

## University College of the North

### Accessibility Plan December 2016

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am pleased to provide the inaugural University College of the North (UCN) Accessibility Plan. This initial plan highlights activities that UCN has undertaken around addressing accessibility needs. More importantly, the Plan outlines additional actions and goals to further increase accessibility at UCN.

I thank the members of the UCN Working Group responsible for creating this plan, your dedication and commitment are appreciated. I also want to thank all members of the UCN community who contributed to the development of this plan through completion of the Accessibility surveys, and who will ensure that the goals and objectives of Accessibility at UCN are achieved.

Konrad Jonasson  
President and Vice-Chancellor

#### About University College of the North

UCN is a post-secondary educational institution located in Northern Manitoba, with campuses in The Pas and Thompson, and 12 Regional Centres, along with other teaching sites. The UCN Regional Centres are located mainly in First Nations communities.

UCN offers more than 40 degree, diploma, and certificate programs in the Faculty of Arts, Business and Science, Faculty of Trades and Technology (including Apprenticeship Training), Faculty of Health, Faculty of Education, and as part of community-based contract training.

#### UCN Mission Statement

The mission of University College of the North is to ensure Northern communities and people will have access to educational opportunities, knowledge and skills, while being inclusive and respectful of diverse Northern and Aboriginal values and beliefs.

#### UCN Vision Statement

Rooted in the Seven Sacred Teachings of Aboriginal peoples, University College of the North prepares life-long learners and graduates to be positive and contributing members of society.

## The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law on December 5, 2013. Under the AMA, all government agencies (public sector) are required to develop an Accessibility Plan to address accessibility barriers in policies, practices and procedures. The goal is to ensure Manitobans of all abilities have full access to programs and services designed to meet the public's needs. The ultimate goal under this legislation is for Manitoba to be fully accessible by 2023.

In 2012, 15.6% of the Manitoban population, or 145,270 individuals aged 15 years or older reported having a disability that limited their daily activities. Source: Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Disability 2012 ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/mbs/reports/pubs/demographic\\_impacts\\_2015/mbs\\_demo\\_impact\\_2015\\_c5\\_disability.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/mbs/reports/pubs/demographic_impacts_2015/mbs_demo_impact_2015_c5_disability.pdf))

As the general population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase.

Under the AMA, the Manitoba government is developing mandatory accessibility standards. Each standard will address barriers for Manitobans in key areas of daily living. The standards will address the following areas:

The Customer Service standard addresses business practices and training requirements to provide better customer service to people with disabilities. The Customer Service standard must be fully implemented by November 1, 2017.

The Employment Accessibility standard will address practices related to employee recruitment, hiring and retention.

The Information and Communications standard will address barriers to accessing information – information provided in print, in person, on websites or in other formats.

The Built Environment standard will deal with access to those areas outside the jurisdiction of The Manitoba Building Code, such as sidewalks, pathways, parks and other aspects of the environment that we design and construct.

The Transportation standard will apply to public transportation to address barriers Manitobans might encounter while getting to work or school, shopping, socializing and other aspects of daily life.

The timeframe for compliance with the standards other than the Customer Service standard is yet to be determined. All standards apply to Manitoba's private and public sector organizations, including post-secondary institutions such as UCN.

As per the AMA legislation, UCN is obligated to produce its first plan by the end of 2016. The Plan must be updated every second year.

## **UCN's Commitment to Accessibility**

UCN is committed to inclusion, and to building and maintaining a diverse organization, and respecting all people's abilities. UCN is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all employees, students and other stakeholders, and treating people in a manner which allows dignity and independence. UCN is committed to meeting the needs of all people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, preventing and removing such barriers and by meeting all requirements of the AMA.

As required by the Act, UCN has designated an Accessibility Coordinator - the Director of Human Resources is identified as the Accessibility Coordinator. There is also accessibility support for students through the Learner's Assistance Centre and the position of the Accessibility Resource Officer.

## **Post-Secondary Institutions Network**

Post-Secondary Institutions in Manitoba recognize the benefit of working together and cost-sharing resources towards each institution's compliance with the AMA. To this end, a Post-Secondary Institutions Network (PSIN) was created in October 2015. The purpose of the PSIN is to meet to share ideas and best practices, recognizing that we are all in the same business, and we all want to ensure full accessibility to our students, employees and to all who utilize our services.

In particular, representatives from nine post-secondary institutions in Manitoba formed the PSIN to discuss the AMA's Customer Service standard. The PSIN is working to develop the customer service training webinars and facilitator guide which can be used at all institutions. Training modules for the Customer Service standard will be released in 2017 at all institutions. UCN will utilize these training modules to ensure that all UCN employees are trained to provide respectful and relevant customer service to all persons with disabilities.

Terms of reference have been developed for the PSIN, and the group will continue to meet as the remaining four standards are released.

Participating Post-Secondary Institutions are as follows:

- University of Manitoba
- University of Winnipeg
- University College of the North
- Assiniboine Community College
- Canadian Mennonite University

- Brandon University
- Université de Saint-Boniface
- Red River College
- Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Yutta Fricke, Executive Director of the Manitoba Disability Issues Office, had this to say about the PSIN:

“We are very pleased that the Post-Secondary Institutions are working collaboratively on the customer service standard. Our goal is to have a fully accessible province, where all abilities are valued, diversity celebrated, barriers removed and human rights protected.”

### **UCN Accessibility Working Group**

A UCN Working Group comprised of representatives across the institution, including employee and students and persons with disabilities was composed to discuss the AMA requirements as they pertain to UCN and to draft an Accessibility Plan. The participants have a good working knowledge of UCN's policies, programs and services and for those with disabilities, have “real life” experience in being disabled by barriers.

A survey of employees and of students has been undertaken, and survey information continues to be gathered. This data provides a baseline in terms of accessibility issues – what UCN may be doing well, and what barriers exist and must be removed. In addition, information was gathered from external service providers in the disability community. Input from these consultations will guide the actions to be taken with regard to Accessibility at UCN. Based on these consultations, initiatives/action have been set, and a course of action is set out in this Accessibility Plan in order to address and remove the barriers identified.

For the most part, the surveys reflected a general sense that UCN is accessible in terms of accommodating identified disabilities. However, the major theme from the surveys is the lack of knowledge and experience that employees have about accessibility, and how they can best accommodate persons with disabilities within their own roles.

The major barrier appears to be accessibility awareness. UCN will address this barrier with the provision of information about the AMA and accessibility in general. The training and information which will be brought to all employees and students under the Customer Service Standard will address and remove this barrier. This will assist in addressing attitudinal barriers related to persons with disabilities as well.

The Accessibility Policy at UCN will be shared with all stakeholders, and additional policies will be developed as the need for a new policy is identified. For example, a separate policy on service animals or support persons may be necessary to ensure full understanding of accessibility and how to remove barriers and to accommodate these factors.

Additional working groups will be composed to address the specific tasks and commitments to accessibility which will be identified as UCN works through this process, and which are noted in the Accessibility Work Plan later in this document (p. 5).

## UCN Accessibility Work Plan

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcome	Anticipated Timeline	Responsibility
UCN Management to appoint an Accessibility Coordinator.	UCN will have an Accessibility Coordinator to guide the Working Groups and Management.	Completed	Senior Executive Council
UCN to establish an accessibility working group.	UCN will have a working group(s) to ensure all aspects of accessibility are addressed.	Completed.	Accessibility Coordinator.
UCN to develop and approve a Statement of Commitment on accessibility.	UCN will have a statement of commitment on accessibility as required by the AMA.	Completed.	Accessibility Working Group and Senior Executive Council.
Retain plain text version of all UCN documents for efficient conversion to alternative formats. Add statement to all documents "available in alternative formats upon request"	All UCN documents will be accessible.	Current documents to be available in Word. All new documents to be maintained in plain text and to include the accessibility statement regarding alternative formats.	All areas of UCN



# Accessibility Plan

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcome	Anticipated Timeline	Responsibility
Create training on how to respond to requests for alternative format documents, and how to ensure accessibility with all forms and documents.	Individual staff can respond and provide alternative formats related to the documents in their department.	April 2017	Human Resources in consultation with Learning Technologies/ IT.
UCN Accessibility Working Groups to be composed as needed on identified topics.	Relevant working groups will address each accessibility issue as it arises – or on a proactive basis where possible.	As needed.	Relevant individuals depending on the accessibility issue.
Alert Finance that increased funding for accessibility will be needed. There are currently funds available for accommodation in the HR Budget, but an increase will be needed as accessibility awareness grows and more situations require accommodation.	UCN will have the necessary funds available to accommodate persons with disabilities.	2018-19 UCN Budget.	Accessibility Coordinator.
Assess UCN's website for accessibility and make all necessary changes to ensure it is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines standards.	UCN Website is fully accessible.	June 30, 2017	Communications and Web Master.

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcome	Anticipated Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Review all UCN policies and procedures to ensure they allow for accessibility in all services provided.</p>	<p>All UCN policies and procedures reflect UCN's commitment to accessibility and removes all barriers in policy.</p>	<p>Begin immediately, ongoing cycle review of all policies.</p>	<p>All areas of UCN</p>
<p>Develop new policies related to accessibility. UCN must ensure that all policies and documents are clear and in plain language, concise, logical and unambiguous.</p>	<p>UCN will have all necessary policies in place to uphold the commitment to accessibility and to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Policies to be developed as the need arises, or need is identified through the work of the Working Group(s).</p>	<p>Accessibility Coordinator and Policy Reference Groups.</p>
<p>Customer Service Standard must be met by November 1, 2017. All staff must be trained on the Customer Service standard for accessibility. Other standards will have varying deadlines. Students will receive training through student videos and formal documentation about the AMA during orientation sessions.</p>	<p>All staff will provide positive, respectful and relevant customer service at UCN. All staff and students will understand accessibility and how to assist with accommodations as necessary.</p> <p>UCN will comply with all accessibility standards within the required deadlines.</p>	<p>UCN will begin delivering training on this standard beginning no later than November 1, 2017, and the training sessions will take place at regular intervals throughout the year, as well as being available on-line.</p>	<p>Human Resources, All employees, Student Association Council.</p>



# Accessibility Plan

Initiative/Action	Expected Outcome	Anticipated Timeline	Responsibility
Determine what accommodation equipment and other accommodation supports exist currently at UCN.	UCN will have an accurate inventory of accessibility supports and can determine if other supports are require, and if so, when.	January 30, 2017.	Human Resources, IT and Student Development.
An “active offer” states that information is available in alternate formats upon request. The “active offer” will be stated on all documents and the UCN website.	All communications from UCN will include the “Active Offer”.	Immediately and ongoing.	All areas of UCN.
More information and resources must be shared with employees at all levels to understand the AMA and their responsibilities under the Act, as well as to gauge what they are currently doing in this regard and what barriers people are facing at UCN (accessibility audit). AMA training/ awareness presentations will be made to all managers and employees as well as students. In particular, managers will be taught about the AMA and the expectations of their roles within UCN as it relates to accessibility.	UCN will have up to date information/ input from staff and students on accessibility at UCN while ensuring all are trained on accessibility and accommodation. Employees will understand accessibility and will support implementation of UCN's Accessibility Plan.	Additional AMA information to be sent via email to managers, and to all staff – December 2016 and ongoing.  Formal training to begin in May 2017, and ongoing.	Human Resources and Working Group(s)



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Initiative/Action	Expected Outcome	Anticipated Timeline	Responsibility
UCN will monitor progress on accessibility challenges and requests for accommodation, as well as successful accommodations. Accessibility Coordinator will report quarterly to UCN Senior Executive Council.	UCN Senior Management will be aware of progress on AMA compliance. Accessibility Plan will be posted on the website (and available in alternative formats).	Annually, with first report to be provided in December 2017.	Accessibility Coordinator in consultation with Accessibility Resource Officer.

Ongoing discussions, feedback and audits will aid in sharing information about the AMA and each standard, as well as in collecting the information needed to complete the accessibility audit, and will assist UCN in identifying and addressing issues and barriers related to accessibility as they come to our attention.

Collaboration within and across departments and UCN sites will be critical to sharing information and strategies to address issues of accessibility for all.

The UCN Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to consistently identify, prevent, and remove all barriers to accessibility. This will be an ongoing process: UCN is committed to ensuring accessibility to all.

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Note: This document will be available in alternative formats upon request.