2014 - Brock University Annual Accessibility Status Report

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed into law in 2005. The purpose of the AODA is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025 through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards.

The AODA and its standards apply to Brock University; compliance with AODA regulations is a shared responsibility of all Brock academic and administrative areas.

The regulations now enacted are:

- Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service ("Customer Service Standard")
- Ontario Regulation 191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation ("IASR"), which includes standards in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces
- Ontario Regulation 368/13 - Amendment to Building Code Accessibility Requirements

Brock University filed an Accessibility Compliance Report with the Accessibility Directorate in December 2013 – reporting on the ongoing requirements of the Customer Service Standard (see page 8) and the new IASR requirements to the end of 2013.

Implementation

As required under the IASR, Brock University prepared a multi-year accessibility plan in 2013 that outlines the University’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, S.O. 2005, c.11 and the IASR.

The following status report prepared by the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator outlines our progress to implement the 2013 multi-year accessibility plan, and a look forward to the IASR requirements for 2015. The report also includes an update on other non-regulatory accomplishments, and the ongoing implementation of the Customer Service Standard.

Questions about this report may be directed to Margaret Sanderson, University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator, within the Office of the Vice-Provost &
Implementing the IASR requirements 2011-2013

2011
Transportation - public sector organizations (Part IV Transportation Standards, s. 76)

The University embedded a statement in the accessibility policy that states the intention to provide accessible vehicles or equivalent services, when reasonable notice is given.

2012
Emergency Procedure, Plans and Public Safety Information (Part II, s. 13)
Workplace Emergency Response Information (Part III, s. 27)

Information for Persons Requiring Assistance (PRA) about the availability of emergency plans, procedures and public safety information in accessible formats and individualized workplace emergency response information is currently available at the Fire & Life Safety tab of the Brock Be Safe website located at www.brocku.ca/safety/fire-and-life-safety

2013
Part I General Standards

Establishment of accessibility policies (Part I, s.3)

In December 2013, the Brock University Accessibility (AODA) Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees and replaces the Brock University Provision of University Goods or Services to Persons with Disabilities Policy. This policy includes a statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities, and is created in an accessible format. The policy will be reviewed prior to January 1, 2016.

Accessibility Plans (Part I, s. 4)

The 2013 Brock University Multi-year Accessibility Plan completed in December 2013, outlines the University’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the IASR. The multi-year accessibility plan has been shared with the Brock University Accessibility Advisory Committee (BUAAC) and is created in an accessible format. The document will be reviewed and updated with applicable accessibility committees prior to January 1, 2016.
Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities (Part I, s 5)

An accessible procurement web page has been created with resources to assist faculty and staff with accessible procurement and the updated Brock Purchasing Policy (December 4th, 2013) outlines the responsibilities and authority of Procurement Services to:

“Incorporate where appropriate, accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services or facilities in order to create and maintain an accessible university community as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (the “AODA”).”

All buyers in Procurement services attended an AODA training session in 2013 delivered by the University Accessibility Coordinator and the Human Rights and Equity Officer.

An Accessible Procurement Guide is being developed and prepared for release in 2014 by representatives from the Ontario University Purchasing Management Association (OUPMA) and the Council of Ontario Universities AODA Coordinators Sub-Group.

Self-service kiosks (Part I, s. 6)

Facilities Management has included accessibility design criteria for information systems such as display kiosks, video display terminals, and interpretive/informational panels (Section 4.4.10 Information Systems) within the revised 2014 version of the Brock University Facility Accessibility Designs Standards (FADS). Further information about the revised FADS document will be provided later in this report.

A link to the Georgia Tech Research Institute Accessibility Assistant has also been included on the Brock accessible procurement page. The Accessibility assistant is an information resource that supports the design and procurement of accessible products and service.

Educational and training resources and materials, etc. (Part II, s. 15)

The Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) continues to ensure that all videos in the e-learning initiative are captioned and general accessibility practices are followed in the development of these courses. CPI will provide up to 100 minutes of captioning per academic year for other “blended” or fully online courses.

Accessibility information has been prepared for students and faculty with disabilities who use assistive technology to navigate “Isaak”, Brock University's
Sakai-Based Learning Management System (LMS). This site includes tips and tricks for navigation, known accessibility issues, etc.

In the summer of 2013 Brock commissioned a partial accessibility audit on “Isaak” as part of a full university web accessibility audit. By May 2014, Isaak/Sakai will be upgraded to Sakai Version 2.9. Over a dozen accessibility issues were identified as part of the audit and most will be addressed in the upgrade.

The Manager of eLearning within CPI is Chair of the International Sakai Accessibility Working Group.

More information on the full Brock institutional web accessibility audit will be provided under the section - Accessible Websites and web content (Part II, s. 14) on page 5.

Students who are registered with Services for Students with Disabilities, and have a documented need for printed material to be provided in an alternate format, can make an alternate format request.

Services for Students with Disabilities continues to participate in the Alternate Education Resources Ontario (AERO) project and may request alternate formats of textbooks, etc. on behalf of students with disabilities.

The James A. Gibson Library at Brock is now registered as a library with the Ontario Council of Universities Libraries (OCUL) – ACE (Accessible Content E-Portal) Project. This initiative currently provides students and faculty with reading and print disabilities with barrier free access to books, journals, etc.

University Marketing and Communications has committed to creating an accessible PDF version of The Brock Book for September 2014. Staff attended external training in 2013 on web accessibility and accessible PDF design. In April 2014 another staff member attended accessible Word document and PDF creation.

Training to Educators (Part 11, s. 16)

CPI and the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator are moving forward to adopt educational videos on the topic of accessible teaching and learning developed by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. These are being modified for use at Brock and will be launched in 2014.

CPI has created an Accessible Teaching and Learning web page for Brock faculty and educators. This includes a number of resources including a link to the Council of Ontario Universities accessible campus resource page.
CPI and the Senate Sub-committee on Teaching and Learning Policy have been working to create an accessible course outline template. This template will be available to all instructors at Brock by fall 2014.

Faculty Resources web page has been created by Services for Students with Disabilities to identify a number of resources including the Brock Faculty Resource Guide and information about accessible teaching and learning and accommodated teaching and learning.

Implementing the IASR requirements - 2014

Training (Part I, s. 7)

The Human Rights and Equity Officer and the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator are coordinating the content and delivery of training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Human Resources will keep records of this training. We anticipate training to be completed prior to December 31, 2014.

Part II - Information and Communication Standards
Feedback (Part II, s. 11)

Information Technology Services (ITS) is working with the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator to create an accessible feedback form on the University accessibility page that will be available for use by October 1, 2014.

Accessible Websites and web content (Part II, s. 14)

Brock is required to make their websites and web content accessible according to the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. This requirement applies to all new websites and web content first - beginning in January 1, 2014, and then will apply to ALL websites by January 1, 2021.

Under the leadership of ITS, University Marketing and Communications, and with the support of the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator, an institutional web accessibility audit of Brock web sites and applications was conducted by external auditors in 2013 - Accessibility Advantage. The audit completed in October 2013 included a review of a sample set of pages taken from:

- Various parts of the my.brocku.ca portal
- Brock’s main website (Brocku.ca)
- “Isaak” - Sakai-based LMS
- James A. Gibson Library
- Faculty of Business
- Faculty of Education
With the exception of “Isaak” - Brock University’s Sakai LMS, the 2013 institutional audit found that “web accessibility at Brock is poor and poses major accessibility barriers for some people with disabilities.”

Since this audit report extensive steps have been taken to begin remediation.

These include:

- In January 2014 campus wide training of over 40 Brock staff responsible for information technology and other areas of website and system development at Brock was implemented. Staff attended sessions covering the topics of web accessibility for a technical audience, and web evaluation and implementation. These sessions were delivered by a representative from the Inclusive Design and Research Centre at Ontario College of Art and Design University and funded by University Marketing and Communications and the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator.

- In February 2014 ITS began a series of staff led AODA workshops on issues that were identified in the web accessibility audit.

- Tracking of ITS initiatives to meet AODA compliance is recorded and updated within ITS.

- Requests for more information are being sent to the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator as required.

A strategic, institutional approach to creating an accessible ITS infrastructure is recommended at Brock.

The University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator will work with ITS as the lead department and other stakeholders to develop and implement the first year of this strategy in 2014. The end goal of creating accessible websites and meeting requirements is to create a better user experience for all university stakeholders including people with disabilities. Achieving this goal will be incremental and take a number of years as we move forward to the 2021 requirement.

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1 Staff representatives from Information Technology Services, University Marketing and Communications, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Math and Science, Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, Campus Store, BUSU, James A. Gibson Library, Student Services - Registrar’s Office, International Services, Student Development Centre, & Recruitment and Liaison.
Part III - Employment Standards

The University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator provided feedback in April 2014 to the existing Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities policy currently under review.

The University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator will be coordinating the provision of training to all applicable Human Resources staff on the IASR Employment Standards in 2014.

Following training, any necessary revisions to Brock Human Resources employment policies and/or procedures will then be completed to ensure AODA compliance prior to December 31, 2014.

Progress towards implementing the IASR requirements - 2015-2016

Brock University will also be required to comply with the requirements set out in Part IV.1 of the IASR - Design of Public Spaces Standards as of January 1, 2016 and the new amendment to the Ontario Building Code - Ontario Regulation 368/13 Amendment to Building Code Accessibility Requirements beginning in January 1, 2015.

In order to prepare for the implementation of the standards, Facilities Management is working with Designable Environments to update the existing Brock University Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) in order to incorporate the above requirements. Facilities Management and the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator will release the revised FADS in 2014 and implement relevant training on the requirements for Facilities Management staff and other University stakeholders.

Brock is very progressive in accessibility planning for the built environment and is often cited as an exemplar in this area; for example, with the completion of an Accessibility Audit conducted by The Herrington Group in 2006 and 2012. Since 2007, annual allocations to address accessibility audit priorities have been made possible by the Facilities Renewal Program (FRP) grant provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities along with funding from the University’s operating budget. Year 1 (Fiscal Year 2014/15) of the University’s Long-Term Capital Plan includes funding for accessible built environment projects totaling $245,000 for academic, Department of Residences, and general accessibility built environment requirements.
A look forward towards IASR requirements of 2015

2015 will bring into effect the following additional IASR requirements:

- Accessible formats and communication supports, s. 14
- Educational libraries- print based resources, s. 18
- Producers of educational or training material - textbooks, s. 17

Progress in 2014 is being undertaken to meet the above requirements and they will be reported upon in the 2015 Brock University Annual Accessibility Status Report.

Other non-regulatory accomplishments in 2013 & 2014

A University Accessibility Compliance Framework was implemented in 2013. As a result of this, several AODA committees have been established under the accountability of the applicable senior administrator.

The 2013-2014 accessibility representative to Senate (Professor Lynn McCleary), the Legal Advisor (Office of Research Services), and the University Accessibility (AODA) Coordinator attended and provided feedback as part of the AODA Review session held in Niagara Falls with Dean Mayo Moran of the University of Toronto in March 2014.

Ongoing implementation of the Customer Service Standard

Implementation of the Customer Service Standard continues with the following actions:


- Beginning in July 2013, all new faculty and staff receive an in person AODA training session at Human Resources orientation/on-boarding process or using the Council of Ontario Universities Accessibility Tutorial (AODA).

- February 2013- Addition of wording on all Senate and Board of Trustee committee agendas: Information about meeting accessibility or to request disability accommodation in advance, please contact Darlene St-Denis at dstdenis@brocku.ca or ext. 3334.

- Addition in 2013 of “accessibility” pages in Human Rights and Equity Services and Service Learning.
• October 2013 - Memo sent to all eligible Part-time Instructors, Teaching Assistants, and Lab Demonstrators with request to complete the Council of Ontario Universities Accessibility Tutorial.

• Beginning in October 2013, all new Trustees appointed to the Board of Trustees, receive a 30 min session in the AODA and Accessible Service as part of new Trustee orientation.

• Review and revision of the Brock AODA Training framework for all employee groups, agents, volunteers and others in collaboration with Human Resources began in late 2013.

Brock continues to move forwards in accessibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret J. Sanderson
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Office of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Student Services
Brock University