



# University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUITY

TO: University Affairs Board

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AGENDA ITEM: 6

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Ontarians with Disabilities Act: University of Toronto Accessibility Plan, 2005-06

## **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 University Affairs Board for information because of its responsibility for “equity issues and initiatives” (Terms of Reference, section 5).

## **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

This Plan reports on and builds upon the initiatives that were included in the 2004-05 Plan previously approved by the Governing Council

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

2005-2006 is the third year that the University of Toronto is submitting an Accessibility Plan as required by the Ontarians with Disability Act, (ODA), 2001. 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 annual accessibility plans that are intended to address existing barriers and prevent new barriers from being established. (The Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, AODA, received Royal Assent in June, 2005, however the planning requirements of the ODA, 2001, are still applicable until they have been replaced by standards in the new act).

**HIGHLIGHTS:** (cont'd)

The process of developing the Accessibility Plan is highly inclusive. Under the auspices of the Vice-President Human Resources and Equity, a broadly representative ODA Planning Committee was established consisting of more than fifty members and included faculty, staff, students, and alumni representing a range of stakeholders and constituencies. In the preparation of the 2005-2006 Plan, a greater number of people with disabilities, both visible and invisible, were involved in identifying barriers and initiatives. The work of the Committee was facilitated by Professor Connie Guberman and Kate Lawton, Employment Equity & ODA Officer.

In 2005-2006 an eighth subcommittee addressing “Mental Health”, was added to the seven existing ones: Attitudes, Policy and Procedure, Physical Facilities, Technology, Instructional Design, Student Life, and Human Resources. The Mental Health subcommittee was added in order to more fully address the range of barriers that persons with disabilities face, as defined in the Act, 2001.

Every one of the 43 initiatives identified in the 2004-2005 Plan has been responded to and acted on in the past year. The Plan of 2005-2006 describes the work that was accomplished in each of these initiatives and demonstrates the breadth of commitment across University units and departments. Particular highlights include: a working group updated parking policies and procedures to more thoroughly reflect the needs of persons with disabilities; the University’s Design Standards were reviewed to ensure inclusion of all disabilities; the awareness campaign, “The Face of a Great Community” was launched; and a student-run Access Centre was opened. Seventeen new initiatives were included to be addressed in the forthcoming year.

At its meeting on August 31, 2005, the Accessibility Planning Community unanimously endorsed the 2005-2006 Plan and agreed that in addition to addressing the planned initiatives, the focus in the coming year will be to address the intersection of disability with other equity issues.

The approved Accessibility Plan will be submitted to the Ontario Government for September 30, 2005 and will be made public through the U of T website and through [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

No new resources are required for the 2005-2006 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:**

For information