ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2025 - 2028

I'm proud to share the 2025-2028 update of Mount Saint Vincent University's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. As a university community, we are deeply committed to leading the way in eliminating systemic barriers that hinder those from full participation in university life. This commitment extends to all faculty, staff, and students—especially those from equity denied groups. We are committed to become a safer and more welcoming place and to be known for our efforts to provide the supports and environment necessary for everyone to thrive. We firmly believe that expanding access to education is essential to building a stronger, more inclusive community.

We made meaningful progress in our 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, as we worked towards creating a more accessible campus for our community and beyond. We are a leader in Universal Design for Learning, we have completed an Accessibility Audit of campus with the recommendations guiding our campus planning and capital investment, and we are a Dimensions participating institution. In addition, the MountAbility program (Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Program) continues to welcome students, and our Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to oversee and monitor institutional accessibility goals. As we look towards the next three years with this plan, there is still work to be done in improving accessibility in all facets of our operation of MSVU.

I want to thank the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their leadership in developing this plan. Your dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated. I also want to thank the members of the MSVU community who have continuously come together to work towards achieving the goals and objectives laid out in the previous plan. I'm confident that as we begin our work on the current goals that we will meet those outlined in this plan and continue to advance accessibility in meaningful ways across the MSVU Community.

Dr. Joël Dickinson
President & Vice-Chancellor
Mount Saint Vincent University

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MSVU ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2025 - 2028 REQUIREMENT AND PURPOSE

The *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017: An Act Respecting Accessibility* in Nova Scotia, recognizes accessibility as a human right and has a goal of an accessible province by 2030. Through the development of standards and other initiatives, the legislation aims to remove barriers to participation in:

- Education
- Employment
- Transportation
- Delivery and Receipt of Goods and Services
- Information and Communication
- Built Environment

Under the Act, Nova Scotia's universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) are prescribed as public sector bodies. This means all Nova Scotian post-secondary institutions must:

1) develop multi-year accessibility plans,
2) establish an accessibility advisory committee,
3) monitor and evaluate these plans every three years and provide a triennial update and,
4) comply with accessibility standards when they are developed.

The aim is to remove barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing post-secondary education in Nova Scotia and working at our post-secondary institutions.

Access to education is a human right, and Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector is committed to ensuring access for persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility. Accessibility is a collaborative practice, requiring participation from all constituency groups - departments, faculty, staff, students, and partners. It requires understanding the barriers persons with disabilities face accessing education and committing to prevent and remove them through the proactive design and revision of programs, policies, practices, services, and infrastructure.

The MSVU Accessibility Plan provides direction on how the MSVU Community will work to remove even more barriers and support our staff, students, and visitors to our community. The purpose of this plan is to work toward full and equitable access to education, programs, and services through a collaboratively developed and values-based commitment to accessibility that prioritizes institutional accountability within a human rights and disability justice framework. Through this plan, we will continue to create spaces where diversity is our strength.

While this update is being completed on a three-year cycle, MSVU's Accessibility Plan is designed as a living guide to supporting our commitments around accessibility. It will evolve with the needs of our community and new developments in our understanding of best practices and **the goals and strategies have been designed to reflect our aspirational vision for a fully accessible campus, which we recognize will take longer than the time period for this plan to achieve** new accessibility standards in support of the Accessibility Act become available. Enhancing our monitoring, evaluation, and reporting commitments remain a key priority for MSVU as we foster accountability and sustainability in our accessibility work.

The 2025-28 plan is MSVU's second iteration of its Accessibility Plan. The updated plan highlights the key achievements from the 2022-25 period and updates its goals and commitments to reflect ongoing priorities. It is informed by the continued work of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, including the Accessibility Standards and Standard Development Committee reports, which have been released since the development of the original plan.

INTRODUCTION

Mount Saint Vincent University has a long tradition of social justice and inclusion and is committed to a campus community that welcomes all learners. As we continue to prioritize Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA), we recognize that successful learning, living, and employment are the result of a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, employees, faculty, and senior administrators. Our culture of inclusiveness requires the recognition and support of everyone on campus to support initiatives that remove barriers to accessibility. The 2025-28 Accessibility Plan builds off the 2022-2025 plan which was developed by the MSVU Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), composed of students, staff, faculty, and community members and working groups in each area of commitment.

The focus of the AAC is continuing the work to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers experienced by people with disabilities in post-secondary education – not limited to program, services, attitudinal, structural, systemic and built environment. This document outlines the overarching goals for improving accessibility at MSVU so we can better meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.

MSVU is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility Act, 2017*. This updated accessibility plan provides a refreshed overview of the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. We commit to fostering a culture of accessibility, and encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers to education. It is essential to include first voice perspectives and lived experiences of people with disabilities in the implementation of this plan, actions, and decision-making processes through an intersectional and culturally responsive approach.

Our work across these priority areas will be guided by the following principles:

- **Human Rights:** We uphold accessibility as a fundamental human right and model disability justice in our work. We prioritize the social model of disability, recognizing disability as impacted by environmental, structural, and attitudinal barriers that limit the full participation of persons with disabilities.

- **First Voice:** We prioritize first voices in our work to advance accessibility, recognizing the lived experiences and expertise of students and employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

- **Diversity:** We understand the diversity of disabilities and how other identities, circumstances, and experiences intersect and impact accessibility.

- **Inclusion:** We are committed to advancing our efforts to create equitable and inclusive learning and working environments, where students and employees are treated with respect and dignity.

- **Collaboration:** We share information and promote collaboration and coordination across our university and with our sister institutions, as well as among other like-minded organizations, communities, and initiatives. Students, employees, and external service providers work collaboratively to foster learning environments, experiences, and services that create opportunities for success for people with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

- **Innovation:** We understand that being innovative, proactive, and flexible are essential to advancing accessibility.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive Sponsor:	Lori Francis, Provost & Vice-President, Academic
Co-Chairs:	Chris Hattie, Associate Vice-President, People & Culture Gloria Johnson, Manager, Accessibility Services

Accountability Partners:
Accountability partners are responsible for providing progress updates for their pillar at each AAC meeting, coordinating their work with other accountability partners, and chairing meetings of their advisory group 1-2 times per year.

Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation	Chris Hattie, Associate Vice-President, People & Culture Gloria Johnson, Manager, Accessibility Services
Awareness, Communication, & Capacity Building	Gillian Batten, Director, Communications
Teaching, Learning, & Research	Emily Ballantyne, Acting Director, Teaching and Learning Centre
Delivery of Goods & Services	Keltie Jones, Associate Vice-President, Student Experience
Employment	Kim Peitzsche, Director, Human Resources
Built Environment & Transportation	Tom Strapps, Director, Facilities Management Ryan Walker, Acting Security Manager

Members at Large:
Members at large support the work of accountibility partners and contribute to the overall mandate of the committee.

Oluwatomisin Adesina, Student Representative
Delvina Bernard, EDIA Advisor
Amy Braye, Manager, International Education Centre
Justin Creamer, Digital Content Advisor
David Dahms, Technician (Art Gallery)
Sarah DesRoches, Accessibility Advisor
Stephanie Hale-Wills, Registrar
Caelin Lloyd, Student Representative
Mary MacDonald, Community Representative
Leigh-Ann MacFarlane, Educational Developer
Dustin McGillivary, Safety Officer
Christine McNeille, Manager, Web & System Services
Tammy Mercer, Human Resources & Diversity Advisor
Meagan Pottie, Coordinator, Library Information Services
Cornelia Schneider, Associate Professor (Education)
Elena Tran, Manager, Online Learning
Johan Woodworth, Assistant Professor (Education)
Tianyuan Yu, Associate Professor (Business & Tourism)

Committee Resource:	Sarah Bond MacDonald, Accessibility Advisor Suzie Cleversey, Administrative Assistant Dinesh Kumar, Accessibility Advisor

HIGHLIGHTED ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the implementation period of the 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, MSVU made meaningful progress towards creating a more accessible campus across each of the eight pillars. Highlights of these achievements include:

Awareness & Capacity Building

- The University launched an annual Town Hall event that provides updates on the University's process towards the accessibility plan, and gathers first-voice input on accessibility initiatives.

- Starting in 2025, MSVU is the host institution for the Post-Secondary Accessibility Capacity Building Collaboration, which will lead initiatives to enhance cross-institutional collaboration on accessibility across.

Teaching, Learning, & Research

- The MountAbility Program continues to welcome students with diverse abilities to explore academic interests, engage in lifelong learning, and make meaningful connections within the MSVU community.

- The Teaching & Learning Centre has undertaken significant work to promote and develop inclusive teaching practices and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training for faculty.

- As a pilot member of the Dimensions Program and a member of the first phase of its Recognition program, MSVU is a part of national conversations and initiatives on accessibility.

- Moodle, the University's online learning platform, was upgraded to be more navigable and better align with accessibility standards.

Megan Pegg, graduate of MSVU's MountAbility program. Megan also created the stole (worn here) that will adorn future MountAbility graduates.

Information and Communications

- An accessibility audit was completed of the MSVU website to assess WCAG 2.0 AA compliance and the recommendations are now being actioned.

- The University's new inclusive language guide includes a section on ableist language.

- The Library is conducting an ongoing audit of LibGuides and Open Educational Resources (OER) to promote accessibility of online resources.

Delivery of Goods & Services

- Mental Health First Aid training continues to be offered to all staff multiple times per year.

- Enhancements are being made to campus wayfinding and signage. New signage is being designed to meet accessibility standards, including braille and high contrast.

Employment

- Updates to University faculty and staff recruitment processes were implemented to enhance accessibility, including offering accommodations to all candidates when interviews are being arranged.

- A new position was established in Human Resources to provide improved coordination of accommodation requests and support other accessibility initiatives.

Built Environment & Transportation

- An Accessibility Audit of the campus was completed with recommendations now informing campus planning and capital investment.

- Two Facilities Management employees completed Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification.

- Enhancements to the Facilities Management workorder system were made to facilitate reporting and addressing accessibility barriers.

- Renovations were completed to Assisi, a student residence, to provide accessible living spaces, washrooms, and laundry facilities.

- Accessibility enhancements to the Rosaria-Evaristus tunnel were completed and a lift was added from the tunnel to the ground floor of Evaristus.
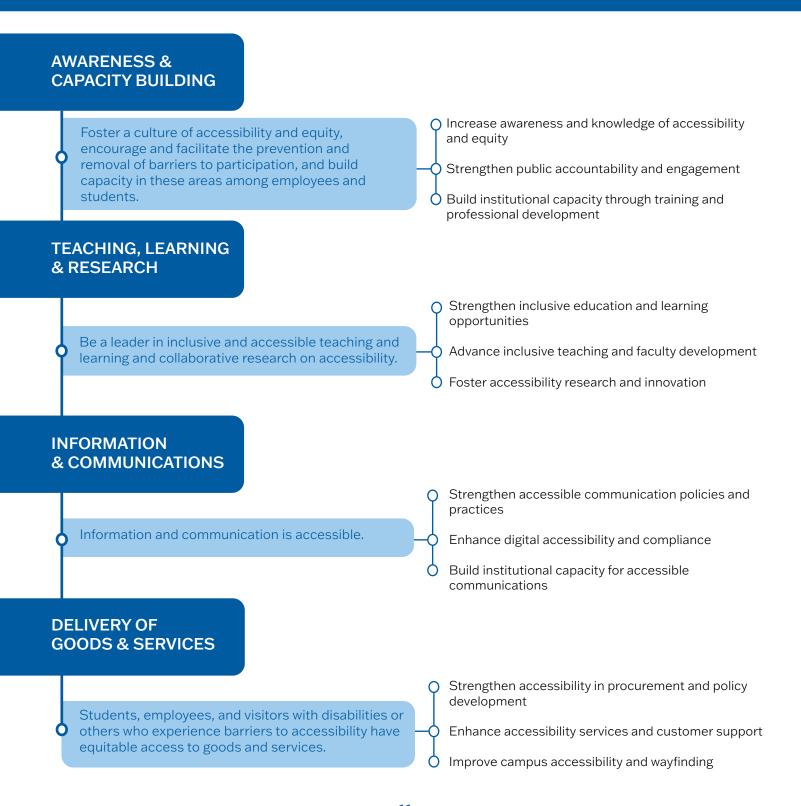
Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

- A new governance framework was developed for the Accessibility Advisory Committee to enhance accountability and coordination around plan commitments.

- MSVU played a leadership role in the development of the evaluation portion of the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework.

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to oversee and monitor institutional accessibility goals, including supporting the development of the updated Accessibility Plan.

While we recognize that a number of the goals set in the 2022–25 plan have not been fully completed or have been delayed, some of these are carried forward to the 2025–28 plan. Others have been adapted based on what we learned from the first plan and to better reflect the current context.

AREAS OF COMMITMENT

Consistent with the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Framework 2020, MSVU's original Accessibility Plan was designed around identifying commitments to improving accessibility within 8 areas of focus. The 2025-28 plan maintains these areas of focus, while also establishing specific strategies under each goal. A summary of the areas of focus, goals, and strategies is as follows:

AWARENESS & CAPACITY BUILDING

Foster a culture of accessibility and equity, encourage and facilitate the prevention and removal of barriers to participation, and build capacity in these areas among employees and students.

- Increase awareness and knowledge of accessibility and equity
- Strengthen public accountability and engagement
- Build institutional capacity through training and professional development

TEACHING, LEARNING & RESEARCH

Be a leader in inclusive and accessible teaching and learning and collaborative research on accessibility.

- Strengthen inclusive education and learning opportunities
- Advance inclusive teaching and faculty development
- Foster accessibility research and innovation

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Information and communication is accessible.

- Strengthen accessible communication policies and practices
- Enhance digital accessibility and compliance
- Build institutional capacity for accessible communications

DELIVERY OF GOODS & SERVICES

Students, employees, and visitors with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility have equitable access to goods and services.

- Strengthen accessibility in procurement and policy development
- Enhance accessibility services and customer support
- Improve campus accessibility and wayfinding

EMPLOYMENT

Be an accessible and equitable employer, support the careers of employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility, and that reflect the diversity of Nova Scotians.

- Strengthen inclusive employment policies and practices
- Build capacity and awareness for inclusive workplaces
- Improve workplace accessibility and assistive technology

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation provided to employees and students is accessible.

- Enhance accessible and inclusive campus transportation
- Improve campus accessibility and wayfinding
- Strengthen safe and accessible campus navigation

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Buildings and outdoor spaces on campus provide meaningful access for intended users.

- Assess and address campus-wide accessibility needs
- Strengthen emergency preparedness and communication
- Build capacity and secure resources for accessibility improvements

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Regularly monitor and evaluate progress to remove barriers to accessibility, measure the impact on students and employees, and continue to identify opportunities to improve access to education

- Establish governance and oversight for accessibility
- Strengthen the accessibility plan, strategic planning, and evaluation
- Secure and allocate resources for accessibility initiatives

AWARENESS & CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL - *Foster a culture of accessibility and equity, encourage and facilitate the prevention and removal of barriers to participation, and build capacity in these areas among employees and students.*

STRATEGY 1: Increase Awareness and Knowledge of Accessibility and Equity

- Launch and implement an Access by Design 2030 Awareness Campaign to educate employees and students on accessibility, equity, human rights, disability rights, and barriers to participation in post-secondary education.

- Develop and execute a communications plan that delivers targeted messaging, engages key audiences, and aligns with the Accessibility Directorate to reinforce post-secondary sector obligations under the *Accessibility Act*.

- Organize and promote provincial post-secondary accessibility events, including conferences, speaker series, and awareness campaigns to strengthen community engagement and knowledge-sharing.

STRATEGY 2: Strengthen Public Accountability and Engagement

- Maintain and update MSVU's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan webpage with clear, accessible information on institutional accessibility goals, ensuring regular updates and a structured three-year review cycle.

- Host regular Accessibility engagement sessions for the MSVU community, collect first-voice and lived-experience insights, and guide ongoing efforts to eliminate barriers while monitoring progress across campus areas.

STRATEGY 3: Build Institutional Capacity through Training and Professional Development

- Continue to offer training opportunities focused on accessibility, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and the Duty to Accommodate to support faculty and staff understanding of best practices in inclusive education.

- Encourage faculty, staff, and administrators to participate in accessibility-focused professional development, reinforcing our institutional commitment to accessibility excellence.

TEACHING, LEARNING & RESEARCH

GOAL - *Be a leader in inclusive and accessible teaching and learning and collaborative research on accessibility.*

○ **STRATEGY 1:** Strengthen Inclusive Education and Learning Opportunities

- Actively promote the MountAbility (IPSE) inclusive education program, inviting students with diverse abilities to participate in academic exploration, lifelong learning, and community engagement at MSVU.

- Conduct regular reviews of educational support services, identifying and removing barriers to accommodations, academic resources, and student wellness.

- Explore the viability of targeted transition programs for students with disabilities, creating clear pathways from high school to post-secondary education, employment, community involvement, or further studies.

○ **STRATEGY 2:** Advance Inclusive Teaching and Faculty Development

- Deliver comprehensive Universal Design for Learning (UDL) faculty training, equipping educators with strategies to reduce barriers and apply equitable teaching and assessment methods.

- Establish and facilitate communities of practice to embed UDL, culturally responsive pedagogy, and learning equity in teaching.

○ **STRATEGY 3:** Foster Accessibility Research and Innovation

- Continue to meet commitments under the Dimensions Program, including those that advance research and scholarship in accessibility and disability studies.

- Strengthen collaborative accessibility research initiatives across Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions, fostering interdisciplinary partnerships and shared innovation.

- Improve and streamline processes for creating and integrating accessible teaching, learning, and research materials, with a focus on expanding the use of accessible technology in educational environments.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL - *Information and communication is accessible.*

STRATEGY 1: Strengthen Accessible Communication Policies and Practices

- Develop and implement an accessible communication policy for the creation of inclusive, multi-format, and accessible materials across all university platforms.

- Create and distribute a best practice guideline for accessible document reviews across all departments.

- Conduct annual reviews and updates of content creation guidelines to maintain accessibility best practices across university communication platforms, including the website, social media, and the learning management system.

STRATEGY 2: Enhance Digital Accessibility and Compliance

- Continue to implement recommendations to align with WCAG 2.2 AA standards.

- Implement ongoing training and internal content reviews, from the audit of our university platforms and monitor, improve, and maintain digital accessibility across university platforms.

STRATEGY 3: Build Institutional Capacity for Accessible Communications

- Develop accessibility standards that inform all campus-wide communications.

- Develop and launch an education and awareness campaign to actively promote accessible communication practices and encourage the consistent creation of multi-format materials.

- Provide staff responsible for key communication platforms appropriate tools and training to maintain accessibility and inclusivity in all university content and digital interactions.

DELIVERY OF GOODS & SERVICES

GOAL - *Students, employees, and visitors with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility have equitable access to goods and services.*

STRATEGY 1: Strengthen Accessibility in Procurement and Policy Development

- Develop an accessible procurement guideline to meet accessibility requirements, incorporating standardized accessibility language, criteria, and expectations into all tenders for goods and services.

STRATEGY 2: Enhance Accessibility Services and Customer Support

- Create and execute an action plan to enhance public service areas on campus to provide a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible customer service experience.

- Further enhance MSVU's Accessible Learning Centre as a centralized office to enhance accessibility support services, particularly in accommodated testing and student accommodations.

- Design and implement accessibility-focused customer service training for all MSVU employees, integrating Mental Health First Aid and other relevant programs to improve service delivery.

STRATEGY 3: Improve Workplace Accessibility and Assistive Technology

- Utilize existing campus planning and infrastructure audit processes to continue to identify and reduce accessibility barriers.

- Conduct routine evaluations and upgrades to campus wayfinding and signage, promoting clear identification of accessible areas, features, and service locations for students, staff, and visitors.

- Develop, implement, and communicate an animal on campus policy.

EMPLOYMENT

GOAL - *Be an accessible and equitable employer, support the careers of employees with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility, and ensure our employees reflect the diversity of Nova Scotians.*

STRATEGY 1: Strengthen Inclusive Employment Policies and Practices

- Develop and implement an Employment, Disability, and Accommodations Policy to support inclusive and adaptable accommodations and provide access to assistive tools, offer supportive leave practices, and include structured return-to-work plans.

- Revise staff and faculty recruitment processes to identify and address barriers and actively promote the hiring, career growth, and advancement of individuals with disabilities and those facing accessibility barriers.

- Establish a structured employee feedback system on accessibility in the Climate Survey to continuously assess, address, and improve workplace inclusivity.

STRATEGY 2: Build Capacity and Awareness for Inclusive Workplaces

- Deliver training for new and existing staff and faculty on employee rights, responsibilities, accommodations, and the duty to accommodate.

- Partner with community organizations and disability-focused groups to provide capacity-building initiatives for employees and senior leadership, fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture that prioritizes recruitment, retention, and advancement of employees with disabilities.

STRATEGY 3: Improve Workplace Accessibility and Assistive Technology

- Invest in and catalogue assistive technology to enhance employment accessibility and productivity for people with disabilities.

- Identify and address accessibility in employment-related documents.

- Standardize and implement document accessibility protocols, so that staff can request and receive workplace documents in multiple accessible formats.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL - *Transportation provided to employees and students is accessible.*

STRATEGY 1: Enhance Accessible and Inclusive Campus Transportation

- Advocate for safer, more equitable transit options for MSVU community members.

- Partner with Halifax Transit to optimize transit connections and schedules between MSVU, major transit hubs, and other universities, improving accessibility for students, staff, and faculty with disabilities.

STRATEGY 2: Improve Campus Accessibility and Wayfinding

- Design and implement multi-format accessible campus maps that clearly highlight key accessibility features, including accessible parking spots, Access-a-Bus pick-up points, elevators, accessible washrooms (with detailed features), and the Rosaria-Evaristus lift.

- Audit and enhance designated accessible parking spaces to improve optimal curb cut locations, effective snow and debris removal, strategic proximity to pay stations, and directional signage.

STRATEGY 3: Strengthen Safe and Accessible Campus Navigation

- Work with HRM City Council to advocate for crosswalk improvements around MSVU, prioritizing accessible and safer pedestrian access for all individuals.

- Explore campus entryway enhancements, with the aim to remove barriers for individuals using public transit or active transportation and provide accessible arrival points including Access-A-Bus services.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

GOAL - *Buildings and outdoor spaces on campus provide meaningful access for intended users.*

STRATEGY 1: Assess and Address Campus-Wide Accessibility Needs

- Conduct, analyze, and implement the findings from the campus-wide Accessibility Audit to identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers to meaningful access at MSVU.

- Establish and promote a centralized accessibility request system where students, staff, faculty, and visitors can submit accessibility concerns, work orders, and seasonal maintenance requests (e.g., debris removal, snow clearance, temporary closures).

- Integrate Provincial Built Environment standards into new construction, renovations, and building updates, to align with the Built Environment Accessibility Standard, Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations, and Rick Hansen Foundation Gold rating standards.

STRATEGY 2: Strengthen Emergency Preparedness and Communication

- Review, update, and implement emergency evacuation systems, policies, and procedures to promote and support safe and efficient evacuation for people with disabilities and others facing accessibility barriers.

- Enhance and standardize emergency communication protocols for clear, accessible messaging regarding fire alarms, evacuation procedures, weather disruptions, debris and snow removal, and other unplanned campus accessibility concerns.

- Assess, enhance, and expand the MSVU Safe App to improve security measures and accessibility-related emergency communications, providing real-time updates and support.

STRATEGY 3: Build Capacity and Secure Resources for Accessibility Improvements

- Certify additional staff members in accessibility to provide ongoing expertise and accessibility support at MSVU.

- Develop structured and collaborative processes that accessibility considerations are factored in to annual campus planning and facilities renewal decision making.

- Regularly communicate accessibility progress and proposed changes to the campus community, for transparency, engagement, and accountability in all accessibility-related initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION

GOAL - *Regularly monitor and evaluate progress to remove barriers to accessibility, and assess the impact on students and employees, and continue to identify opportunities to improve access to education.*

STRATEGY 1: Establish Governance and Oversight for Accessibility

- Lead and coordinate the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) with clearly defined terms of reference to guide the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the multi-year MSVU Accessibility Plan.

- Accountability partners have been appointed by pillar and are responsible for monitoring, implementing, and evaluating the Accessibility Plan, ensuring a structured three-year review and revision cycle.

- Implement a formal process for receiving, reviewing, and responding to accessibility-related feedback.

STRATEGY 2: Strengthen Strategic Planning and Evaluation

- Provide an annual status report on progress towards achieving the goals outlined in this plan.

- Adopt and integrate the provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and measurable deliverables to track, assess, and enhance accessibility initiatives.

- Design and outline the resource requirements for a comprehensive campus-wide Accessibility Needs Assessment, to support data-driven decisions for future accessibility improvements.

STRATEGY 3: Secure and Allocate Resources for Accessibility Initiatives

- Identify and apply for funding opportunities, grants, and accessibility-specific financial resources at the local, provincial, and national levels to support accessibility projects.

- Continue to partner with funding sources, the post-secondary education sector, and other like-minded organizations to pursue new opportunities for resourcing, funding, and collaborating in support of our accessibility commitments.

GLOSSARY

Glossary – from Nova Scotia Post Secondary Framework.

Accessibility – The prevention and removal of barriers (physical, attitudinal, technological, or system) to allow equitable participation for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

Accessibility Act – The provincial legislation enacted in 2017 to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. It has a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The Act outlines some responsibilities for municipalities, universities, and other entities, including developing accessibility plans and establishing an accessibility committee. It allows Government to develop and implement standards (regulations) in education, the built environment, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, transportation, information and communication, and employment.

Accessible Employer – Reducing and preventing barriers in hiring, retaining, career development and advancement for employees, and addressing employee needs with individualized, flexible accommodations.

Accessible Customer Service – Ensuring all persons have the same opportunity to seek, obtain, use or benefit from the service. Accessible services are easy for all people to use, interact with, and understand.

Barrier – Anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society. Barriers can be physical, attitudinal, technological, or systemic (policy or practice). Accessibility barriers may be related to areas such as employment, education, the built environment, transportation, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, or information and communications.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) – A teaching method that acknowledges the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference of students and uses it to make learning more relevant and effective. It ensures that students from diverse cultures have equitable opportunities and supports for success within school systems and that design is reflected in pedagogy, not just additional targeted services.

Deaf – A sociological term referring to those individuals who are medically deaf or hard of hearing who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign language (Canadian Association of the Deaf).

Disability – A physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

Employees – Administration, faculty, and staff employed at a post-secondary institution.

Equity/ Equitable – Equity is fair treatment of individuals, acknowledging and making provisions for their differences by ensuring that employment and educational processes are free from systemic barriers. Equity does not mean ignoring differences and treating everyone the same. Instead, it means recognizing and valuing differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.

First Voice – First voice perspectives generally refer to the knowledge generated by persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility that emerges from lived experience, community connections, knowledge traditions, and scholarly activities that are typically under-valued and under-represented.

Glossary continued.

Inclusion – The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals or groups of individuals who are disadvantaged or under-represented, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion.

Learning Equity – The principle and practice of ensuring that all persons have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed in their education.

Meaningful access – When referring to the built environment, meaningful access is the intent to meet the needs of all users of a site (a building or outdoor space) regardless of their ability. It means that not only individual features of a site, such as an entrance or washroom, must be accessible, but the entire experience throughout.

Neurodivergent – Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of "normal". It recognizes diverse neurologies and ways of being, as variation of human experience, rather than deficiency in need of remediation or cure. It includes those who identify with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome, and dyslexia, to name a few.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – An educational approach to designing instructional goals, assessments, methods and materials, and policies that work for a diversity of learners. It employs flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual student needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the MSVU Accessibility Plan, please contact:
AccessibilityFeedback@msvu.ca

An accessible plain text version of the MSVU Accessibility Plan can be found online at:
msvu.ca/accessibility

This document is available in alternate print formats by request. Please contact:
AccessibilityFeedback@msvu.ca

For more information on Bill 59, visit:
nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-62-session-3/bill-59

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