

Annual Accessibility Plan

September 2003 to August 2004

The University of Western Ontario

30 September 2003

Submitted to

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President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario

Submitted by

Western's Ontarians With Disabilities Act Committee
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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the ODA mandates that every university, including The University of Western Ontario (UWO or Western), prepare an annual accessibility plan.

This is the first year plan (2003 – 2004) prepared by Western’s Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee (WODAC). This report describes (1) the measures Western has taken in the past and (2) the measures the University will take in the current year (2003 – 2004) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the University, including faculty, staff, students (part-time and full-time, graduate and undergraduate), alumni and members of the public.

This year, Western has committed itself to the following objectives:

- the continual improvement of access to University premises, facilities and services for persons with disabilities;
- the participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans; and
- the provision of quality services for all students, staff, faculty, alumni and members of the public with disabilities.

Early on in the process, WODAC came to the understanding that a great deal of work will have to be done to set the stage for the more ambitious requirements of the ODA. The Committee identified the following challenges standing in the way of effectively addressing the requirements of the ODA:

- the size of the campus;
- the large number of people on campus;
- the fact that Western is like a small city, with a wide variety of types of programs, resources, services, employment positions, etc.;
- the decentralisation of the administration of the units;
- the fact that an accessibility audit of campus has not been carried out in more than a decade;
- despite the very ardent efforts of several groups and units on campus, the lack of understanding among many members of the community of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and on basic issues such as the definitions of terms like “disability” and “barrier”.

The Committee was unable to obtain a complete picture of the individual barriers that have been addressed and removed on campus, the barriers that still exist, and the steps that are being taken to address them. As a result, the Committee will continue to obtain information concerning the accessibility of the University while pursuing projects that are intended to increase University accessibility (by, for example, addressing barriers that have been identified and can be immediately addressed). The Committee will focus on the kind of preparatory work that must be

carried out to put the Committee, and the University, in the position to approach the more detailed efforts to identify and remove barriers.

The Committee also understands that, although barriers are often discussed and reported in categories (physical, attitudinal, technological, etc.), the issues underlying such barriers are very much interconnected. For example, resources (meaning money, personnel and space) and time appear to underlie almost every barrier that exists: with more resources and more time, physical barriers could be removed and attitudinal barriers could be addressed. The Committee recommends that its efforts (and the efforts of all members of the campus community) be directed toward accomplishing the following during 2003-2004:

- begin to conduct a campus accessibility audit with the purpose of creating an authoritative list of barriers that currently exist;
- create and put into effect educational and awareness-raising programs to improve the general campus-wide understanding of disability issues and, in the process, address attitudinal barriers, which appear to the Committee to be the most pervasive and generalised barrier on campus and the most difficult to address;
- create the will to make the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities a priority in all constituencies (faculty, staff, students and alumni), from the most senior member of University administration to the new employee;
- amend existing policies regarding the following issues – 1) implementing accommodations for students, staff and faculty with disabilities; 2) identifying and removing existing barriers; and 3) ensuring no new barriers are created – to ensure that they are effective and comply with existing Human Rights legislation and the ODA;
- formalise unwritten policies and procedures with regard to accommodations for students, staff and faculty with disabilities and with regard to identifying and removing existing barriers and ensuring no new barriers are created;
- create or compile accessibility standards to be followed by all units;
- establish the Committee as a fully-funded action or standing committee;
- establish procedures for the continuing review and assessment of barrier-removal and prevention efforts.

While taking these steps, the University will also address some identified barriers immediately. Only once these basic steps have been taken and have had some effect, however, can the University begin the work of addressing in a consistent, comprehensive way the barriers that currently exist.

The Committee also believes that the mandate of the Committee itself must be clearly established in the coming year, with the allocation of sufficient resources for the Committee to complete its work effectively. The Committee recommends that its mandate be written to include the following tasks, with appropriate resources allocated to the Committee to allow it to complete such tasks:

- prepare the Annual Accessibility Plan each year and present it to the President;

- conduct, continue, maintain and update an accessibility audit of the University and all its facilities and programs and, where necessary, engage external professionals to help in this task, especially in areas such as the analysis of the accessibility of University policies, procedures, and practices;
- analyse the information and data collected in preparation for future Plans and barrier-removal initiatives;
- establish procedures and commit resources for the continuing review and assessment of barrier removal efforts;
- establish programs and commit resources for education and awareness-raising activities on issues related to disabilities and the workplace;
- establish procedures and commit resources to identify and remove barriers that exist to the full participation of persons with disabilities at Western.

Aim

This report is submitted to Paul Davenport, President of The University of Western Ontario, as part of the University's obligations under the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act* (2001).

Objectives

The purpose of this report is (1) to describe the measures that Western has taken in the past to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities (faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of the public who use the facilities and services of the University) and (2) to outline the measures the University will take during the current year (2003 to 2004) to remove and prevent barriers.

The report is intended to help put the University in the position to do the following tasks in the future:

1. describe the process by which UWO will identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
2. review earlier efforts to remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
3. list the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services that the University will review in the coming year that constitute existing barriers to persons with disabilities;
4. describe the measures Western will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities; and
5. describe how the University will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

Description of The University of Western Ontario

The University of Western Ontario is one of the largest universities in Canada and is a leader in research and teaching. Through its 12 Faculties and Schools, and three affiliated colleges, Western offers more than 60 degree and diploma programs.

Enrolment at Western and its affiliates in the 2001-2002 academic year totalled more than 29,000* full- and part-time students, broken down as follows:

	Full-Time	Part-Time	TOTAL
Undergraduate (Western)	17,986	4,434	22,420
Undergraduate (Affiliates)	3,718	658	4,376
Masters	2,217	300	2,517
Ph.D.	838	43	881
TOTAL	24,759	4,435	29,194

* Source for Student Data: Western Facts 2002

On average, the University employs approximately 7,000 faculty and staff (both full- and part-time) at peak times. As of January, 2001, the University employed 7,109* people, broken down as follows:

	Full-Time	Part-Time	TOTAL
Administrative Staff**	1,930	2,372	4,303
Faculty	1,528	1,278	2,806
TOTAL	3,458	3,651	7,109

* Source for employee data: President's Standing Committee for Employment Equity Annual Report 2001

** "Administrative Staff" includes all employees of the University who are not members of Faculty.

Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee (WODAC)

Establishment of WODAC

In the fall of 2002, Peter Mercer, the Vice-President (Administration) and General Counsel for the University, drew together a working group of persons who hold leadership roles on campus in the areas of human rights, equity and providing services for persons with disabilities. This working group was comprised of the following persons:

- Peter Mercer
- Gail Hutchinson, Director, Student Development Centre (SDC)
- Deborah Stuart, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (SDC)
- Frances Bauer, University Ombudsperson
- Mark Walma, Advisor, Equity Services

The working group then created WODAC, the membership of which included representatives from all areas and constituencies on campus. WODAC began meeting in April 2003 with the understanding that it was intended to do the following:

- conduct research on barriers facing persons with disabilities in all facilities, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services offered by the University;
- list facilities, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services that cause or may cause barriers to persons with disabilities;

- identify efforts that have been taken recently within the University community to remove or prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- identify all (or as many as is possible) barriers that currently face persons with disabilities as they take part in university life;
- identify barriers that will be removed or prevented in the coming year;
- describe how these barriers will be removed or prevented in the coming year; and
- prepare a report on these activities and make the report and plan available to the public, after its approval by the President and Board of Governors.

Members of WODAC

The following members of the University community served as members of WODAC from April 2003 to the date of submission of this report:

Committee Member	Department	Contact Information
Joan Aldis	King's College	433-3491 x4316
Farid Arbi	Professional and Managerial Association	661-2111 x85735
Frances Bauer	Ombudsperson	661-3573
Brian Borowski	Information Technology Services	661-2111 x86033
Claire Callaghan	Western Libraries	661-2111 x84772
Francis Chan	Medicine & Dentistry	661-2111 x86803
William Cliff	Huron University College	438-7224 x294
Wendy Dickinson	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-3031 x88616
Veronika Elsie	HR, Staff Relations	661-3783 x85580
David Empey	Staff Association	661-2111 x83028
Flemming Galberg	Physical Plant and Capital Planning	661-2111 x88880
Gail Hutchinson	Student Development Centre	661-2111 x85946
Lisa Klinger	Occupational Therapy	661-2111 x88963
Ruta Lawrence	Housing and Ancillary Services	661-2111 x85978
Bruce Morgan	Brescia University College	432-8353 x289
Adrienne Kennedy	University Students' Council	661-3574 x83574
Merran Neville	Information Technology Services	661-3976 x83976
Jeff Preston	University Students' Council	
Valerie Smith	HR, Occupational Health and Safety	661-2111 x84742

Deborah Stuart	Services for Students with Disabilities, SDC	661-2147 x82147
Mark Walma (Chair)	Equity Services	661-3334

Western's commitment to accessibility planning

As is stated in *Making Choices*, the University's current Strategic Plan,

Western is also committed to increasing its representation of First Nations, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. In the current environment, excellence requires that Western be an attractive destination for the full diversity of young faculty, including those from all the groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program, to which the University is a signatory.

With regard to its administrative staff, Western also establishes the following commitment in *Making Choices*: to “Ensure that our hiring is supportive of applicants from diverse backgrounds, including the designated groups identified under the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program”.

The University of Western Ontario has been committed to accessibility planning for some time now and has recommitted itself to such planning under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (2001). With the formation of WODAC, Western has committed itself to meeting its obligations under the Act, as well as to achieving the following goals:

- The continual improvement of access to University premises, facilities and services for all persons with disabilities;
- The participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its annual access plans; and
- The provision of quality services to persons with disabilities.

The Work of the Committee

Information Gathering

In April 2003, WODAC first circulated an e-mail to every member of the University community (approximately 37,000 people). The e-mail read:

Ontarians With Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001

The purpose of this Act is “to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province” of Ontario. The term “barriers” is considered to include physical, informational, communications-related, attitudinal and technical barriers, policies and practices.

The primary obligations of UWO and the Affiliated Colleges under the ODA are to consult with people with disabilities and to “prepare an accessibility plan” each year. This is the goal of the newly created Ontarians With Disabilities Act Committee.

To achieve this goal, the committee would greatly appreciate receiving comments from UWO and the Affiliated Colleges; faculty, staff, and students. Please let us hear about your experiences, both positive and negative, or how “barriers” either exist or have been removed at Western and what impact they have had on your ability to be fully involved in your various endeavours.

Your e-mail responses will be returned to equity@uwo.ca, the address for Equity Services. Please note that the identity of individuals who provide information will be kept strictly confidential. Individuals’ responses may be communicated beyond the UWO Ontarians With Disabilities Act Committee [WODAC]; however, this communication will take place only after removal of all information that could identify the individuals who provided the responses.

Your reply by April 30, 2003 would be most helpful but a reply after that date would also be welcome.

Thank you for your participation.

UWO Ontarians With Disabilities Act Committee [WODAC]

As well, each member of WODAC was asked to canvass their own constituency.

The response to these information gathering initiatives has been very positive, with 95 responses to the original mass e-mail. The respondents were not asked to identify whether or not they considered themselves to be persons with disabilities. Most responses, however, appeared to come from persons with disabilities and included both praise and criticism, suggestions as to

how to make the University more accessible and descriptions of approaches to removing barriers that have already been effected on campus. The e-mails (both the mass e-mail and the responses it generated) have also had the positive impact of immediately raising awareness of and creating discussion around barrier-removal initiatives and the challenges facing persons with disabilities at Western.

Barrier Busters Forum

The Committee formed a sub-committee to begin planning a “Barrier Busters Forum” of the kind held at Queen’s University this past spring to be held at Western in October of 2003. This forum will bring together persons with disabilities from across the Western community to discuss accessibility issues, to identify barriers that they might have experienced in using the University’s services and facilities and to brainstorm ways of approaching the task of removing those barriers and ways of ensuring new barriers are not introduced in the future.

Campus Accessibility Audit

An accessibility audit of The University of Western Ontario’s buildings was carried out under the auspices of the Department of Physical Plant in 1990. Physical Plant has used this audit as the basis for planning and implementing many upgrades to enhance accessibility of existing buildings and roadways around campus. As part of the mandate of WODAC in 2003, funds were provided by the Office of the Vice-President (Administrative) to enable an update of the accessibility audit. The present audit, which commenced in July 2003 and will continue until July 2004, is being conducted under the supervision of Professor Lisa Klinger, School of Occupational Therapy, and Dr. Linda Miller, Associate Dean, Scholarship, Faculty of Health Sciences, using an assessment tool that is being developed and tested specifically for the purposes of auditing accessibility of university campuses – the University Campus Accessibility Measure.

Campus Accessibility Map

An up-to-date accessible routes map of the campus is required. As part of the audit process outlined above, data are currently being collected for use in the creation of a single campus map that is based on a philosophy of universal accessibility for the use of all members of the community. This map will include accessible routes and will be made available on paper and on the web.

Recent Barrier-Removal Initiatives and Barriers to be Addressed

WODAC has undertaken several efforts to amass information on the initiatives that have been taken in the University’s many different units and in the central administration of the University to improve accessibility in recent years. The information received by these methods has been extremely useful but fails to give a complete picture of what has taken place at Western over the past several years nor of what barriers remain to be addressed. As a result, the following

discussions are general in nature. More detailed information obtained from respondents is attached to this Plan in various appendices.

In many cases, a barrier is multi-factional, meaning that it does not fall into any one discrete category. Removing the barrier can be a costly, creative process, requiring a concerted effort on the part of several people and offices.

A general statement may be made which would apply to all types of barriers at Western: there is a need for the establishment of a coordinated, University-wide, properly funded initiative to identify and remove barriers of all types systematically across campus. The current financial constraints under which the University is operating make it very difficult to ensure that such an initiative will be properly funded.

Physical

Efforts to improve physical accessibility on campus are widespread and effective. With the help of the student-funded Accessibility Development Committee (“ADC”), barrier-removing improvements have been installed in numerous buildings across campus. While these barriers have been identified by students and addressed with funds provided both by the Students Council and the University administration, the removal of these barriers has a beneficial impact for all members of the community. These improvements include:

- installation of accessible elevators, ramps, doors, desks, etc.
- renovations of classrooms, washrooms and residence rooms to render them accessible
- provision of special chairs, keyboards, foot stools
- purchase of accessible equipment such as photocopiers, library checkout stands, etc. (see Appendix “A”).

The Barrier Free Access Committee (BFAC) is also involved in the review of plans for new buildings and for renovations to existing buildings to ensure that barriers are addressed and no new barriers created. The Department of Physical Plant, which plays a large role in the BFAC, has also displayed a strong commitment to addressing physical barriers that are brought to its attention and to maintaining accessibility-related improvements such as door openers.

There does not currently exist, however, a concerted, coordinated approach to ensuring that physical barriers are identified and addressed uniformly across campus. Until a campus-wide accessibility audit is completed, the University will continue to face challenges in creating a strategic plan to eliminate all barriers which currently exist.

Architectural

The ADC and BFAC continue to do exemplary work in addressing architectural barriers that have been identified on campus and in reviewing building and renovation plans to ensure that no new barriers are created. Ramps have been installed outside almost all buildings (including some

of the University's oldest buildings) and all newly constructed residences (Essex, Elgin, Delaware and Perth Halls) are fully accessible to persons with mobility impairments.

Once again, however, without the comprehensive information which would be provided by a full campus accessibility audit, efforts to address existing architectural barriers can only be carried out on a case-by-case basis as barriers are brought to light.

The University consistently ensures that new construction and renovation projects follow accessibility standards which meet and in the majority of cases go beyond the requirements of the Building Code. A concern, however, is with the design of the furnishings within the newly built or renovated space – once a building is built in an accessible fashion, the design of furnishings, and layouts of offices, classrooms, labs, etc. within that building may still not be universally accessible.

Resources are also an issue here (and in the area of Physical Barriers above). In many situations, the cost of adapting existing buildings to be fully accessible is fairly high. The University provides, in its Annual Capital Plan, for the provision of up to \$50,000.00 per year to help address these issues, but the best efforts of accessibility-minded committees are sometimes frustrated on financial grounds. In terms of renovating existing buildings, for example, needs exceed available resources.

Informational

The University's efforts in the area of identifying and addressing informational barriers have been extensive and effective. There are many areas, however, where barriers still need to be identified and addressed.

Western Libraries have undertaken extensive work to improve the accessibility of their facilities and informational resources. Staff are trained to provide appropriate assistance to library users who have disabilities and adaptive technology has also been made widely available. The Libraries are currently working on ways to ensure that in-class and in-lab library instruction is also available in electronic and alternative formats.

Information Technology Services has also undertaken the monumental task of revising the University's websites to ensure that all official departmental websites meet international accessibility standards. This ensures that information about the University, its services and its academic programs is accessible to all users with appropriate computer and adaptive technology.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), at the Student Development Centre, is also a leader in helping students and faculty members to work together to ensure that students with disabilities have full access to the academic opportunities Western offers. SSD provides expert assistance in designing and implementing accommodations of all kinds which help students with disabilities to take active part and reach their full potential in the classroom (see Appendix "B").

On the other hand, there does not currently exist an up-to-date Accessible Routes map for the campus, nor is there a consistent, comprehensive approach to ensuring that the courses offered to

students at the University are delivered (taught and tested) in a fully accessible manner. The cost of converting library materials into accessible formats is also daunting and further steps are necessary in this area.

Communicational

In many areas, the Western community is working hard to remove barriers to communication that currently exist and to ensure that no new barriers are created. Signage issues are being addressed and alternative-format information in elevators is becoming more and more prevalent across campus.

The Educational Development Office (EDO) and SSD are both working with faculty (in groups and on an individual basis) to improve faculty members' understanding of some of the communicational barriers that exist in classrooms and how to avoid or address those issues.

University departments are also recognising the value and accessibility of the web as a communication tool and of brochures, information packages and other materials available through the web in accessible formats. Information Technology Services has developed accessibility standards which all primary, official University websites must meet and these standards have been followed campus-wide.

The issue continues to be, however, the lack of a coordinated approach to removing communicational barriers. This is an area where members of both the administration and the faculty need to improve their efforts.

Attitudinal

This is perhaps the most difficult of the barriers to identify and address. The University of Western Ontario has a large number of interested and concerned people in its community who take on the task of educating their colleagues about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in our community.

The Office of Equity Services has held training programs for several groups over the past three years (most recently a session in its Employment Equity Week programming for Professionals and Managers) on disability issues in the University setting. SSD also takes advantage of every opportunity that arises to educate members of the community about barriers and how to remove them. EDO, the Residence Life Team, and Rehabilitation Services (often in conjunction with various units across campus) are also involved in the awareness raising efforts.

The Committee has come to the conclusion, however, that more work needs to be done in this area. Educational and awareness-raising sessions must be initiated campus wide to increase the level of understanding of all members of the community, with the hope that with understanding will come cooperation and participation in barrier-identification and removal efforts.

One major issue with regard to attitudinal barriers is the fact that persons in positions to undertake the process of removing barriers and providing accommodations for students and

employees with disabilities either do not feel it is their responsibility to do the work or find the process difficult, confusing and costly. It can often be a major new challenge in their already busy schedule, one which they would prefer not to take on. As long as money issues remain and policies and procedures continue to be lengthy and difficult to implement, these attitudinal issues will remain difficult to address. If accommodation processes were simple and clear and money readily available, attitudes toward providing accommodations would likely change as well.

Technological

As with the other types of barriers, efforts to remove technological barriers on campus are on-going but lack central coordination and funding. SSD, for example, includes an adaptive technology centre for students which provides them with access to computer equipment (hardware and software) which increases accessibility and their ability to succeed.

Various academic departments have also taken steps to acquire adaptive technology for use in the general classroom/laboratory setting. Rehabilitation Services works with various departments (academic and administrative) on an as-needed basis to provide adaptive technology for employees who require it.

On the other hand, while the University's central administration often provides funds to pay the cost of these accommodations, more communication is required to ensure that units are aware of the availability of such funds. A formalised process for accessing these funds should also be developed. The lack of awareness regarding available funds may create a disincentive to attempting to address barriers and involve persons with disabilities in the community.

Policy/Practice

The University needs to develop a process by which new and existing policies and practices can be reviewed to ensure that they do not create barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities. This will be a very complicated process, especially with regard to "practices" on campus since, due to the size and population of the university, literally thousands of informal "practices" no doubt exist.

With regard to the accommodation of a disability in a particular instance, it is possible that the person seeking accommodation might face one or more of the following barriers:

1. no policy, process or procedure exists to allow them to seek accommodation;
2. if a policy, process or procedure exists, it has not been well-communicated to the community such that either no one is able to advise the person with a disability that it exists or to direct them to the appropriate person or office to start the process of accommodation; or
3. once the process of accommodation is underway, matters proceed very slowly such that the delivery of the accommodation is significantly delayed.

Rehabilitation Services is currently involved in developing corporate guidelines regarding the accommodation of persons with disabilities who are employees of the University. SSD already has similar policies and procedures in place with regard to students with disabilities. Equity

Services administers policies (many of which are parts of employment and collective agreements negotiated between the University and employee groups) which prohibit harassment and discrimination on the grounds of disabilities (among other things).

While many informal practices have been developed in various units on campus to reduce or remove barriers to persons with disabilities, the University is not yet approaching from the identification and removal of barriers of all kinds from a central, coordinated standpoint.

Conclusion

Persons with disabilities on the Committee have made it clear that they feel the impact of these barriers most in the form of financial costs and the loss of time spent negotiating for the accommodation. When a person with a disability encounters any of the barriers discussed above, that person must take time away from his or her work or academic pursuits to negotiate for the accommodation required. The more barriers that exist, the more time is expended in obtaining accommodation. In many cases, there is also a financial cost to the person with disability in negotiating for the accommodation.

Removal of the barriers and the institution of well-communicated, efficient procedures for dealing with barriers that may still exist should serve to ease the strain on both the person's time and finances, allowing him or her to participate more fully in the University community.

Barrier-Identification Methodologies

WODAC used a series of related barrier-identification methodologies:

Methodology	Description	Status
Mass E-Mail	WODAC drafted and sent an e-mail to all members of the University community, asking for input into accessibility issues on campus. All respondents were sent a thank-you e-mail.	E-mail sent April. Responses collated and included, in edited form, in this report. Five respondents who offered to help have been contacted by members of WODAC.
Reports from WODAC members	Members of WODAC were asked to canvass their own constituencies to determine what efforts had been made to address accessibility issues in the past and what issues remain	Reports from several WODAC members received and incorporated into this report. Further reports will be added as they come in.
Barrier Busters Forum	A single-day event featuring guest speakers on accessibility issues involving persons with disabilities from all groups on campus – student, staff and faculty. Participants will be asked to	In planning stage for October 2003.

	identify barriers and suggest methods of removing existing barriers and avoiding future ones.	
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Barriers That Will Be Addressed 2003 – 2004

The Committee believes that important work must be done before priorities can be set as to which barriers should be addressed in a given period of time. This work involves the following tasks:

- conducting or at least beginning to conduct a campus accessibility audit with the purpose of creating an authoritative list of barriers that currently exist;
- creating and putting into effect educational and awareness-raising programs to improve the general campus-wide understanding of disability issues and, in the process, address attitudinal barriers which appear to the Committee to be the most pervasive and generalised on campus and the most difficult to identify and address;
- engendering a campus-wide will to make the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities a priority in all constituencies, from the most senior member of University administration to the newest employee;
- formalising policies and procedures with regard to accommodations for students, staff and faculty with disabilities and with regard to identifying and removing existing barriers and ensuring no new barriers are created;
- establishing the Committee as an action or standing committee, with appropriate resources to carry out its mandate;
- establishing procedures for the continuing review and assessment of barrier-removal and prevention efforts.

Long-Term Goals of the Committee

The Committee has established the following long-term (five-year) goals:

- to enable the University to meet or exceed the requirements of the ODA;
- to create an awareness and accountability on the part of all members of the Western community as to the ODA and creating a fully accessible University;
- to increase community awareness of related University policies and procedures;
- to ensure the University sets aside adequate resources to allow units to meet their duties to meet the needs of persons with disabilities while meeting their own goals;
- to ensure that barriers are identified and removed and that accommodations, where required, are arranged in a timely manner;
- to complete the comprehensive accessibility audit and to establish an effective process to ensure it is kept up-to-date;
- to create or compile accessibility standards to be followed by all units.

Review and Monitoring Process

WODAC will meet monthly to review progress. WODAC will update senior administration and leaders of units with responsibilities under this plan on the progress of various initiatives and to remind them of their obligations, either by e-mail or by telephone.

Appendix A

Accessibility Development Committee (ADC) Funded Projects 1999 - 2003

The ADC is a committee on campus that is fully funded by money contributed by undergraduate students through their student fees. This committee, run by students, allocates funds to projects that increase accessibility on campus for students with disabilities:

1999-2000

- Repair Automatic Door Buttons to UCC
- Install Automatic Doors to Washrooms outside SDC
- Replace Panic Bars and Install Elevator Signs in Somerville
- Replace Faucets in Female Washroom in Somerville
- Add Curb Cut to south end of Alumni Hall sidewalk
- Install Power Door to Accessible Washroom in Alumni Hall
- Lower Public Phone in Alumni Hall
- Install new sidewalk to accessible entrance of Engineering
- Remove door in kiosk of accessible door entrance in Engineering
- Install accessible male and female washroom in Engineering
- Remove metal partition in female washroom in Engineering
- Install additional automatic doors in WSC and Chemistry
- Automatic door openers budget increase
- Four Curb Cuts outside Med/Sci and Kresge Building
- Re-finish wood ramp in Wave (entrance)
- Install Power Door in UCC Lower Level (Inprint)
- Asbestos Removal to Physical Plant
- Re-surface ramp outside Music Building

2000 – 2001

- Automatic Door openers for Accessible Washrooms, 2nd floor Social Science
 - Hoyer Lift for Accessible Washrooms, 2nd floor Social Science
 - Accessible Washroom, 2nd floor UCC
 - Automatic Door Openers/ replacements
 - *Three Pentium Computers with Kurzweil software
 - *Alpha Smart 3000 Note Takers
 - *Electric Adjustable corner desk
 - *Two electric adjustable desks
 - *Three ergonomic Malaga Chairs
 - *Eight CNS Note books
 - *Recorders/ CNIB
 - *Grey APH 4 Track Recorder
- * The above items are to furnish three workstations within the SDC to aid students with a wide range of disabilities.
- Law Building: Ramp

- Automatic Door opener for accessible washroom, 2nd floor UCC

2001 - 2002

- UCC 2nd floor washroom combination lock
- Accessible washroom on 4th floor SSC
- CCTV for Law library
- CCTV for Weldon Library
- Zoom Text Software
- Fully Accessible Weldon Study Room
- Adaptive Technology Equipment
- Two Laptop with Digital Video Recorders
- Two Workstations for Visual Impairments

2002 - 2003

- Weldon Library Unisex Accessible Washroom
- Music Library Door Opener
- Scanner for Open Book Software
- Assistive Technology Lab (virtual motion)
- Talbot College Elevator
- Assistive Technology Lab
- Tape Recorders
- Music Library Door
- Signage for Projects
- Eight Laptops for Special Exams
- Furniture for Special Exam Rooms
- Career Services Building Renovation

Appendix B

Services for Students with Disabilities at the Student Development Centre

History of Funding

Prior to 1989, services for students with disabilities were provided by a staff member in the Student Development Centre. This person's position changed from part-time to full-time as the number of students for whom she provided assistance increased from fewer than 10 (in the early '80s) to 157 in 1989-90.

In the 1989-90 academic year, the provincial government began providing the Enhanced Accessibility for Students with Disabilities Envelope (or the Accessibility Envelope). This envelope was used to fund offices for Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at the Ontario universities and colleges, and whenever possible, to pay for services that would not be provided directly by SSD, such as sign-language interpretation and specialized tutoring.

The Accessibility Envelope was intended to *assist* institutions in paying for the costs associated with services for students with disabilities, and not to cover all costs. Initially, the fund was large enough to pay for most services for students with disabilities; however, increases in this funding have not kept up with increases in demand for service. For example, the Accessibility Envelope increased from \$392,000.00 (in 1989-90) to \$516,446.00 (in 2002-03), which represents a 32% increase in funds. In contrast, the number of students who have used the services provided by SSD has increased from 157 to approximately 850 (a 441% increase), and the number of exams that are administered annually by SSD has increased from 255 to approximately 4,543 (a 1,682% increase). Accordingly, the Enhanced Accessibility Envelope is no longer sufficient to cover the costs associated with services for students with disabilities. These costs are approximately \$150,000.00 per year more than the government funding. The University is attempting to establish a source of funding within the institution that will cover the shortfall. Several Ontario universities have contributed financially to their offices for Services for Students with Disabilities. Many universities that have not received institutional funds are now in need of this support.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is situated primarily within the Student Development Centre, and also in Counselling and Student Development at King's College.

The staff who provide services hold the following positions:

Coordinator of SSD	full-time
Counsellor	two full-time positions and one three-day-per-week position in SSD on Western's main campus
Consulting Psychologist	one half-time position at King's College
Office Manager	20% of a full-time position full-time

Examination Coordinator	full-time
Administrative Assistant	29% of a full-time position
Approximately 40 Proctors	part-time employees who work on an as needed basis (approximately 15 of whom work at King's College)

Other positions within Student Development Centre that provide services for students with disabilities are: one full-time position in the Adaptive Computing Technology Centre, and 51.93% of a full-time position in Learning Skills Services.

Students who use SSD

The number of students with various kinds of disabilities who have used services provided by SSD during the last four years are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of Students across Disabilities

Disability	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Chronic Illness	171	182	195	172
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	26	23	27	28
Learning Disability	270*	276*	304*	340*
Mobility Disability	47	46	50	85
Multiple Disabilities	20	30	34	37
Blind/Low Vision	21	24	27	27
Temporary Disabilities	16	8	3	6
Other**	79	75	85	113
TOTALS	650	664	725	808

NOTE: Categories, for reporting purposes, have varied from year to year so should be interpreted with caution.

* These figures include the following numbers of students with cognitive impairment associated with brain injuries: for 1998-99, 12 students; for 1999-00, 14 students; for 2000-01, 25 students, and for 2001-02, 23 students.

** These students were screened for possible learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. Many were referred for psychoeducational assessments and/or learning skills counselling, psychological intervention, and medical intervention.

Services Provided by SSD

1. Academic Accommodation

Most of the students who seek services from SSD work with counsellors to determine and arrange academic accommodation. This work involves: a. assisting students in obtaining appropriate documentation of their medical and psychological conditions; b. determining classroom and examination accommodation to recommend to instructors based on information contained in the documentation, the students' histories of using accommodation and other strategies for coping with their disabilities, and the course and program requirements; c. communicating recommendations to instructors; and d. engaging in discussions regarding the rationale behind these recommendations and practical concerns in arranging accommodation.

2. Conflict Resolution

SSD assists many students each year through resolving conflicts concerning accommodation and other matters.

3. Examinations

SSD administers an increasing number of exams each year for students who require altered conditions under which to write exams. The numbers of examinations that were administered during the last four years are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Number of Individual Tests/Examinations across Exam Periods

Examination Session	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Summer Midterms & Finals	255	178	248	207
Fall Midterms	813	819	740	868
December Examinations	499	507	536	636
Spring Midterms	746	701	694	837
April Finals	880	970	860	1136
TOTALS	3193	3175	3078	3684

4. Screening for Possible Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders

Students who may have learning disabilities (LD) or attention deficit disorders (ADHD) may see a counsellor for the purpose of determining whether or not their academic difficulties likely arise from LD or ADHD, or are more likely associated with other issues (e.g., weak learning skills, insufficient preparedness for certain university courses, psychological and health-related issues, or a combination of these). Some of these students are referred to psychologists for psychoeducational assessments, and others are referred to various services for other kinds of assessments and intervention.

5. Counselling, Consultation, and Learning Skills Assistance

Some students seek counselling for disability-related issues (e.g., difficulties adjusting to a new diagnosis or to losses that accompany a progressive condition). Some students consult with SSD regarding financial, housing, and transportation related issues that arise because of their disabilities. Many students seek learning skills assistance.

6. Access Van

The Access Van transports students who have mobility impairments among locations on all of Western's campuses and between campuses.

7. Alternative Format Textbooks and Equipment Lending

SSD arranges for students to obtain audiotope, braille, and electronic text. The service also lends tape recorders, electronic spellers, note-taking keyboards, and other kinds of assistive technology to students.

8. Sign-Language Interpreting and Note-taking Services

SSD arranges for students who are deaf or hard of hearing to use sign language interpreters or note-takers who take notes using a linked laptop system. The note-taker enters notes using one laptop, and the student reads the notes which appear on the screen of the second laptop.

9. Administration of the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (in collaboration with Student Financial Services)

10. SSD works with other departments, services and committees to enhance accessibility. In the past few years, SSD has worked with the D. B. Weldon Library, Student Health Services, Physical Plant, Housing and Ancillary Services, the University Students Council's Accessibility Development Committee, the University's Barrier Free Access Committee, and the Deans' offices.

University Contributions to Services for Students with Disabilities

Western has contributed financially to services for students with disabilities that are provided or arranged by SSD in the ways that are listed below.

1. The costs of psychoeducational assessments for students who are ineligible for the provincial government's Bursary for Students with Disabilities are paid by the University when the assessments are deemed appropriate by SSD. The main campus Administration provides approximately \$40,000 per year for assessments. The affiliated colleges have paid for an increasing number of assessments each year since 1999-00. This year, King's College will pay \$8,600.00, Huron University College will pay \$10,800.00, and Brescia University College will pay \$1,200.00 for assessments for students.

2. The University pays approximately \$17,000 per year in rental costs of space in University Community Centre. This space houses SSD's offices and exam rooms as well as the Adaptive Computing Technology Centre.

3. The University has paid for renovations in order to create more office space in Student Development Centre (SDC) and an exam facility on Western Road. In 2000-01, the University

paid \$15,831.00 for renovations at SDC. In 2002-03, Administration paid \$22,297.00 for further renovations to create office space, and \$80,000.00 for the exam facility.

4. The D. B. Weldon Library has contributed eight study carrels for exams for students with disabilities and eight double-sized carrels for an assistive technology lab that is specialized for students with learning disabilities. Weldon also has contributed Room 102 for an assistive technology lab that is suitable for students with a variety of disabilities.

Contributions from Students' Council

The University Students Council's Accessible Development Committee has contributed over \$100,000 per year to enhancing accessibility on the main campus. Until a few years ago, most of the funding paid for building renovations and structural changes to the campus to improve accessibility. In the last few years, the Committee has funded assistive technology and ergonomic work stations for students. This technology and furniture has been used primarily in exam rooms and the Weldon Library.

Appendix C

Accessibility Efforts & Issues - Faculty of Health Sciences/Elborn College

Lisa Klinger, April 9, 2003

The following information was compiled from information provided by several members of the Faculty of Health Sciences plus one Research Assistant in Elborn College who has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair.

Overall, over the course of several renovations, specific areas of Elborn College have become reasonably accessible. Communication Science & Disorders made classrooms, washrooms, water fountains, door handles and light switches accessible for persons in wheelchairs plus installed an additional elevator. Automatic doors were installed in 3 locations in the Speech and Hearing Clinic, door lips were leveled, and treatment rooms were moved to the main floor for safety. Physiotherapy has accessible classrooms, change-rooms and laboratories. Occupational therapy classrooms are similarly accessible, as is the Kid Skills Clinic. Elborn College has several ramps with non-slip surfacing to enable access to all parts of the main floor, despite grade differences. Outside doors are equipped with push panels and these are generally well-maintained throughout the year. There are a number of parking spots designated for persons with disabilities.

There are a number of issues that were identified, however:

- There are no Braille labels for room numbers and signage
- An interim plan has been devised to assist persons confined to a wheelchair in case of emergency, but there is currently no evacuation mechanism from the 2nd floor of Elborn College
- The 2300 block of offices/labs are not accessible; while hallway and ramp width meet code, these spaces are too narrow for people using scooters for mobility - visits to these areas by people using scooters (which do occur), result in very difficult manoeuvring
- Elborn College itself is not user friendly; ramped access requires taking a fairly circuitous route to the back of the building (OT/PT areas); signage is not user friendly; grades of ramps are 1:12, which is according to code, but remains difficult to go up and down when users have upper extremity weakness or anti-tipper mechanisms on their wheelchairs; turning radii at the top and bottom of some of the ramps are quite tight for people using scooters
- Classroom 1520 is not accessible
- Several of the accessible classrooms do not have seating that would accommodate a student confined to a wheelchair
- There are no audio systems in classrooms to assist students with hearing impairments
- We do not know whether any of the computer room equipment is set up for low vision Assistive devices or audio input/output
- Snow removal at the designated parking spots (which are continuously and regularly used throughout the year) does not occur quickly enough or thoroughly

enough and users often have to struggle through snow banks from their cars; snow banks often block access to the automatic door openers

- Because of the paucity of parking at the northwest side of the building, UWO delivery vans often block the designated parking spots located there
- Bathrooms, while accessible according to code, often have heavy external doors with springs and minimal turning radii inside the bathroom, that makes use of the bathrooms energy consuming and difficult; handles on cubicle doors are not accessible
- The university has no policy on dealing with the costs of accommodating disabled graduate students (eg: providing assistants during clinical placements) of undergraduate students for whom funding of accommodation is handled centrally. At this time, costs associated with graduate students are left with the individual department or School. Because of the small number of students involved, this should be handled centrally, perhaps through the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, so the costs can be budgeted and get spread out. The Dean of Graduate Studies is aware of this situation, and is exploring options at this time. Dr. W.G. Webster, Director, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders has agreed to work with the Dean of Graduate Studies in this regard.

Appendix D

Housing and Accessibility

All of our newly constructed buildings are all wheel chair accessible. This would include Essex, Elgin, Perth and Delaware Halls.

Saugeen-Maitland Hall and Alumni House are not fully accessible. Access is only available to a small percentage of these buildings.

Westminster, Medway/Sydenham, Ausable and Beaver are not accessible.

At Platt's Lane Estates we have one townhouse that has a ramp from the exterior but once inside a wheelchair bound person would not be able to access the second floor or the basement areas of the townhouse.

In Perth, Essex, Elgin and Lambton Halls we have units that are equipped to address most special needs or can be modified to address most special needs. Our commitment is to have the flexibility to address a situation once it is required.

Communicating Special Needs

We address special needs information in the Offer Book sent to all first year students receiving an academic and residence offer. We also have that information on our web site. A form is available on the web which a student is required to complete and then forward to the Residence Admissions Office.

Housing has a good working relationship with the Centre for Students with Disabilities and upper year students usually use the Centre as their contact and the Centre communicates the student's needs to Housing.

Appendix E

Western Libraries' accomplishments to date re: the Ontarians with Disabilities Act - 2001 April 7, 2003 (revised April 28/03)

The UWO Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy states that UWO "...recognizes its obligation to provide reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities..." In the spirit of this policy, Western Libraries strives to provide a safe and comfortable environment for all library users.

Western Libraries offers specialized research or reference service. It is advisable to make advance arrangements by calling and sending an email to the appropriate library. The numbers and email addresses are included in the following places: the Western Libraries web page (www.lib.uwo.ca), the Western Directory as well as the London phone book.. The virtual Reference Service ASK US NOW is a pilot project that offers users of Western Libraries traditional reference service online in real time. The pilot project officially commences January 2003 and runs until April 2003. If this trial proves successful, it will be of great assistance to the disabled.

Reference or Circulation staff are available to assist in the retrieval of material from the stacks. Circulation staff are also able to assist in the photocopying of material.

Western Libraries has partnered with the Student Development Centre (SDC) and the University Students' Council to provide services in The D.B. Weldon Library for students with disabilities. SDC hired an Assistive Technologist for an eight month contract "to teach students how to use the most appropriate technology, given their particular learning disabilities". The D.B. Weldon Library provides space for the services, and the University Student's Council has equipped the rooms set aside with different combinations of hardware and software to assist students with reading, writing, and organizing their ideas for written expression. It is anticipated that this contract position will be renewed.

The Student Development Centre has an Access Lab situated in The D. B. Weldon Library, Room 102. This lab contains six accessible workstations and one Sun Ray station. The Lab is equipped with technology, adjustable workstations, and ergonomic chairs that allow students who have disabilities to access information, and to work in a comfortable environment.

Three workstations are equipped with scanners, text-to-speech and speech-to-text translation software, and software to facilitate the organization of written work. The other three stations are equipped with printers and two kinds of screen reading software.

The assistive software in the Lab includes JAWS, Win-Eyes, Kurzweil 1000, Kurzweil 3000, Inspiration, TextHelp and Dragon Naturally Speaking.

Libraries

Content (Information Resources)

- * Does the library have a collection policy for materials in alternate formats?

Western Libraries does not have a specific collection policy for materials in any format. Rather within existing collections policies we speak to the content we want regardless of format. So essentially we remain silent on the issue -- which means we neither include nor exclude.

- * Do audio visual materials purchased or created in-house have captions?

As per the question above, we collect for the content regardless of format.

Newer television sets do have captions B older sets do not have this feature. The *Weldon Library* DVD/TV unit does have the captions feature.

- * Are textbooks and materials available in alternate formats?

Our existing collections policies are likely to indicate that we do not comprehensively collect textbooks regardless of format. Rather we have a sampling of textbooks if required to support undergraduate programs. Again, we do not discriminate by format but rather concentrate on the content and its relevancy and need.

These alternate formats materials (e.g.; audiotape text, braille text and e-text) are currently made available from the W. Ross Macdonald School, or the CNIB and the arrangements are handled by a part-time staff member who works from September - April in the Student Development Centre.

- * Are library web pages designed with text-only underlays that work with standard screen reader software?

No - we can't say that we have achieved this as yet. It is hoped that this will be in place by the fall 2003. The Law Library is currently experimenting with text-only version for its web pages and will serve as the model for the other Western Libraries.

- * Do license agreements for digital content permit the university to make alternate copies for persons with disabilities?

A section of Bill C-42 gives copyright exemption to people with disabilities.

Regarding digital content license agreements, in most cases the vendors remain silent on the issue.

* What digital materials, in addition to e-journals, can be accessed? Does the library provide document delivery and interlibrary loan services, and in particular, high priority liaison with special collections and services (e.g., W. Ross Macdonald School, CNIB, National Library, etc.)?

Document delivery and interlibrary loan services are available to all patrons.

* Does the Library work with the UAOs to promote the adoption of the National Library standards for all publications of the institution? Do librarians work with faculty and access services staff to ensure that course web pages and other course documentation (assignments, etc.) are produced with acceptable standards for enlargement, voice synthesization or other adaptive means?

This will be investigated.

* Has the Library designated a staff person with responsibilities for developing annual plans for services to persons with disabilities and for working to ensure that training, support and liaison are undertaken in compliance with the expectations of the legislation and the University?

Claire Callaghan is the Western Libraries' representative on the University's Committee. However, this additional role has not yet been discussed.

Library Space and Facilities:

* Is entry to the library barrier free ? Do turnstiles, control gates, etc. have swing capacity for admission of wheelchairs, scooters, etc.

Entrances and exits to all but one of the Western Libraries are barrier free and do allow admission of motorized vehicles. The exception is the *Business Library* which does not have an automatic door opener.

For the most part the elevators in all Western Libraries have braille on both the inside and outside and the phone inside the elevator is accessible from a wheelchair.

Business Library:

The circulation desk is at waist height and does not have a lowered section to accommodate wheelchairs.

Education Library:

A wheelchair lift was installed in 1988. This is located inside the Faculty of Education that allows for access into the Education Library. The user rings for staff assistance to operate the lift and to open the doors to the Library.

In 1997 a ramp was installed outside of the Education Library main entrance. Also installed are handicapped door openers so that both the internal and the external doors swing open when the button has been pushed.

The Circulation Desk is at waist height and does not have a lowered section to accommodate wheelchairs.

The elevator needs to be modified to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters.

The 2 washrooms on the lower level need to be remodelled to accommodate disabled patrons.

Law Library:

New doors installed at entrance to the Law Library. Doors are wheel chair accessible (one pushes a button and the doors open automatically)

A wheelchair accessible book security system installed. (The old unit had a gate while the new unit has done away with that impediment to mobility)

A new circulation desk was installed this past year. Part of the counter is at a lower level which facilitates providing service to a seated patron, e.g. in a wheel chair.

As well, a new elevator was installed in Law Building which goes directly to the Law Library entrance.

Music Library:

This past year the Music Library identified the entrance to the Music Library as a barrier and funding was received from the Student Development Centre to have an accessible door installed (happened Feb-March 2003).

Although not part of the library per se, one must go through a non-accessible door to get from the 2nd floor elevator to the Music Library.

The Circulation Desk does not have a lower portion and is problematic for users in wheelchairs.

The Reference desk is accessible, as are the photocopiers, listening equipment, a number of sunrays and the CD-ROM stations.

The Choral/Orchestral/Band (CBO) library on the first floor of Talbot College has a very awkward arrangement and is not accessible.

Taylor Library:

The accessible doors were paid by the University Students' Council.

A barrier free service desk (on two sides) has been designed and will be installed this summer.

The D.B. Weldon Library:

Is fully accessible to patrons in wheelchairs. All areas within the library are accessible by elevator except for Room 102 (see below) and Quotes Cafe which are available via a ramp.

The library directory (located near the entrance) gives the locations of the library's four elevators.

A portion of the Circulation Desk is lowered for wheelchair accessibility. The Reference Desk allows for full wheelchair access.

* Are library brochures, web pages and doorways marked with the international accessibility symbol.

Web pages are not marked with the international accessibility symbol.

Entrance doorways to "stand-alone" libraries and buildings which house Western Libraries do have one doorway to accommodate persons with disabilities. These doorways are marked with the international accessibility symbol.

Fully accessible washrooms are marked with the symbol.

* Is library signage presented in large type, employing international symbols where appropriate?

At this point not all library signage is presented in large type. Some library signage (eg., directory signage) contain international symbols (e.g., accessible washrooms).

Most signage is designed taking into account colour blindness.

* Are all floors and sections of the library accessible? If special sections or services are not accessible, is there personnel delegated to assist with accessibility for advertised core hours daily?

All public floors and library sections are accessible. Floor plans are also included on the individual library's web pages.

Archives and Research Collection:

ARCC is accessible through The D.B. Weldon Library. It should be ready by June 2003 and the reference desk for the ARCC has been redesigned from the original plan to provide a lower area (29 3/4" high with a 9" ledge) specifically in order to accommodate people in wheel chairs.

Business Library:

The elevator is wheelchair accessible.

Education Library :

Has a small elevator that reaches all 3 floors. However it does not accommodate a larger wheelchair or scooter.

The lower level stack area should be revamped to accommodate wheelchair accessibility; however, this will directly reduce the amount of shelf space for books.

Law Library:

Doors on washroom stalls were adjusted to swing out instead of in allowing for easier access for wheelchair users.

Music Library:

There is also an area where the scores are (from M1500s onwards) where the aisle to access these scores is too narrow as study carrels are situated along the wall. These carrels may have to be removed. There is very little study space to begin with (only 25% of what we should have) and most of it is inaccessible.

Most of the aisles are wide enough for wheelchairs, crutches etc., although the shelving is high and users need help with items on the upper shelves. Our patrons are comfortable with asking staff and their fellow students for assistance.

Taylor Library:

One accessible washroom is located on each floor.

All aisles between the stack shelves conform to standards which ensure access by wheelchair.

Weldon Library:

The D.B. Weldon Library has five large wheelchair accessible washrooms available on the Main and Ground Floors. One of these five washrooms is also a private, special needs facility. This unisex fully accessible barrier-free washroom was installed over the Christmas holidays 2002/03 with total funding from the University Students' Council.

All aisles between the stack shelves conform to standards which ensure access by wheelchair.

* Is there dedicated seating for persons in wheel chairs at tables in key study and service areas? Are table heights adjustable? Are back-lit map tables adjustable?

There is dedicated seating for persons in wheelchairs in some Western Libraries. There are no tables with height adjustment capabilities. There are no adjustable back-lit map tables available. The Serge Sauer Map Library in the Social Science Centre has 2 smaller fixed lit tables and one larger adjustable table.

* Does the library have work areas with adjustable lighting intensity?

Western Libraries does not have work areas with adjustable lighting intensity.

* Is accessibility technology integrated into main library operations where appropriate?

The Law Library has an Alladin Ultra Pro CCTV (closed-circuit) character-enlarging system which was provided by the Student Development Centre. ZoomText XTRA Level

2 character-enlarging software is located on two machines in Law Computer Lab situated in the Law Library and was provided by the Faculty of Law.

Taylor Library has ZoomText XTRA Level 2 character-enlarging software on a selected public computer provided by the Student Development Centre (summer of 2002).

Weldon Library has a CCTV (closed-circuit) character-enlarging system, located in the Microform Centre provided by the Student Development Centre, and the University Students' Council (summer of 2002). The ZoomText Level 2 character-enlarging software, available on one PC workstation in the Reference Hall was provided by Student Development Centre.

The Business Education and Music Libraries do not have adaptive technologies.

* Is there quiet study space for users easily distracted by noise and foot traffic? Is this individual space? Is it situated to ensure personal safety of users?

There are quiet study areas in some Western Libraries. The noise level is difficult to monitor.

Library Services

* Do library loan policies recognize the need for extended loan periods by users with disabilities? Are these policies identified in library promotional materials and web sites?

Loan policies as advertised in the [Access Code for Western Libraries](#) do not promote extended loan periods for users with disabilities. However, this practice is indeed offered in all Western Libraries on an “as needed” basis.

Books can be dropped off at the UWO Information Booths located at the 2 entrance to the main campus.

Self serve options are available through the Western Libraries' web based catalogue. These include: Application for Borrowing Privileges, Renew Loans, Request an item from another Western Library (including RDL), Brescia U.C. Library and Huron U.C. Library and View your Circulation Record.

Credit card options are available in the *Business Office* as well as *Taylor* and *Weldon* Libraries. Patrons can make arrangements to pay overdue fines and missing books over the phone.

The Circulation Desk staff will be very flexible when it comes to assigning longer loan periods, overriding, waiving fines etc.

The *Business Office* located on the mezzanine floor of *Weldon* will also do the same and in some instances would unseal records based on circumstances or if they were aware of a disability.

Taylor Library and Weldon Library have self-checkout machines that are waist height. The other libraries do not have self check units.

* Are library overdue fines standardized/harmonized so as not to unfairly penalize borrowers of special products (e.g., videos, cassettes, etc.?) which, by virtue of format, support alternate learning modalities?

Fines are standardized and do not discriminate by format. This type of discussion would be handled by the circulation desk staff at the point of return. In necessary, fines will be either waived or reduced.

* Are transcription services, such as PAL/COPY regulations, available through the library?

No- this is offered through the Student Development Centre.

* Does the library facilitate stacks retrieval by supporting peer assistants, and/or ensuring the availability of library staff for retrieval?

Absolutely - in all Western Libraries.

Weldon Library:

“Over the counter” photocopying will be provided at the 7 cents per page rate for self-service photocopy instead of the normal charge of 25 cents per page.

* Does the library conduct regular inventories of adaptive technologies, ensuring that software is upgraded and hardware serviced? Does the library provide intermediate assistive devices such as headphones for computers, magnifying glasses in addition to more significant aides such as voice synthesizer, computer magnification?

The Library Director would report hardware servicing needs to the media technician. Should they not be repairable, a requisition for replacement of the unit would be submitted by the Director. This area requires further review.

Headphones and magnifying glasses would be considered supplies items which are requisitioned by each of the individual Western Libraries, and are ordered through the Facilities & Services Department.

* Does the library work cooperatively with the UAOs to coordinate support services, equipment acquisition and software licensing, and staff training?

Not as yet; however, this relationship will now be addressed.

* Do librarians ensure that in-class or in-lab library instruction is supplemented with web modules suitable for review and self directed learning?

We're actively working on this. It is available on a limited basis in some disciplines; e.g., nursing and education tutorials.

Other identified issues that are not covered in the Library checklist

*** Part-time staff:**

The *Business Office* is responsible for advertising and hiring part-time staff. The job ads include the appropriate clause at the bottom of the job ads as well as the application form which talks about disabilities etc: "The University of Western Ontario is committed to employment equity, welcomes diversity in the workplace and encourages applications from all qualified individuals including women, members of visible minorities, aboriginal persons and persons with disabilities." Part-time staff with disabilities have been hired. At a Job Fair held in September 2002 the Business Officer was asked about available technology that would allow 2 visually challenged students to work in the Western Libraries. It's becoming clear that more workshops with clear directives need to be offered from HR. Some of the language such as 'are job requirements limiting' is important as Western Libraries has certain limitations, i.e. for shelving duties to lift, etc.

*** Loudspeakers:**

Only Taylor and Weldon libraries have loudspeakers and it's been identified that not all of the rooms in these 2 libraries have speakers.

*** Area to congregate in case of fire:**

The stairwells and platforms in Weldon Library are narrow. In case of a fire there is no place for those in wheelchairs to safely congregate until assistance arrives.

Prepared by J. Claire Callaghan

Appendix F

Report from Staff Relations - April/2003

- One of our Recruitment Specialists has served on the President's Standing Committee for Employment Equity subcommittee for Persons with Disabilities. This subcommittee has identified the following priorities:
 - change the wording of the question regarding persons with disabilities on the workforce survey
 - examine Western's recruiting practices with regard to persons with disabilities, and to compare these practices with those at other universities
 - examine new ways to evaluate the representation of persons with disabilities within the university workforce (in particular among faculty) because available census data are limited and not very helpful. This may involve examining practices at other universities (e.g. looking at the way in which they obtain "blended" census data.)
 - focus on education and training of persons in a position to recruit and hire, with regard to barriers facing persons with disabilities and existing support services for them
 - work toward creating an environment in which persons with disabilities already at Western are not fearful of disclosing their disabilities
- Currently there is no corporate policy regarding the accommodation of people with disabilities, however, in practice, the organization is guided by the Ontario Human Rights Code. A corporate policy is currently being developed.
- Accommodations are ongoing in numerous units: i.e. special chairs, split keyboards, foot stools, desk modifications, etc. As an example, there is an employee in the Libraries who has mobility issues who has been accommodated on a temporary basis by having her responsibilities modified. The unit has exceeded their duty to accommodate by attempting to create a new position comprised of work she is able to do physically. - Rehabilitation Services leads a team in working through accommodation with units which include the Unit Head, Staff Relations, the employee, and the union or association representative.
- Regular "Return-to-Work" meetings take place amongst representatives from Rehabilitation Services, Staff Relations and union/employee groups to discuss accommodation issues for those employees who are off work due to illness or injury, in an attempt to bring them back to work as soon as possible.
- The Recruitment Specialists now can test vision impaired candidates applying for positions using voice activated software.
- In the past, interviews were conducted and UWO liaised with agencies representing members of the disabled community.
- Meetings have been established to discuss the way in which job descriptions are written and work is described. Potential systemic barriers can be explored as part of this process.
- Room 262, our Human Resource Communication Centre is now wheelchair

accessible and the drop-off boxes by rooms 262 and 251 (SLB) are at an appropriate height to accommodate people in wheelchairs.

Appendix G

Barrier Free Web Accessibility

In February 2000, UWO received information regarding the Web Accessibility Initiative for which the Government of Canada was an official sponsor. The Government of Canada position stated that the need for universal accessibility meant that sites must be developed to serve the largest possible audience using the broadest range of hardware and software platforms, and that the needs of users with disabilities, are considered.

Barrier Free Web Accessibility has always been an important issue for ITS staff providing support for the UWO Web Server. However, it was in 2001, that the SCITS Subcommittee on the World Wide Web (SUWWW) sponsored a project to review the official departmental web sites of the University of Western Ontario for their accessibility to users with disabilities. That summer, from May through August, one ITS staff person and two students worked full time on the project.

During this time, all official departmental web sites, regardless of the server on which they were located, were assessed by the project team for their level of accessibility to users with disabilities. All web information providers were contacted by e-mail and often by phone to discuss the evaluation of their site and to offer assistance in how to make the site more accessible. By August 31, 2001, 167 sites had been evaluated and recorded in the database, which was created to track all the information collected about the official departmental web sites.

Two courses were developed to train staff in how to make their web sites accessible. These courses were run regularly throughout the summer for staff who were web maintainers/information providers of the official departmental web sites. There was a high level of participation in these courses.

A web site was created for the project at <http://www.uwo.ca/IP/barrierfree/> This site continues to be useful to the Western community and usage statistics indicate a steady flow of visitors to the site. The courses which were created as PowerPoint presentations can be found here and used by anyone. The restricted mailing list ip-web@uwo.ca containing the e-mail addresses of UWO web maintainers of official departmental web sites (ip in this context means "information provider") is available for list members to communicate with each other. A Barrier Free WebCT site was created as a discussion forum for the web maintainer group. This site has not been used so far but it could be developed further and become useful.

ITS now offers a web design and development service and several sites have been created using this service. Barrier Free web accessibility has been an important consideration for the designer in each case and the appropriate testing has been done to verify the accessibility. Two sites that have been created this way using the UWO templates (based on the UWO home page) are the Financial Services web site at

<http://www.uwo.ca/finance/> and the Research Ethics web site at
<http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>

Barrier Free Web Accessibility is now a MUST for official departmental web sites. Monitoring of sites for accessibility did not continue beyond August 2001 but the awareness has been raised and continues to be discussed whenever the opportunity arises.

Merran Neville
ITS
Barrier Free Web Accessibility Project Leader
March 20, 2003.

Appendix H

Report from the Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law under went several upgrades which improves mobility and the learning environment for students with disabilities.

We installed a new user friendly elevator in which the controls are lower and easy to reach from a wheel chair or with walking aids. The elevator also contains braille indicators to aid the visually impaired, and the flooring material was selected to allow a greater ease of use for those who require devices.

We have a new access ramp in the front of the bldg. which compliments the ramp in the rear of the bldg. The front curb was also modified for vehicle drop off. We have internal ramps as well and several handicap door openers were installed on interior door ways to improve the ability to travel throughout the bldg. with greater ease . We also have modified washrooms, and the entrance to our library was also modified to allow easier access and mobility.

All of our classrooms and cafeteria have desks/tables which were modified to suit students in wheelchairs. We worked with a couple of our students in wheel chairs and received very valuable input regarding the redesign of these areas. Not only was the design modified but also enhanced with laptop plug ins and electrical outlets. The visual line of sight to the front of the room was also improved

In September of 2001 we began working with two of our incoming visually impaired students. A special reading enhancement aid which enlarges print of the text and library books was purchased . Also as a further aid for these students a software program called Zoom Text was purchased and installed. Zoom text modifies and reformats text and notes etc. to allow a change to larger print. This software is available to the students in our library and our student legal clinic.

Along with the above enhancements, special arrangements are made as requested during examination periods which will allow not only those students with physical challenges but also those who have learning disabilities, extra time or aids to ensure they are able to complete the exams in a modified time element or setting. This reduces the level of stress and allows the student(s) to concentrate on the exam rather than the disabilities.

Our achievements in these areas have proven to be very successful and we strongly feel it was due to the involvement of our students. The student involvement brought valuable insight from their prospective and ensured the projects and modifications provided beneficial support.

Prepared and Submitted by Patricia Grant, Executive Director, Administration, Deans Office, Faculty of Law

Schedule I

Report from Biology 22/23

Presently, we teach first and second Biology in the Staging Building. Bio 22/23 hosts a total of about 1,750 students in lab. Our accessibility issues are outlined below.

Our two first-year Bio labs are on the ground floor and are accessible through the parking lot entrance. Lab benches are 36 inches high, far too high for a student using a wheelchair. Special tables must be set up for wheelchair access. Two years ago, we provided one such set up for a student who successfully completed the Bio 23 course.

Several years ago, an elevator was installed to provide access to second year labs on the second floor. Yet, there is only one set of washrooms in the building...on the ground floor. To my knowledge, no students in wheelchairs have taken second year biology.

Lectures are presented in Alumni Hall (Bio 22) and Middlesex 110 (Bio 23). These rooms are barely accessible and cumbersome without help. Access to elevators are normally locked.

Each of our new labs in the North Campus Building will have one or two accessible low benches. I am assuming that all other access issues will likewise be addressed in lecture and tutorial rooms.

Our Bio 22/23 Website <www.biocore.uwo.ca/b22_23> offers online lecture overheads, timetables, marks, staff contact info, etc. This site is mainly text based and is being tested and altered for accessibility according to UWO and W3 standards.

Prepared By Dan Lajoie, Lab Supervisor

Appendix J

Barriers Identified By Members of the Community

The following barriers have been identified by members of the University community in their responses to the mass e-mails distributed by WODAC:

Physical

- lack of accessible parking near main library, Alumni Hall, etc. and the width of accessible parking that is provided;
- lack of elevators/ramps into and in some buildings and to some classes and offices (Elborn, Natural Sciences, Medway and Sydenham Halls, Siebens Drake Research Institute);
- lack of underground or indoor access for persons with disabilities – cold exposure;
- access to main campus from Visual Arts is either steep stairs or a long way;
- inaccessible interior doors in buildings with accessible outer doors (Western Science Centre);
- lack of places to park and recharge electric scooters;
- Need for proper chairs, low counters, etc. in areas where lines form (Registrar, SSD);
- smoking in entrances to buildings.

Architectural

- need for more accessible entrances to buildings (Dentistry).

Informational

- lack of services for graduate students with disabilities;
- lack of closed-captioning on video equipment;
- lack of knowledge on the part of staff/faculty on services available for persons with disabilities;
- use of inappropriately coloured slides which cannot be read by persons with certain vision impairments;
- lack of available FM systems for classes.

Communicational

- lack of loop systems in classrooms for persons with hearing aids;
- inappropriate, ineffective or absent signage about accessible routes which are, themselves, often complex and confusing (Middlesex, Somerville);
- lack of Accessibility Map.

Attitudinal

- lack of knowledge of instructors of duty to accommodate;
- van service is so clearly marked as being for people with disabilities that it is embarrassing for users;
- rude responses to requests for accommodations from some staff;
- lack of understanding and efforts for persons with psychiatric disabilities.

Technological**Policy and Practice**

- lack of proper snow and ice clearing from accessible ramps, sidewalks, etc.;
- course and room assignments in distant buildings or without long enough periods between to move from one classroom to another for faculty and students with mobility impairments;
- inconsistent availability of transportation service for students with disabilities;
- use of cleaners, colognes and perfumes hindering persons with chemical sensitivities;
- Student evaluation techniques which do not take into consideration disabilities;
- services for students (health, bus pass, etc.) often require full course load;
- lack of enforcement of accessible parking rules.

Appendix K

Positive Comments Received from Members of the General Community

The following are quotations (or, where changes are required to maintain the confidentiality of the contributor, summaries of quotations) from e-mails received from members of the University community in response to WODAC's mass e-mail requesting input and comments on Western's efforts to meet the needs of persons with disabilities:

1. Overall, Western seems to be making a concerted effort for those with disabilities, better than most;
2. I was very impressed by my faculty's empathy and willing to accommodate when I needed it;
3. Parking access has been good;
4. I recently started a new job in a new office. This office is a much better working environment for me. I attribute this improvement to several factors: hands free phone accessories; computer monitor glare reduction screen; good quality computer chair with arm rests; window that opens - fresh air helps a lot; regular breaks; one-hour long lunch; co-operative, understanding, supportive co-workers and supervisor;
5. I have been extremely impressed by the efforts of the university to remove barriers to people with disabilities. My feeling is that UWO has even gone beyond what might be hoped for in a real world;
6. On-campus facilities, mainly the speech and hearing clinic at Elborn college, were excellent in testing my current hearing levels and suggesting improvements to my hearing devices;
7. In all renovations and new construction at the School of Dentistry every attempt was made to eliminate physical barriers. Apart from the obvious elimination of steps and providing wheel chair access to public facilities the design of treatment operatories and reception areas took due consideration of the needs of the [persons with disabilities];
8. I found the automatic door-opening feature on many of the doors around campus extremely helpful. I had no problems finding elevators, I didn't feel there was somewhere I couldn't go;
9. Two years ago, room 1R40 in the Ivey building was fitted with a closed captioning decoder, which was very helpful for that year;
10. I would personally rate uwo 10 out of 10. My experience is that if you encounter any problem at all, and bring it to their attention, it will be promptly addressed. I recently told parking services that handicap parking had lost two spaces due to a new building going up adjacent to visual arts. Their response was immediate. Within two days, the parking was added to the other side of the building. I find that UWO has pretty much anticipated needs, and in those few instances where they haven't, they'll do everything they can to correct it;
11. In regards to exams I have had little difficulty this year, and the people at King's go out of their way to help students. It is truly appreciated;
12. I am very pleased with the fact that there are computers at the disposal of the SDC and the affiliates, this makes life much easier and more comforting;

13. At the Department of Psychology's Lab School, we've recently created a barrier-free entry to the school's rooftop playyard which allows not only the school children to come and go more freely and independently, but allows our UWO students who are completing their practicum placements for various Psychology courses to come and go freely and independently as well;
14. I have had many barriers moved for me. Through student services I am able to take alternative tests to help me. Without these accommodations, I feel that I would be struggling through my classes, with many chances of failing;
15. One student had a learning disability. King's College's response to this was to provide her with: volunteer readers who would read text books to her; taped books where possible; and I think, special computer programs and even the computer itself -- all to help her succeed as a student;
16. The staff in the SDC and Sue Burns in Weldon have been very pleasant and helpful at all times! I LOVE room 102 in Weldon. It is so quiet and I get much work done there;
17. I was having a lot of breathing problems here at Western until I finally asked the school to change the cleaners they use in the building I take classes and volunteer in. The people I contacted were helpful and switched to a scent-free detergent. As a result, I have been feeling much better at school and don't have to constantly hold my breath;
18. I have an audio-visual disability. Overall most people (professors, Student Development Centre) have been very helpful and sensitive to my needs.