



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES

Appendix "A"

TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: September 8, 2004 for 28

AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The University Affairs Board is responsible for "equity issues and initiatives" (Terms of Reference, section 5).

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Governing Council approved the first annual University of Toronto Ontarians with Disabilities Act Accessibility Plan 2003-2004, on October 30, 2004. One of the initiatives identified in the Plan was to review the Services to Disabled Persons Policy (1987).

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.

As one of the initiatives identified in the University's 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan, the Services to Disabled Person Policy (1987) was reviewed and revised as the Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities.

The Services to Disabled Persons Policy (1987) is a policy that outlines the purpose and activities of a specific office that no longer exists at the University. According to the policy, this office provided information, education and counseling, assisted with accommodation measures, coordinated volunteers to work with persons with disabilities and encouraged increased accessibility. By contrast, the new Statement of Commitment outlines a broad vision of the university community for the benefit of all members. It sets out some of the efforts that the University will make with respect to persons with disabilities in order to realize this vision, and also identifies various members of the University community whose participation would assist in creating the envisioned community. Some efforts that the University commits to making include those directed at accommodating disabilities and addressing barriers, as well as providing information to all. In sum, whereas the former policy was limited to outlining the services provided by a particular office to persons with disabilities, the new Statement is a broad commitment by the University to the entire University community.

Consultation with regards to the development of the Statement of Commitment was far reaching. In addition to the forty members of the Accessibility Planning Committee (who represent a wide range of stakeholders and constituencies in the University including unions, faculty, alumnae and people with disabilities), the draft policy was sent for comment to student Governors, leaders of SAC, APUS, and the GSU.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

N/A (NB: Any Financial and/or Planning Implications will be considered as part of the annual ODA Accessibility Plan.)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the proposed Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities be approved, replacing the Services to Disabled Persons Policy approved by the Committee on Campus and Community Affairs on December 9, 1987.