



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT,
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUITY

FOR INFORMATION

TO: Business Board

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DATE: September 24, 2004 for October 6, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act: University of Toronto Accessibility Plan, 2004-05

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The plan is being recommended for approval to the Planning and Budget Committee, which is responsible for (a) the institutional planning process (of which this is a part) and (b) submissions to external agencies that include new policy positions. (With the agreement of the Planning and Budget Committee, the proposed plan will proceed to the Academic Board, whence to the Governing Council.)

The plan is presented to the Business Board for information because of its responsibility for “personnel policy for administrative staff” (Terms of Reference, section 5.9).

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

This Plan reports on and builds upon the initiatives that were included in the 2003-04 Plan previously approved by the Governing Council.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (ODA) received Royal Assent in December 2001. The purpose of the Act is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that preclude their full participation in society. The Act requires institutions within the broad public sector to review their policies, programs and services as they impact upon persons with disabilities, and to develop accessibility plans that are intended to address existing barriers and prevent new barriers from being established. Each Ontario University is required to develop annual accessibility plans, as part of the annual planning process, and to file the 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan by September 30, 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS: (cont'd)

The development of the University of Toronto Accessibility Plan is under the auspices of the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity, who established a broadly representative ODA Planning Committee. The Committee consisted of forty members and included faculty, staff and students representing a range of stakeholders and constituencies. Several members of the Committee were selected because of their professional expertise in relevant areas (for example, technology; instructional design; architectural design); others for their professional knowledge of disability and accommodation issues. A number of people with disabilities – some visible, some not – were on the Committee. The work of the Committee was facilitated by Professor Connie Guberman.

The Planning Committee created seven working sub-committees each with four to seven members. The working committees focused on specific areas (Attitude, Policy and Procedure, Physical Facilities, Technology, Instructional Design, Student Life and Human Resources). They were asked to outline the barriers that had been identified and/or the process that will be put in place to identify barriers, the initiatives to be put in place in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers, and to define how the initiatives will be measured.

The 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan includes a status report on the forty-five initiatives identified in the 2003-2004 Plan and identifies new initiatives within the scope of the seven subcommittee areas. In response to concerns raised in the preparation of the 2003-2004 Plan, this year the consultation process has included far greater outreach to members of the University community. The outreach included group and individual meetings with students, faculty, staff and alumnae with disabilities. The barriers identified and new initiatives planned are drawn from the findings of these consultation meetings as well as from subcommittee members' outreach and expertise.

The approved Accessibility Plan will be submitted to the Ontario Government for September 30 2004 and will be made public through the U of T website and the through accessibility.utoronto.ca.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

No new resources are required for the 2004-2005 Accessibility Plan. Costs to implement initiatives have been previously allocated, have been designated within the budget of specific units, and/or include the reallocation of employee's time.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Plan is presented to the Business Board for information.