Culture*

Theo Carthen, student

Michael Cheng, *Counselling*

Heather DeLong, *Department of English*

Maia Donahue, *student*

Dwayne Doornbosch, *Facilities*

Giselle Barros Correa de Mello Duarte, *Dean's Office*

Nora Franzova, *Department of Mathematics and Statistics*

Briana Fraser, *Educational Technology*

Andrea James, *Department of Early Childhood Education*

Bhumika Laller, *Facilities*

Edmund Lee, *Faculty of Nursing*

Erin MacWilliam, *Department of English*

James Martin, *Teaching Curriculum Development Centre*

Brittany Matuschewski, *Information Technology*

Jake McCallum, *Student Engagement and Athletics*

Luke McKnight, *Educational Technology*

Kamila Mitchell, *Information Technology/ Co-op and Career Development Centre*

Suzanne Munson, *Accessibility Services*

Ruth Onaghinon, *Information Technology*

Brooke Raphael, *Faculty of Nursing*

Nik Roberts, *Facilities*

Maggie Ross, *Student Conduct and Academic Integrity*

Rei Sakuma, *Department of Modern Languages*

Alexandra Samur, *Teaching Curriculum Development Centre*

Alexandre Santiago Da Silva, *Strategic Communications and Marketing*

Debbie Schachter (Co-chair), *Associate Vice-President, Students*

Susan Sverdrup-Phillips, *Department of Sociology and Anthropology*

Susan Todd, *Department of Kinesiology*

Monica Vallejo, *Strategic Communications and Marketing*

Joy Walcott-Francis (Co-chair), *Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

Peter Walsh, Mental *Health Initiatives*

Madelayne Walter, Library

Jennifer Weldon, *CAPER-BC/Library*

Azaia Windwraith, *Registration and Enrolment Services*

Ruby Wong, *Facilities*

Heather Workman, *Co-op and Career Development Centre*

A working group was struck to develop draft documentation for the review and input by the Accessibility Committee at large. Participants of the Accessibility Committee Working Group include:

Gina Buchanan

Briana Fraser

Suzanne Munson

Ruth Onaghinon, *Information Technology*

Nik Roberts

Debbie Schachter *(Co-chair)*

Monica Vallejo

Joy Walcott-Francis *(Co-chair)*

Consultation Conducted

Consultations have taken place as part of the work of the Accessibility Committee, both involving general discussions about the purpose and the intent of the plan and through consultations on how to develop effective and appropriate feedback mechanisms, and to determine the identification of barriers through our surveys.

Who was Consulted

Our initial consultations have involved the Accessibility Committee to provide input and feedback into the development of this initial framework.

How Consultation was Conducted

Consultations were conducted within meetings and through an online survey of the committee members conducted May through June 2023. To develop our benchmark on perceptions of accessibility barriers, a pilot survey was conducted with the Accessibility Committee during the summer of 2023. This survey will be launched to the College community in the fall of 2023.

Key Discussion Themes

Themes will be developed following the data collections of our pilot survey, and the subsequent full community survey in fall 2023. These themes will provide benchmark information for discussion within the committee and the College at large and will inform plans to address barriers identified across the physical plant and service areas.

Feedback Mechanism – Feedback on Barriers

Feedback Mechanism Development

Feedback Mechanism Development the Accessibility Community discussed the need for a range of feedback mechanisms to enable students, employees, and broader community members to identify any barriers to access. From that initial information, and through the development of this plan, the Accessibility Plan Working Group engaged in additional brainstorming and research on the types of feedback mechanisms used by other post-secondary institutions to plan the mechanisms for feedback.

Initially, the committee recommends an accessible feedback form on the Langara College website, the annual accessibility survey, and an email account to be monitored for forwarding identified barriers to the appropriate department. Through the development of a communications plan for socializing the accessibility work of the College, the Accessibility Committee anticipates that all service points should be prepared to receive and forward any identified barriers to the appropriate department to address.

The committee also anticipates the need for administrative support for accessibility work at the College, and recommends a dedicated support role as a means of ensuring responsiveness to feedback and supporting the ongoing work of the College to meet upcoming provincial Accessibility Standards.

Identifying Barriers – What We Need to Find Out

Through the work of developing this plan, our initial process to identify barriers was a pilot survey for identifying barriers on campus. This survey was piloted with the Accessibility Committee in the summer of 2023 to identify a baseline of barriers, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the survey for later launch to the college community at large. This survey is intended to be conducted annually across the College community to identify barriers and measure our success in reducing these barriers.

Barriers to Identify

In accordance with the Accessible BC Act legislation, the College will seek to identify barriers in the following areas:
- attitudinal
- environmental
    a. sensory
    b. physical
- information and communication
    a. clear and consistent information in a timely manner
- systemic
    a. practices
    b. policies
- technologies
- time
    a. service delivery
    b. access to resources

In relation to the category of barriers, above, according to Section 13 (2) of the Act we anticipate standards (regulations) being created in future years related to:
    a. employment
    b. delivery of services
    c. the built environment
    d. information and communications
    e. transportation
    f. health
    g. education
    h. procurement

How Will We Identify and Response to Barriers

REVIEW BEST PRACTICES

We are in the process of reviewing best practices in the development of the initial framework plan through information sharing through PSI training offered, peer networks such as CSSAL, Accessibility Hub, and reviewing accessibility plans from institutions in other provinces.

SURVEY

A pilot survey is being conducted with the Accessibility Committee through summer 2023 which will then be launched in the fall semester of 2023. This survey will create a baseline of accessibility barriers and will be provided to the Committee for review and recommendations, and will be updated on a regular basis to ensure ongoing monitoring of accessibility barriers on campus. Barriers identified will be reported to the departments and services responsible to those concerns. The ongoing feedback mechanism on accessibility concerns and barriers for members of the public and the College community will include a web form and an email address. See "How to Give us Feedback – The Feedback Mechanism" section for details on the feedback mechanisms.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

The Accessibility Committee will contribute to identifying barriers and members can collect or direct contributions and feedback from the community to our feedback mechanisms. In addition, the Accessibility Committee will create a working group to recommend to the College's Executive Leadership, any processes or procedures on how the barriers are being identified or how these barriers are being addressed.

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

In fall 2023, in tandem with the distribution of the access barriers survey to the community, we will begin the audit process to review of the current state at the service or department level by asking each service area to consider the following questions: "What are you doing well?" and "What do you think are the gaps that need to be addressed?" Following the receipt of information, we will create a baseline of identified barriers and gaps to be addressed by mapping the survey data with information derived from the department/service audits. Future developments of the audits and survey work will be to address the specific expectations identified under each standard, as it is released by the government.

Ongoing input will include:
- employee surveys
- student surveys
- community engagement opportunities (such as whiteboards with questions or ideas so our campus community can answer or rank) departmental self-assessments and audits
- physical plant review through an accessibility consultant audit such as the Rick Hansen Accessibility Audit [1]

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[1] Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) is a national rating system that will help us measure and certify the level of meaningful access to campus. Using the RHFAC rating will help our planners better understand physical accessibility, identify barriers for our community, and look at opportunities to improve. Whether or not we become certified, the Scorecard and Rating Summary will still provide valuable information about the current level of accessibility and highlight areas for improvement for your Site.

Actions Planned

COLLEGE ACCESSIBILITY PROCESSES

- Develop a workflow for receiving, responding to, and actioning barriers identified through the annual survey, feedback mechanisms, and accessibility audits.
- Launch feedback mechanisms.
- Launch annual survey in the fall of 2023.
- Undertake accessibility audits across the College in the fall of 2023.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT / FACILITIES

- Facilities has completed a high-level assessment for the Child Development Centre (daycare). Powered door openers will be installed and there are plans to apply for additional funding to improve accessibility.
- Non-accessible door handles and light switches will be replaced with lever door handles and flat panel light switches.
- Installation of wheelchair accessible sinks with motion sensor faucets in the cafeteria and RMT classrooms.
- Installation of automatic door openers in the T Building washrooms.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Promote accessibility and UDL through the continuing work of the UDL working group including learning sessions for members of the Accessibility Committee, to offer regular, college-wide workshops through EdTech and TCDC, and enhance accessibility resources on the Ed Tech and TCDC webpages.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Langara College will take action to ensure that it presents information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities, starting with implementing accessibility solutions to problems already identified, including:

WHAT WE HAVE FOUND

Although we have identified several accessibility issues with our current Langara communications ecosystem, we lack a comprehensive understanding of the barriers facing persons with disabilities when engaging with communication and information from Langara

INTENDED ACTIONS

Identify the accessibility barriers with the college's communications and marketing ecosystem, using external and internal research and usability testing.

Identify the cost of implementing American Sign Language (ASL) in digital media communication.

WHAT WE HAVE FOUND

The Langara brand needs updating to eliminate problems related to accessibility that were not considered when the brand guidelines were originally created.

INTENDED ACTIONS

• Revise and expand our Langara brand colour palettes.

WHAT WE HAVE FOUND

The Langara web presence needs updating to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA accessibility standards.

INTENDED ACTIONS

• Redesign Langara websites/webpages to ensure they meet The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, level AA.
• Review, streamline, and update information about Langara programs, courses, and services, including reformatting, and updating content to plain language.
• Ensure webpages, images, and digital PDFs (portable digital documents) are accessible to any screen reader.
• Optimize web performance as a best practice to ensure accessibility to users without high-speed Internet

WHAT WE HAVE FOUND

Langara print materials, video, digital signage, social media, and advertising must be updated to meet AA accessibility standards.

INTENDED ACTIONS

• Ensure our communications and marketing materials are designed and written to support AA accessibility standards.
• Include closed captioning on videos.

Our 3-Year Plan Summary

Our initial plan is a framework to enable Langara College to begin the work of creating the mechanisms for gathering information about barriers, prioritizing barriers to be addressed, and enabling processes to reduce and eliminate those barriers. This initial framework will develop over time to incorporate the specific requirements of each accessibility standard, as they are released by the government.

Priority #1

Develop the College's first Accessibility Committee and initial Accessibility Plan, focusing on feedback and communications mechanisms.

Priority #2

Create processes for identifying baseline information on barriers: Conduct an annual survey to community members and service/departmental audit to gather information about barriers.]

Priority #3

Prioritize barriers to be addressed from survey and audit, and identify mechanisms through ELT approval to address the specific areas of concern.

Priority #4

Update the Accessibility Plan at least annually to incorporate responses to new Accessibility Standards as they are enacted by the B.C. Government.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring

The College commits to producing a monitoring report on an annual basis to be delivered at the first accessibility committee meeting of each fiscal year. This report will identify the progress toward removing barriers to access and inclusion, based on the initial baselines identified through the institutional accessibility survey and service/departmental audits.

Evaluating

The College will conduct a review and evaluation of the Accessibility Plan every three years from adoption, with the plan updated in interim years to respond to Accessibility Standards (B.C. Government regulations) as they are enacted. Upon approval by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), this plan will be distributed to the Langara community and made public on the College's website.

Conclusion

While the expression 'this is only the beginning' may be a cliché, it certainly applies to the work of the Langara College Accessibility Plan, and the evolution in our college towards removing all systemic barriers to access and inclusion. Due to the short timeline legislated for our development of our first Accessibility Plan, and the expected additional Accessibility Standards to be released over the coming years, this plan is only the first iteration of the important work that we commit to address over time.

How to Give Us Feedback – The Feedback Mechanism

The public and the College community will be able to submit accessibility concerns to the College through a variety of Feedback mechanisms.

Online Form

An accessible web-based form will be available to members of the Langara community, and an internal version of the form will also be placed on the College's SharePoint site for employees to access. Reports generated on the feedback will be made available to the Accessibility Committee for advice or recommendations of actions.

Email

An email address will be created and will be monitored to ensure that any concerns are directed to the appropriate department or service. A regular report of the types of feedback provided will be provided to the Accessibility Committee.

In Person

Any service point will be a potential point of contact for someone submitting feedback on an accessibility barrier. Communication to all service points as to the processes for receiving and forwarding accessibility barriers to those responsible for addressing these concerns will be undertaken.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

BC Accessibility Hub bcaccessibilityhub.ca
BC Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders (BC CSSAL)

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Government of B.C. *Accessible British Columbia Act*, [SBC 2021] Chapter 19,
bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019

Government of B.C. *Accessibility legislation, Accessibility legislation - Province of British Columbia* (gov.bc.ca), gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation (updated April 14, 2022)

Government of B.C. *Accessibility legislation plain language summary, Accessibility legislation plain language summary - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)* gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/summary#01 (updated June 17, 2021)

Government of B.C. Accessible British Columbia Regulation, B.C. Reg. 105/2022. bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/105_2022

BC Accessibility Hub. *Developing Your First Accessibility Plan – A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations, Disability Alliance of BC, BC Accessibility Hub,* bcaccessibilityhub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Creating-Your-First-Accessibility-Plan-A-Guide-for-Prescribed-Organizations-Accessible-UA.pdf

Langara College. *The Economic Value of Langara College: Fact Sheet, June 2020.* https://langara.ca/about-langara/welcome/community-impact.html

Macdonald, John B. *Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future. The University of British Columbia, 1962.* library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/misc/higher_education_in_bc.pdf

W3C. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 Level AA Conformance. w3.org/WAI/WCAG2AA-Conformance