

Hello BBFWG:

Please find attached the Minutes of the May 26/08 meeting. A big thank you to Judith for volunteering to take the minutes.

I would like to thank all that were able to attend this meeting and for giving your time for this important issue of accessibility of the Brock Learning Commons and Library.

Listed below are the recommendations we feel should be detailed in a letter to the stakeholders of the Learning Commons and Library, Facilities Management, Library, BUSU and Career Services. Prior to sending it out we would appreciate your input and or any additional recommendations you feel we might have missed be sent to us **before June 16/08**.

Accessibility Features in the Learning Commons:

Positive Features

1. The doors and entries to the area are 40" wide (Classrooms, Learning Centre and large Group Study areas) and 36" wide for all other doors, and that entry/exit locations are to be equipped with door operators and the round operator switches as per FADS.
2. Height of counters and that each counter will have a lower desk height point of service.
3. The furniture for students working areas will have a height of 27" and 29" set off the floor for work surfaces and is also to FADS requirements.
4. Classroom furniture has been positioned to allow turning radius for people who use wheelchairs and scooters and all working surfaces allow the person to sit parallel to those work surfaces.
5. The only barrier-free washroom is on the 5th floor of the Library and it will be equipped with a door operator and the round activation switches. This is a recommendation from the Accessibility Audit and prioritized by the committee.
6. It is a compromise that the swing gate security system on the south entrance will not be installed (although the mechanics for this installation are in place) and this is appreciated; however please read the #1 recommendation below for our comments in this area.

Recommendations and or Suggestions for Improvements:

1. The swing gates positioned at the east entrance of the Learning Commons are currently equipped with a spring mechanism that has been excluded from FADS design recommendations. These swing gates are a hazard to people who are blind and their working animals. If the animals are not experienced with these types of gates they will either go under the gates causing the person to crash into them or the working animal will just stop dead - unaware of what action to take causing the person confusion and perhaps cause an accident. Additionally the spring mechanism of the proposed swing gates will present a hazard for people in wheelchairs/scooter and for people of smaller stature, perhaps springing back and injuring them if they are not aware of this spring action.

It is the recommendation of the Brock Barrier Free Working Group that the proposed swing gates be removed from the east entrance and no longer be used in any context in the university for new build or retrofit since they are a accessibility barrier. It is the opinion of this committee that the new Accessible Built Environment Standards of the AODA may not include this type of security barrier, rendering it not acceptable for use and it may have to be removed to meet the new requirements of the AODA Built Environment Regulations.

This committee has presented a request to the authors of FADS that the swing gates be removed from the next update of the FADS and that this recommendation go forth to the AODA Accessible Built Environment Standards Committee.

2. Career Services is in the basement and is only accessible by stairs which makes it impossible for a segment of the university population to access those services. Arrangements have been made to have an

office on the main floor to service people who are not able to access the Career Services, and although well intentioned this is a segregated non-inclusive arrangement - not allowing people to access some of the more vital services provided by this department.

3. The closest accessible washroom is on the 5th floor of the Library. The committee recommends the installation of appropriate signage installed in several strategic areas indicating that there is an accessible washroom on the 5th floor of the Library.

4. There needs to be tactile contrast in the floors in the both entrances to afford a blind person to find their way to the information counters for directions and or information.

5. In the "quick stop and go" standing computer area of the Learning Commons there are no lowered stations for people that use a wheelchair, scooter or people of smaller stature - this excludes them from using this area.

6. It is the recommendation of this committee that the Accessibility Coordinator and the Brock Barrier Free Working Group (BBFWG) be consulted throughout the design process of all new build and retrofit projects at Brock University to ensure the accessibility of the plans before they go to tender. The timelines for this to occur are to be coordinated between FM and the Accessibility Coordinator.

7. The committee recommends that a member of the Library staff be invited to join the BBFWG.