University of the Fraser Valley
First Annual Accessibility Report 2023-2024

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is situated in the traditional territory of the Stó:lō peoples (people of the river), who have occupied the land long before Canada was formed. The Stó:lō have an intrinsic relationship with S'ólh Tém:éxw (Our Sacred Land) and spoke Halq'eméylem. UFV supports and honours the contribution that Indigenous peoples have made and continue to make to our community. Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning is important to the university.

Executive Summary

In June 2021, the *Accessible British Columbia Act* ("the Act") became law and established a legal framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities. The new legislation is a significant step in the journey to becoming a truly accessible province. Subsequently, the provincial government announced that all publicly funded post-secondary institutions will be required to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and establish a feedback mechanism by September 2023.

The first annual Accessibility Report highlights the progress made on the priority areas identified for UFV's Phase 1: Accessibility Plan from September 2023 to June 2024.

The priority areas are as follows:
- Launch the Accessibility Committee
- Establish a baseline for UFV's accessibility work
- Community Consultation and Engagement
- Capacity Building: Preparing for Change

The key goals for this initial phase of implementing the Act are to ensure a strong foundation on which to build and to ensure ongoing, meaningful consultation with persons with disabilities. The provincial government is currently developing province-wide standards that all institutions covered by the Act will need to meet.

Our work to date

Launch the Accessibility Committee ("the AC")

Priority Area	Status	Notes
Send out a call for expressions of interest to the UFV Community	Done	The call was sent out from September 11-29, 2023 after extensive work by the Accessible BC Act Steering Committee ("ABCASC") to develop draft terms of reference, identify membership, and create a process and set of principles for reviewing expressions of interest.
Once the committee is formed, provide an orientation on the *Accessible British Columbia Act* ("the Act") and other relevant information.	Done	The first meeting occurred in November 2023 and included an orientation on the Act, the work to date of the ABCASC, and discussion about the role of the AC. The committee is chaired by Kyle Baillie and Luisa Giles as Vice Chair.
Establish a community agreement and a common baseline understanding of associated terminology	Done	Led by Kyle Baillie, Chair, and informed by Sundeep Hans, careful work was done to co-create a community agreement with AC members.
Develop a work plan and guiding principles.	No progress	With the province having not yet announced accessibility standards, the AC has been focused on understanding and exploring possibilities for their role; providing feedback to the ABCASC; sharing experiences; and building understanding of the broader context of their work – both at UFV and beyond.
Establish a conduit for AC communications, recommendations, and questions back to the Accessible BC Steering Committee ("the ABCASC").	Done	The chair of the AC reports back to the ABCASC regularly and shares information from the ABCASC with the AC.
Review the AC Terms of Reference and recommend changes to the ABCASC	Ongoing	Terms of Reference is a standing item on the AC agenda.
Provide feedback on the Accessibility Plan.	Ongoing	
Provide opportunities for discussion, self-evaluation, and	Ongoing	

Priority Area	Status	Notes
feedback related to the launch and work of the AC.		

Establish a baseline for UFV's accessibility work

Priority Area	Status	Notes
Identify institutional policies, initiatives, and projects that are already developed or underway.	Progress made	• Institutional policies • EDI Action Plan • Strategic Enrollment Management Plan • Integrated Strategic Plan • 2024/25 Consolidated Budget Plan • *Transitioning to a Successful Career Start: A "Human Library" of CAS-registered Students' Lived Experiences*, Centre for Experiential and Career Education, *2022* • *Report on Academic Advising Centre: Website and Accessibility* by Liam Gilchrist-Blackwood, April 6, 2023. • *How Age-Friendly is UFV? An Evaluation of Current Gaps and Future Directions*, CERA, June 2022
Identify achievements to date.	Progress made	• UFV Athletics Centre (Building E) renovation • Building D3 renovation • Academic Success Centre launched Accessibility Lab • Teaching and Learning resources for accessibility and equity, including workshops and videos
Identify barriers found to date based on audits and/or research conducted at UFV.	Progress made	Examples of barriers identified and have been resolved or in progress of being addressed: • Accessible parking in CEP Lot 5 blocked off for event (resolved) • Automatic door openers non-functional (in progress) • Accessibility of the library search engine (resolved) • UFV website branding colours not meeting colour contrast recommended ratios (in progress) Other barriers identified through the Accessibility and Disability survey include systemic, attitudinal, information and communication barriers.

Gather existing and new data to inform understanding of current practices, experiences, gaps, etc., encompassing all areas of the institution.	Progress made	• Research conducted in 2023 looked at Accessibility at UFV and has expanded to look at both Trades students and accessibility and Indigenous views on disability and accessibility. • Work done on reviewing accessibility standards across the country, focusing on provinces that have accessibility legislation, to understand and anticipate what we might see in BC. • Research underway on understanding the experience of students with disabilities moving from K-12 to post-secondary and of students returning to education after a long gap. • Panel discussion with Michelle Gehring and four Grade 12 students on individual education plans (IEP) who were PSI-bound last year for the Accessibility Awareness Event on June 1, 2023. • Surveyed employees and students on Accessibility and Disability at UFV in 2024. • Together Empowered: Intersectionality and the UFV Student Experience Survey, currently being conducted by the Community Health and Social Innovation Hub at UFV. The survey asks about student experiences of belonging and connectedness at UFV.
Identify improvements that could be made to policies, procedures and practices related to accessibility.	Progress made	• Early discussions about the need to completely revise Policy 93: Accommodation of Students with Disabilities, moving towards an accessibility policy. • Discussion about the need to update Policy 46: Instructional Responsibilities to include responsibilities related to inclusive and accessible teaching. • Two sessions with HR, in advance of forthcoming accessible employment standards, to promote thinking and engagement about accessibility for applicants and employees.
Monitor, respond to, collect, and share feedback provided	Ongoing	UFV launched the Accessibility feedback mechanisms in September 2023. Barriers identified to date are as follows:

through the feedback mechanisms.		- Attitudinal (2) - Built environment (6) - Information/communication (2) - Technology (1) The AC has also become a place where feedback on barriers is provided and addressed.
Analyze information gathered and share findings with the UFV community.	Progress made	Survey results on accessibility and disability were shared as part of the educational campaign launched on social media for AccessAbility Week 2024.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Priority Area	Status	Notes
Develop a communication/engagement framework to guide community communication and consultation to ensure transparency in the process.	Progress made	- Accessible UFV website created. - Communication platforms used to communicate have been through UFV Info, UFV Now, TLC Newsletter, social media, and Vice President, Students weekly Newsletter. - Direct link on the UFV homepage to the Accessible UFV website.
Provide multiple avenues for community consultation and engagement.	Progress made	- Feedback mechanisms – online form, phone, email. - Engagement and consultation with the AC.
Learn from members of the UFV community about barriers to accessibility through formal and informal means, such as focus groups, interviews, climate surveys/barrier surveys, sharing circles, conversations, etc.	Progress made	Conducted an anonymous Survey on Accessibility and Disability at UFV in 2024.
Determine an approach for assessing the effectiveness of the community consultation framework.	No progress	
Analyze information gathered and share findings with the UFV community.	Progress made	Used the results from the Survey on Accessibility and Disability at UFV to inform the development of an Accessibility education campaign that was launched during AccessAbility Week 2024.

Capacity Building: Preparing for Change

Priority Area	Status	Notes
Develop a communications plan that amplifies the voices of those with disabilities to increase awareness at UFV about accessibility issues.	No progress	• Those with disabilities see "First Voice" as a priority. We need to hear directly from those with disabilities. This includes committee work, consultations, etc. While we have made progress here in ensuring First Voice on the Accessibility Committee, we have not yet developed a communication plan related to broader awareness at UFV. • A communications plan should focus on language as a basic first step. For example, it's really important to embed strengths-based language in framing accessibility needs in order to foster an inclusive work and learning environment.
Encourage personal and social responsibility and collective problem solving around achieving UFV's accessibility goals.	Ongoing	
Identify, create, and promote opportunities for learning about accessibility and accessibility issues through training and information-sharing.	Progress made	• Workshops and sessions offered by TLC on accessible and inclusive teaching, UDL, tools like Blackboard Ally that help improve content accessibility. • The Teaching and Learning Centre also develops and posts accessibility-related videos on the UFV MediaSpace. • During this year's AccessAbility Week (May 26 – June 1), an interactive campaign was launched through UFV's social media channels and on the Accessible UFV webpage. The goal of the campaign was to raise awareness, encourage learning, and commit to taking small but tangible actions to further our efforts in fostering an inclusive and accessible work and learning environment at UFV. • HR promoted opportunities to learn about accessibility and inclusion during AccessAbility Week.

Identify resources that can support UFV's collective and individual work and make them widely accessible.	Progress made	• Resources are available on the Accessible UFV webpage and updated regularly. • Resources available through the Teaching and Learning Centre • Connected to the Canadian Accessibility Network via Dr. Wideman, who are working on the creation and a distribution of guides on ableism and on an engagement guide – awaiting the final version of these resources. • Shared resources on accessible communications, including web communications, with Marketing and Communications and with other areas who regularly communicate on behalf of UFV. • Monthly engagement with the PSI Accessibility Network. Supported by the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills, The Accessibility Network brings PSI accessibility leads together, with sessions alternating between education and training and group discussions on matters related to accessibility and the implementation of the Accessible BC Act within post-secondary communities.
Consider mechanisms for assessing the outcomes of capacity building work.	No progress	