

Background on UFV's Commitment to Accessibility

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is a public teaching university established in 1974 and long-standing member of the Universities Canada organization. It enrolls approximately 15,000 students per year. Serving residents of the Fraser Valley and from around the world, UFV has campuses and locations in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, and Hope, along with a presence in Chandigarh, India. The -4all that we do, envisioning our campuses as a gathering place for learners, leaders, and seekers

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) has an intrinsic relationship with S'ólh Tém:éxw (Our Sacred Land) and spoke Halq'eméylem. UFV supports and honours the contribution that Indigenous people have made and continue to make to our community. Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning is important to the university.

Introduction

Purpose

In June 2021, the Accessible BC Act (the Act) was passed. The Act is a significant step on the journey to becoming a truly accessible province. Subsequently, the provincial government announced that all publicly funded post-secondary institutions will be required to meet specific legislative requirements by September 1, 2023, discussed below.

In 2022, UFV launched the Accessible BC Act Steering Committee ("the ABCASC") in response to the new legislation. Led by Dr. Alisa Webb, VP Students and Activities, and Audrey Ackah, General Counsel, the Steering Committee is developing the foundation necessary to build on existing plans and approaches to ensure UFV is a fully accessible institution.

About the University of the Fraser Valley

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3

Definitions

Ableism: "A view or attitude that treats people without disabilities as "normal" and those with disabilities as "abnormal," "inferior," or "other." Ableism can be both intentional and unintentional."

Accessibility: "Having programs, services, and environments that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers."⁵

Adaptability: The ability to evolve in response to changing services, technology, and attitudes.

Barrier: "Anything that hinders the full and equal participation of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be (a) caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and (b) affected by intersecting forms of discrimination."⁷ CollaborationThe exercise of working together for inclusion.

Framework Guiding Our Work

Legislation

In 2021, British Columbia became the fifth province in Canada to introduce accessibility legislation. The Act provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. It is an important step to making B.C. a more accessible and truly inclusive province for all people with disabilities.

Earlier last year, the provincial government announced that all publicly funded postsecondary institutions

support them. It is recognized that there are diverse and evolving ways to deliver educational and learner support services. Thus, we expect to see innovative proposals informed by the scholarship of teaching and learning or by effective pedagogical practices.

Principle C: Flexibility

UFV's campuses will reflect the ability to adapt to multiple uses, reconfigure spaces, and respond to changing program and service needs.

Principle D: Sustainability

UFV's campuses will reflect the ability to adapt to multiple uses, reconfigure spaces, and respond to changing program and service needs.

Principle F: Equity, diversity, and inclusion

UFV campuses will reflect the value of inclusion and diversity, including the principle of designing "with" rather than simply "for".

Principle G: Accessibility

Space planning will facilitate access for all. Space will prioritize and reflect learner accessibility and the principles of universal design.

UN Sustainable Development Goals Accord

In 2023, UFV committed to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord](#) (the SDG Accord).¹⁶ Launched in 2017, the SDG Accord is a global initiative encouraging universities and other post-secondary institutions to pursue the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) Goal 4 Quality Education, recognize that access to higher education is vital to lifelong learning, and set its target under this goal states that "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities."¹⁸

United Nations Academic Impact

In 2022, UFV received membership in United Nations Academic Impact Initiative. The [United Nations Academic Impact](#) (UNAI) is an initiative that aligns institutions of higher education

References

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- ² About UFV, <https://www.ufv.ca/about/>
- ³ University of the Fraser Valley Accountability Plan and Report 2021/22, pg. 5
- ⁴ Government of Canada Consulting persons with disabilities Annex: Inclusive language considerations <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessiblecanadaregulations/guidance/consultation/inclusive-language.html>
- ⁵ Government of Canada (Employment and Social Development Canada), "Towards an Accessible Canada", modified 2023-01-23, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessiblecanada.html>
- ⁶ British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessiblebc/disability-consultation/2019consultation/frameworkfor-accessibility-legislation.pdf>
- ⁷ Government of BC, Accessible British Columbia 2021, [Accessible British Columbia Act \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessiblebc/disability-consultation/2019consultation/frameworkfor-accessibility-legislation.pdf)
- ⁸ Ibid 6.
- ⁹ Ibid 7.
- ¹⁰ UFV Policy 18: Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment [Prevention \(18\).pdf \(ufv.ca\)](https://www.ufv.ca/policy/18-discrimination-bullying-and-harassment-prevention-18.pdf)
- ¹¹ Ibid 7.
- ¹² Inclusion BC <https://inclusionbc.org/about/>
- ¹³ Crenshaw, Kimberle "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. Available at <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- ¹⁴ Ibid 6.
- ¹⁵ Centre for Excellence in Universal Design <https://universaldesign.ie/whats-universaldesign/>
- ¹⁶ UFV signs the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord <https://blogs.ufv.ca/blog/2023/03/ufv-signs-the-united-nations-sustainable-development-goals-accord/>
- ¹⁷ United Nations Academic Impact, Higher Education, <https://www.unaui.org/>