

St. Lawrence College

Accessibility Annual Report

2013



St. Lawrence
College

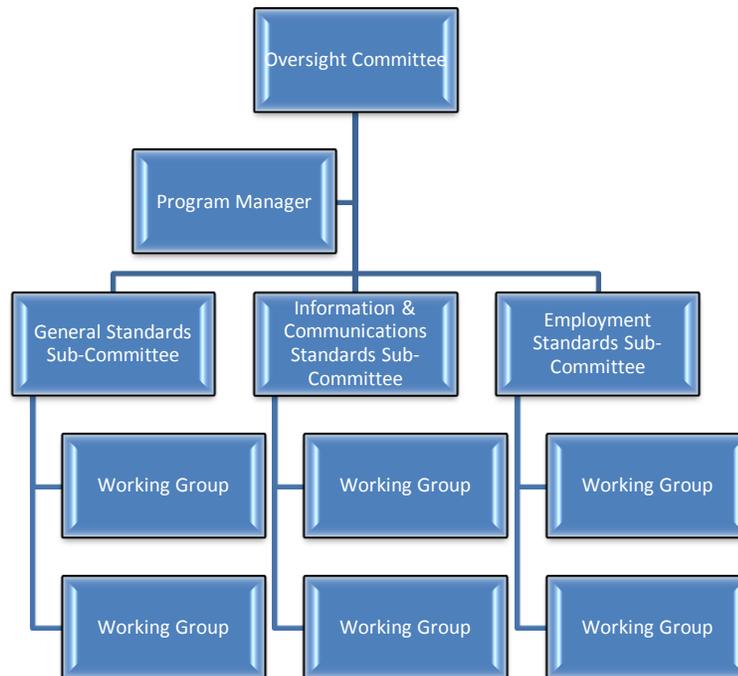
Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

St. Lawrence College is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their independence and participate fully in all areas related to and within the College. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. This will be done by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements as outline under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Introduction

In July of 2011, following the Customer Service Integrated Standard, the Ontario government implemented the final regulations under the AODA Integrated Standards; general standards, information and communication standards, and employment standards. These came with deadlines of compliance which ranged from January 1, 2012 through January 1, 2025.

In 2013, St. Lawrence College revamped its AODA committee. The diagram below shows the result of this planning:



The new structure allowed the college to meet AODA requirements in a more efficient manner, while continuing to meet the obligations of previous deadlines under the AODA (i.e. Customer Service Standard). The working groups were tasked with creating policies and procedures in order to, not only meet the requirements, but to continue the shift in the College's overall approach and commitment to accessibility.

A multi-year accessibility plan was created to outline how the College would approach meeting the requirements of the three standards. The “activities” and “status” section of the plan are maintained by the Working Groups. Drafts of Accessibility Policies are heading into the approval process.

General Standards Sub-Committee

St. Lawrence College’s Purchasing Policy, RFP template, RFQ template were updated to include an AODA clause for all purchases. Updated procurement criteria was made available on the Purchasing website and staff were advised of the policy changes and provided with training and resources to assist them in monitoring compliance. There is on-going planning concerning the roll out of monthly purchasing workshops (for new and existing staff) to continuing introducing AODA compliance information.

A tri-campus audit of all kiosks (such as bank machines, parking access systems, etc.) was conducted to ensure they were compliant under AODA. A multi-year plan is being created in an effort to prevent and remove barriers surrounding self-serve kiosks. The working group began looking at third-party vendors and service contractors and whether their kiosks met the same criteria.

The training module “Understanding Human Rights” was made available to all existing employees, including full-time and part-time staff. Managers were made aware of the new training requirement and asked to support their employees in completing the training in a timely manner. Letters of Offer were updated informing new employees of the required training as a condition of employment. The software used for the training has the ability to generate reports of completed training for tracking purposes.

Information and Communication Standards Sub-Committee

Feedback on accessibility can be given in the following ways; comment cards (available online and in hard copy), by mail, by e-mail, by phone, or in person. The AODA Program Coordinator has been designated as the point of contact at the college where the initial feedback is received. The information is then shared with the appropriate department or contact at the College. Signs will be put throughout the College to ensure the public is also made aware of how to provide feedback.

All areas of the College are being encouraged to create conversion-ready documents and electronic communications as part of their general professional practice. Training sessions on creating accessible documents are being offered to all employees groups. Internal resources from the Counselling & AccessAbility Office are available to support where needed. Instructional videos are being created to provide employees with further support when creating documents.

St. Lawrence College has a new website that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Project plans for new sites/web content that require (at a minimum) WCAG Level A compliance will be deployed in 2014.

Tri-campus information sessions were held to advise faculty of the following:

- 15 (1) requirements
- overview on how accommodation reports are prepared (AccessAbility Services)
- implications for faculty
- tools and resources available to assist faculty in the creation of accessible/conversion-ready educational materials

An inventory of Student Records was completed and there is now a process for students to receive records and educational material in an accessible format in a timely manner upon request. On-going awareness and training will keep AODA compliance in the forefront of academic planning with the intention of it becoming “second nature” or ingrained in the College’s culture.

The Training to Educators training module was introduced to existing faculty and included in the Letter of Offer for new faculty hires. The information is held in the online software HRDownloads from which reports of who has completed the module can be generated for tracking purposes.

Employment Standards Sub-Committee

Current recruitment and selection documents have been updated in order to integrate AODA legislation/language. Internal/external job postings inform candidates of inclusive hiring practices and offer a point of contact should they require accommodation throughout the hiring process, including the interview process. Statements are also included in e-mail confirmations and phone scripts used to contact applicant for interviews.

Each semester, College employees are sent a reminder to complete an Employee Emergency Needs Survey should they require an individualized Emergency Response Plan. This form is also included in hiring packages and will become part of an annual performance review process. Employees who identify the need for an individualized plan are contacted by security to create a plan specific to their needs.

A point of contact (AODA Program Coordinator) for employees has been established within Human Resources and Organizational Development in order to inform all existing employees of how to access support. The Performance Management and Return to Work policies were updated to include language that met the AODA requirements. Career Development and Redeployment statements were also written to ensure accessibility needs will be met if necessary.

Continuing the Commitment

In 2014, the Oversight Committee, sub-committees, and working groups will resume their efforts towards meeting the next round of legislated deadlines under the AODA. The College has already begun, and will continue to, look at ways to not only meet the requirements, but become an organization known for their commitment to being an inclusive, accessible employer and organization.