AODA & ODA Accessibility Plan

2016-2017

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and specifically Regulation 191/11 “Integrated Accessibility Standards” (“Regulation”), the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations and large organizations, including the Office of the Ombudsman, are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans outlining their strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to meet requirements under the Regulation. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.4).

Annual Report

Table of Contents

Introduction 2
Advisors to AODA Initiatives on Campus 3
Diversity of Projects and Commitments 4
Accessible Built Environment 5
Accessible Communications 6
Accessible Service Delivery 7
External Partnerships 8
Pedagogy 9
Mental health 10
Summary of Submission from Students for Barrier-free Access 11
Summary 12
Appendix i - AODA Compliance Timeline 13
Appendix ii - AODA Compliance Timeline 14
Appendix iii - AODA Compliance Timeline - Table Format 15

Introduction

This report outlines the progress made by the University of Toronto in creating working and learning environments that are accessible and inclusive. The University has a long history of commitment to equity, diversity and inclusivity - it is ingrained within our institutional purpose.

Every year significant work occurs across all three campuses, multiple divisions and different departments that assists in building an accessible campus. We recognize that accessibility is about more than the positioning of a physical building feature, rather that it also encompasses the attitudes of those who occupy the buildings. All of us must be committed to ensuring that inclusive environments exist at the University. This report conveys our commitments to accessibility and inclusion and how we move beyond compliance.

The projects highlighted in this report illustrate the work across all three campuses, as well as focusing on accomplishments with respect to the various sections of the AODA and its Standards. They show how the University is seeking to stay accessible as it innovates education and provide access to a broader range of members at the University.

Advisors to AODA Initiatives on Campus

We are grafeful to those who contributed their time, expertise and insight into the various initiatives throughout this annual report. Special thanks go to:

Tamara Adizes Jacobs	I&TS Portfolio Communications Officer
Andy Allen	Manager, Academic Scheduling
Steve Bailey	Director, Academic & Campus Events
Christine Burke	Campus & Facilities Planning
Maria Codispoti	Manager, Planning & Construction, UTM
Cheryl Davison	Manager, Information Projects
Reshma Dhrodia	Student Life, Outreach & Equity Advisor, KPE
Paul Donoghue	CAO, UTM
Tina Doyle	Director, AccessAbility, UTSC
Katy Francis	Director, Strategic Communications, Human Resources & Equity
Lucy Fromowitz	Assistant Vice-President, Student Life
Hayley Fuller	HR Special Projects & Communications Officer
Terry Gardiner	Assistant Manager, Co-Curricular Diversity & Equity, KPE
Paull Goldsmith	Director Facilities Management & Planning, UTM
Steven Green	Director, Online Communications
Laurie Harrison	Director, Online Learning Strategies
William Heikoop	Online Learning Coordinator
Sarah Hinves	Senior Planner
Avi Hyman	Director, Academic & Collaborative Technologies
Nadia Kanani	Advocacy & Volunteer Coordinator, Students for Barrier-free Access
Tricia Kenderdine	Communications Coordinator, Student Life, St. George
Heather Kelly	Senior Director, Student Success
Ted Kent	Senior Property Manager, St. George
Kaitlin Klass	Senior Communications & Web Liason, Arts & Science
Lari Langford	Librarian, St. George
James Lawson	Supervisor, Help Services, Information Commons
Erin Lemon	Executive Director, News and Media
Tanya Lewis	Director, Accessibility Services, St. George
Scott Mabury	Vice-President, University Operations
Heather McGhee Peggs	Manager, Conflict Resolution Centre
Elizabeth Martin	Director, AccessAbility Resource Centre, UTM
Katya Pereyaslavska	Project Manager, Accessible Texts Repository, Ontario Council of University Libraries
Linda Petty	Assistive Technology Consultant, UTSC
Lake Porter	Assistive Technology Specialist
Lidio Presutti	Director, Information Commons
Tayyab Rashid	Project Leader, Flourish
Kim Richard	Director, Health & Wellbeing Programs & Services
Janine Robb	Executive Director, Health & Wellness
Elliot Storm	TATP Social Sciences Coordinator
Mahadeo Sukhai	Senior Advisor, NEADS
Ron Swail	Chief Operations Officer, Property Services & Sustainability
Marie Vander Kloet	Assistant Director, TATP/CTSI
Alan Webb	Planner
Veronica Zaretski	Editor, the Bulletin

Diversity of Projects and Commitments

Accessible Built Environment

These projects focus on the built environment at the University. Renovations, new buildings, and new legislative processes that relate to building accessibility are highlighted here.

Accessible Communications

These projects focus on the way information is delivered in a format that accounts for a person's disability needs.

Accessible Service Delivery

These projects include our obligations under the Customer Service Standard. Here we highlight how departments are delivering their services in an accessible manner.

External Partnerships

The University has completed several projects in partnership with various organizations, including the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) & the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)

Pedagogy

The University is committed to the delivery of classroom learning in accessible ways. This section of the report highlights the work completed by various academic units, professors, and support services to create inclusive classrooms.

Mental Health

In recognition of the growing need to support mental health challenges on campus, this section of the report highlights initiatives and training on mental health in the post-secondary environment.

Accessible Built Environment

In addition to the goals of the AODA in the built environment, it is important that our buildings and Public Spaces are safe and accessible to the University community. Whilst the University is meeting its regulatory requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standards and others, we also seek to meaningfully incorporate accessibility into building design and operations. Examples of this work include the accessibility designs of the Landmark Project, with the goal of revitalizing the major public spaces of the historic St. George campus (see Key focus below); the continuing renovations across St. George to improve accessibility on campus, including those at OISE; and the ongoing improvements made to the AODA Office's Building Access Notices system.

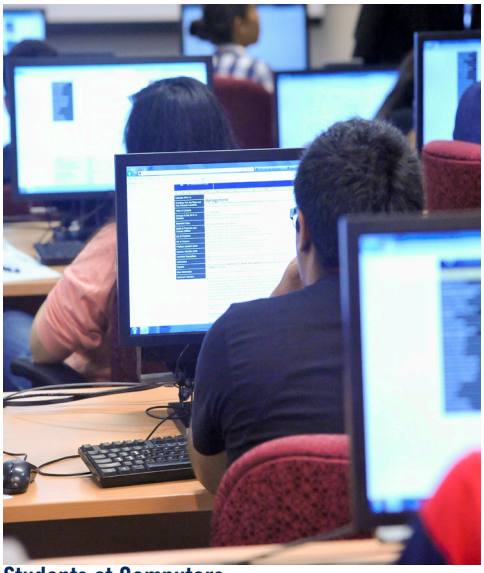
Designers rendering showing Landmark area at Medical Science Building

Key focus: Landmark Project Consultations

The Landscape of Landmark Quality project is underway at the University and has the goal of revitalizing the major public spaces of the historic St. George campus. This will encompass Front Campus, including King's College Circle, Hart House Circle, Sir Daniel Wilson Quadrangle and the Back Campus. Framed by heritage buildings, monuments and pathways, these spaces constitute the heart of the campus and provide important spaces of connection, gathering and ceremony, and allow for a variety of active and passive uses. The planning strategy includes Access leading to a specific principle to provide Access to all Buildings and Landscapes.

This year the University and its selected architects began a fulsome consultation process with the broader community on initial plans for the revitalization project. Under the Design of Public Spaces Standards the University is required to consult with the public and persons with disabilities on elements like on-street parking and exterior paths of travel. Through several consultation opportunities and key meetings, planners at the University met with a large number of groups, committees and offices from the University community. Accessibility of the space was a central focus of these consultations. As part of this work a web page outlining the accessibility of the Landmark Project was developed.

Accessible Communications



Students at Computers

Making our online spaces accessible is another important aspect of ensuring our information and communications reaches as many members of the University community as possible. This year the AODA Office, as well as communicators across our campuses, have worked to address barriers to web accessibility. This has included the AODA Officer assisting in incorporating a session on accessible communications at TechKnowFile, a free technology conference offered to all faculty and staff, the AODA Office delivering regular accessible communications workshops on all three campuses, the AODA Office providing more resources on its website related to accessible communications (see Key focus below) updating the Bulletin for better keyboard accessibility, and the University's accessibility offices deploying a site license for Kurzweil 3000 on all three campuses.

Key focus: AODA Office Accessible Communications webpage

This year the University's AODA Office continually updated the Accessible Communications page of its website to provide up-to-date resources and information. These include resources on how to switch on the accessibility checker in Word, PowerPoint and Excel for Windows and Mac, how to create and verify PDF accessibility, and additional resources on how to check to web accessibility, including keyboard accessibility.

To review these, and other resources related to accessible communications, check out the AODA Office's Accessible Communications webpage.

Accessible Service Delivery

Tina Doyle, Director of AccessAbility Services, UTSC & Thusi Thuraisamy with College Life the text-to-speech app for TalkRocket Go (see 2013-14 Annual Report)

Ensuring all those to whom we provide a service, including education or supporting staff and faculty, have accessible options, helps the University fulfill its commitments to equity, diversity and excellence. In doing so excellence is able to flourish in an environment that embraces the broadest range of people.

Through its services and process, the University is working to ensure accessible service is delivered. Examples include the Health & Well-being Programs & Services team which provides accommodation support to faculty and staff such as setting up assistive technologies, job coaching and technology training; the AccessAbility Resource Centre at the Mississauga campus, Accessibility Services at the St. George campus, AccessAbility Services at the Scarborough campus providing services to students, combined all three had more than 4,300 registered students, representing a 14 per cent increase on the previous year; the AODA Office and Strategic Recruitment Centre which helps to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are as accessible as possible. Another example of this work is the AODA Office continuing its outreach and training functions to assist those delivering services in being aware of our obligations and how to support various service users (see Key focus below). Further to this regular work, the Career Centre at St. George began offering embedded career services at Accessibility Services and hosted sessions such as Navigating Disability in the Workplace to help graduating students transition to fulfilling careers.

Key focus: AODA Outreach and Training

This year the University's AODA Office continued to offer training and provide outreach to the community on the requirements of the legislation. As well as presenting at TechKnowFile (see Accessible Communications) and conducting the AODA Tour (see Pedagogy), the office has offered "lunch and learns" on specific topics (including inclusive hiring practices and web content accessibility); training sessions through the Organizational & Development Learning Centre; and a workshop with the Teaching Assistant Training Program on accessible visual aids (see Pedagogy).

External Partnerships

Students playing wheelchair basketball

This year the University has participated in a number of meaningful projects with various external partners. These include involvement in: the undergraduate student-focused Innovative Designs for Accessibility (IDeA) competition; the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) report and recommendations of its National Taskforce on the Experience of Graduate Students with Disabilities; the Ontario Council of University libraries making 10,000 texts available in accessible formats; as well as the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education hosting a session on accessible sport with Paralympian, Tracy Schmitt (see Key Focus).

Key focus: Play the Game - Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education

Hosted in November at the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education (KPE), Play the Game encouraged participants to play four sports, including adapted bocce ball, seated volleyball, wheelchair basketball and blindfolded soccer. The idea for the event came from the Faculty's Equity Movement, a student-led group that hosts activities to promote inclusivity and physical and mental health across campus.

The group has hosted the event for the past two years and this year they welcomed 60 participants to the Athletic Centre. Beyond playing the four sports, students also welcomed keynote speaker Tracy Schmitt, who is a four-way amputee and Paralympic bronze medalist in alpine skiing. Schmitt encouraged students to help sport become more accessible.

Pedagogy

In recognizing there are various ways to make education more accessible, the University has worked to provide resources on how to do so. Information and advice on the incorporation of accessible course design have been widely disseminated with support provided. This is in line with AODA requirements to provide training to educators in this area and further helps to create accessible spaces. Examples of this have included: an AODA Office Tour; whereby we visited various departments and faculties to discuss accessible course design; workshops provided to faculty by both the Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP) and the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation on accessible teaching practices; resources provided to TAs on fostering accessible learning environments (see Key Focus below); and the working of the Online Learning Strategic portfolio to provide resources on designing interactive learning objects like Articulate Storyline. This year as part of the Learning Portal renewal process, consultation on its accessibility took place, including a testing session at the Students for Barrier-free Access Computer lab.

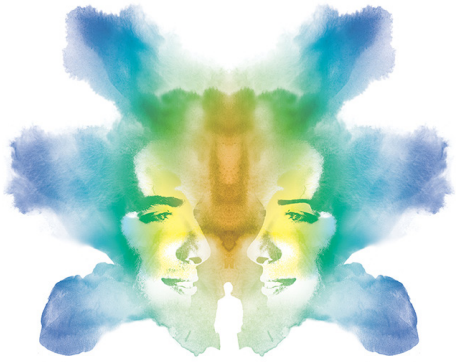
Students in University College Classroom

Key focus: Fostering accessible learning environments

The Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP) is a peer-training program providing pedagogical support to the three campuses of the University of Toronto, through the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation. TATP currently services teaching assistants and graduate students; students currently enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies, regardless of teaching appointment; and members of CUPE Local 3902 Unit 1.

This year the TATP has worked to develop resources and supports for TAs in accessible course delivery. One such resource is Fostering Accessible Learning Environments: A Guide for Teaching Assistants (PDF document), a 13 page guidebook for teaching assistants focused on understanding accessibility services and accommodations processes at the University and on understanding and applying Universal Instructional Design. The guidebook was authored by a Graduate Student TATP staff member and underwent campus consultation.

Mental health



Student health and well-being has become a prime consideration in post-secondary institutions. The University of Toronto serves a large and diverse student, faculty and staff population and is dedicated to fostering an academic community that allows students, as well as faculty and staff, to thrive in their work.

Providing support to our community members so that they may flourish is key to fostering an environment that embraces the broadest range of people.

Over the past year, examples of this work have included confirming the University meets the recommendations made by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) on mental health accommodations for students, the Minding Our Minds conference at Victoria University, open to staff, faculty and students. The School of Graduate Studies, in partnership with Student Life at St. George, launched the Conflict Resolution Centre and expanded its new embedded counselling services at the School of Graduate Studies. Further examples include: the HealthyU initiative from St. George Health & Wellness, which began providing health and well-being support to students; the launch of the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education's Mental Health and Physical Activity Research Centre (MPARC), one of the first research facilities in Canada to integrate the study of physical activity and mental health; the expansion of the Flourish program at UTSC (see Key Focus below), and finally; the growth of Exam Jam to now include UTM Exam Jam, Faculty of Arts and Science Exam Jam, Engineering Exam Jam, and UTSC Exam Jam. In January, the University published a Mental Health Framework Update (PDF Document) providing highlights of the work undertaken as outlined by the Framework launched in 2014.

Key focus: Flourish

Last year we reported on Flourish and its success in receiving funding through the Mental Health Innovation Fund of the then-named Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (now the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development). The program continues to help students learn skills that foster growth by systematically identifying academic and character strengths, while learning effective stress management, improve academic performance and boost overall well-being.

Flourish is a collaborative initiative involving Academic Advising & Career Centre, AccessAbility Services, Athletics & Recreation, Health & Wellness Centre, Office of the Registrar, Office of the Dean (Academic), and the Office of Student Affairs & Services. Working together, their goal is to support student success at UTSC by creating an inclusive learning environment where students: are intellectually and socially engaged; harness their best toward a purpose that they have defined, and; feel they matter.

Summary of Submission from Students for Barrier-free Access

Students for Barrier-Free Access (SBA) is a valuable member of the University of Toronto community with which the AODA Office collaborates on various projects. Below is their submission to our report which highlights another aspect of the work of the University community to create environments that are accessible and inclusive.

Students for Barrier-Free Access (SBA) is a non-profit, levy-funded, organization at the University of Toronto that provides social and advocacy-based programming from a disability justice perspective. One of our main goals is to promote an intersectional understanding of disability. SBA works towards creating an accessible campus and improving student experience. We seek to be an effective stakeholder in the university decision-making process. SBA regularly partners with other campus-based social justice groups and organizations to increase dialogue around disability and equity and to promote systemic change. We are committed to building an inclusive and welcoming community space for students in our Centre and through our events and programming.

Activity Highlights

This year SBA continued to offer regular programming for students with disabilities and community members at U of T. These included American Sign Language Classes, craft classes, as well as participating in Club Days, Frosh Week, the Graduate Students Union Infofair and StreetFest. SBA also expanded skill-building workshops to include sessions which included accessible graphic design, social justice research, resisting ableism, and self-advocacy workshops. SBA collaborated with Accessibility Services at St. George to host a forum for students and organized monthly cooking nights with the Centre for Women and Trans People.

SBA continues to disburse Individual Student Scholarships to support students with disabilities at U of T.

In 2016 SBA expanded its advocacy efforts, which included providing list of recommendations to the Advisory Committee on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence, as well as providing feedback from consultations with members on the Draft Policy on Sexual Violence. SBA also collaborated with campus student unions to consult on increasing the accessibility of their meetings, events and elections. Another project that SBA has had the opportunity to work on this year involves mapping out the accessible computer workstations available for student use on the St. George campus. This project is being carried out in collaboration with the AODA office.

Summary

The broad range of projects and initiatives detailed in this report highlight the participation of the University's community in its commitment to building an accessible working and learning environment for persons with disabilities.

This large community, encompassing various divisions, departments, faculties and geographic locations, engages the delivery of accessible service and creates a system-wide, integrated and comprehensive approach to accessibility. Our goal of making the University of Toronto a leader in assisting the Province of meeting the goals of the AODA is strengthened by our internal and external partnerships.

Over the next year, and with the legislative goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025 in mind, we will continue to target our efforts to best support persons with disabilities at the University. The University as a whole, from institutional commitments to the support and leadership of visionary faculty, staff and students, will continue to be well-placed to fulfill its commitments under the AODA and move beyond compliance.

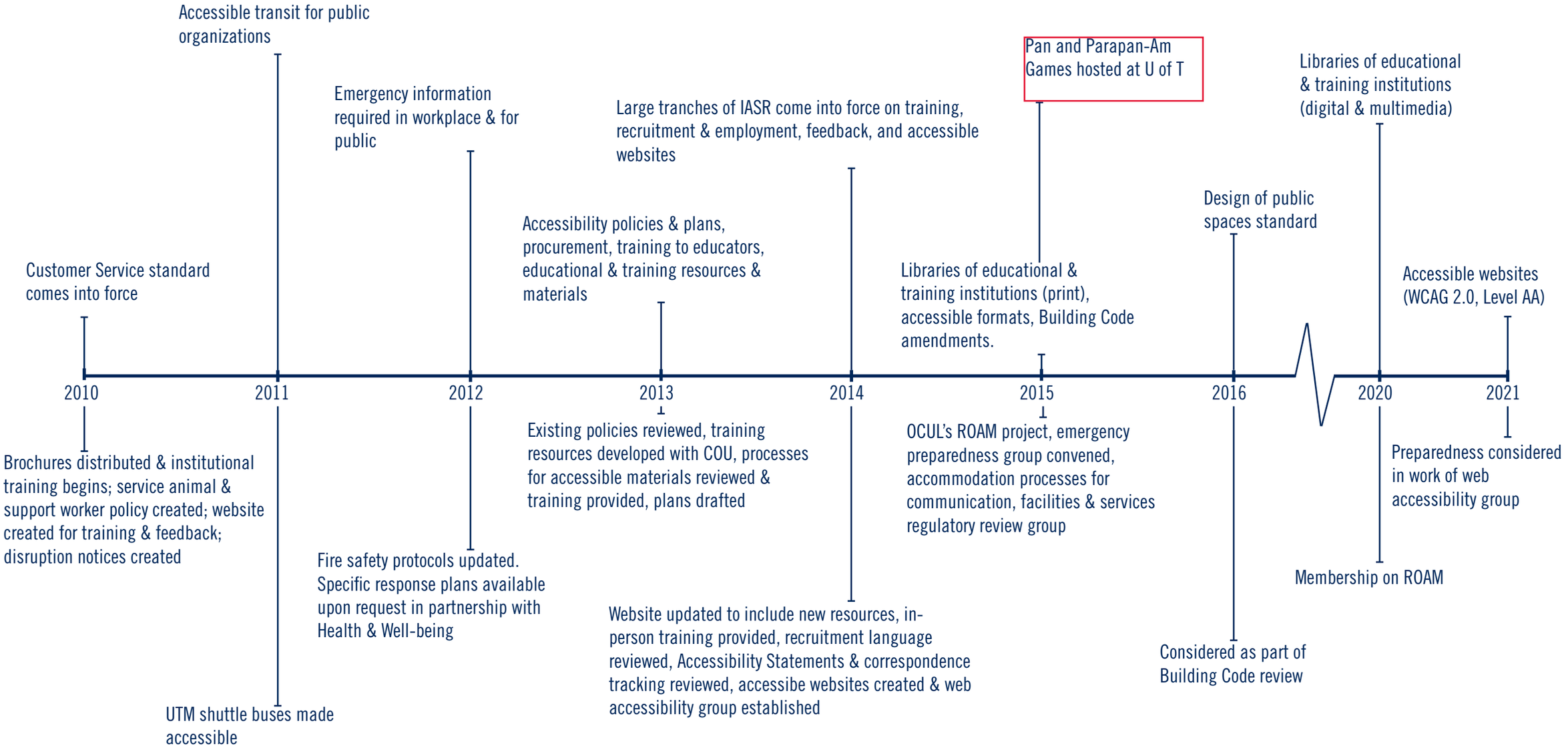
Appendix i - AODA Compliance Timeline

What follows is a graphic representation of the AODA and the University's respective responses. This begins in the past from the point at which the Customer Service Standard came into force, through to present-day, contemporary standards and their concurrent dates, moving towards the future furthest compliance date of 1 January 2021. Those regulation milestones are mirrored by the University's own milestones in how we responded, and will respond, to the legislated expectations.

The purpose here is to provide a snapshot of the work our community has completed, is currently engaged in and what it plans to complete in the future in order to respond to the goals of the AODA and build an accessible working and learning environment for persons with disabilities. A table version of this graphic is provided underneath it.

Appendix ii - AODA Compliance Timeline

Regulation Milestones



UofT Milestones

Appendix iii - AODA Compliance Timeline - Table Format

Date	Regulation Milestones	UofT Milestones
1/1/2010	Section three (policy development), section four (service animals and support workers), section five (notice of temporary disruptions), section six (training for staff), section seven (feedback process), and sections eight and nine (notice of availability of documents) of the Customer Service Standard.	• Customer Service Brochure developed, including description of the Standard, who to contact with concerns, relevant policies, advice around disability disclosure, how disability is defined. • The brochure also lists helpful accommodation tips including some on assistive devices, support persons and animals, food & drink, event location and arrival. • Since 2011 over 12,500 brochures have been distributed across the University and regular in-person training provided.
1/7/2011	Section 76 of IASR (public sector organizations transportation).	• UTM shuttle buses ensured to be accessible.
1/1/2012	Section 13 of IASR (emergency procedures, plans & public safety)	• Fire Safety protocols updated. Specific response plans are available upon request. Performed in partnership with Health & Well-being.
1/1/2012	Section 27 of IASR (workplace emergency response information)	• Specific response plans are available upon request. Performed in partnership with Health & Well-being.
1/1/2013	Section three (accessibility policies)	• Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities: U of T Guidelines • Employment Equity Policy • Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities • Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence • Statement on Human Rights
1/1/2013	Section four (accessibility plans), section five (procurement), , section 15 (educational & training resources), section 16 (training to educators)	• Plans incorporated into process developed for ODA plans. • Relevant policies reviewed • Accessibility services at all three campuses engaged in providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. • Educator Accessibility Resource Kit with COU, training provided across the institution, including via Centre for Teaching Innovation & Support
1/1/2014	All sections of Employment Standard (except s.27) within IASR come into force.	• Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities: U of T Guidelines • Recruitment language reviewed.
1/1/2014	Section six (self-service kiosks), section seven (training), section 11 (feedback), and section 14 (accessible websites, WCAG 2.0, Level A)	• Updated training resources provided to the U of T AODA website. • Accessibility statements updated and communications professional trained on their use. • Homepage updated, new Faculty of Law and Library pages created with accessibility and web accessibility group convened.
2015	Pan and parapan-Am Games hosted at U of T	

Date	Regulation Milestones	UofT Milestones
1/1/2015	Section 12 (accessible formats & communication supports), section 18 (libraries of educational & training institutions (print materials))	• Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities: U of T Guidelines • Accessibility services at three campuses. • Health & Well-being Programs & Services, tri-campus. • Accessibility statements include process for feedback to request accessible formats. • Groups convened to review emergency procedures at all three campuses. • Received OCUL's Report on Accessible Media (ROAM) for non-print materials. • ACE (Accessible Content E-portal) is launched as a Scholars Portal (OCUL) service for alternate formats of print materials.
1/1/2015	Effective date of Ontario Regulation 368/13 filed to amend the new 2012 Building Code, O.Reg. 332/12	• Facilities and services group convened to review updated regulatory requirements with respect to the built environment.
1/1/2016	Section 80 (Design of Public Spaces Standard)	• Facilities and services group convened to review updated regulatory requirements with respect to the built environment.
Feb 2017		• Rollout of new online training module on Customer Service and requirements of Section 7
1/1/2020	Section 18 (libraries of educational & training institutions (digital or multimedia resources))	• ROAM fully implemented
1/1/2021	Section 14 (accessible websites WCAG 2.0, Level AA)	• Considered in scope of activities for web accessibility group.