

President's Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
December 14, 2023
Via Zoom

Members: Karen Gingrich (Chair), Sonya Lobsinger (Secretary), Joanna Bedggood, Chris MacNeil, Jennifer Slay, Laura Clarke, Laura Le Faive, Susan Mahipaul, Angela Core, Owen McGonigal, Erika Katzman, Dominique Perreault

Guest: Joe Henry

Regrets: MK Arundel, Doreen Vautour, Linda Whidden

1. Approval of the Minutes from September 26, 2023 (Dom Perreault/Chris MacNeil)

Question raised by S. Mahipaul regarding reducing the meeting duration to an hour. K. Gingrich confirmed there was discussion about shortening the meeting length. S. Lobsinger clarified that because the meetings have not extended past the one-hour duration, they were shortened. Committee agreed that the meeting duration can be extended if needed.

2. Introduction of New Members

K. Gingrich introduced E. Katzman and O. McGonigal. Round table introductions were conducted. J. Henry was introduced as a guest to speak to AODA post-secondary standards.

Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Revised King's Accessibility Plan and Appendix A

K. Gingrich shared that the accessibility plan has been updated and was distributed to the committee for review. Replaced references to Principle with President and replaced reference to King's Accessibility Advisory Group with PAAC. Also removed Appendix C that made reference to Assistive Technologies at King's. There is no requirement to list this in our plan but suggested these items could be listed on our Accessibility webpage. Appendix A has been updated and was circulated for review by the committee. A review of Appendix A was conducted to identify any items that have been completed.

E. Katzman inquired why some items on the Appendix have not yet been completed, whether there were budgetary reasons. C. MacNeil indicated that from Physical Plant perspective some items are not necessarily budgetary, it's also staffing related. The accessibility auditor is adjudicating for a few different standards such as AODA, FDA and Ontario building code legislation. The results of the audit can then be compared to this list. This audit is specific to physical accessibility. E. Katzman shared that faculty should be assigning materials that are accessible. Much of the plan is related to physical environment and not a lot toward attitudinal barriers and asked if there is opportunity to expand on the attitudinal barriers.

A. Core inquired about the cross walk, the bumpy tactile panels as well as a volume auditory sound connected to the button so that people with vision loss are safer to cross the street. C. MacNeil said that the tactile indicators are not in the plan that we generated but it has been identified in the audits so this will be added in as something that needs to be addressed. C. MacNeil has not seen auditory signals in either this plan or the list from the accessibility auditor. King's doesn't have control over the cross walk itself, that belongs to the city.

S. Mahipaul mentioned it's not just about the physical space, we are very much online with how we present information and becomes about time and planning on how to do things. Difficult to document a list because there are accessibility issues we hear all the time from students and also issues that we experience ourselves at Kings. Average person unaware of the difficulties experienced every day, how can we make these things available to students and how can we let them know that they are available.

E. Katzman suggested using signage in places that are not accessible such as printer in library.

K. Suggestions for PAAC budget

K. Gingrich shared that we received some suggestions for use of the PAAC budget. One suggestion was to put the money towards compliance on our website. We are currently sitting at approximately 66% compliance on the website. Another suggestion brought forward was to use the budget towards the Wemple life. It was also suggested that we use the budget to purchase noise cancelling headphones. The total PAAC budget is \$30K.

L. Clarke mentioned that the main entrance and back entrance of Dante is not accessible so perhaps signage on how to access our board room or faculty offices in an accessible way could be used. This would be an inexpensive item. K. Gingrich indicated that we could make note to add this to the accessibility plan.

D. Perrault shared that the accessibility compliance software for the website would approximately \$2000-\$3000 and it would also come with an annual licensing cost.

L. Whidden provided information that the noise calling head phones would be about \$150-\$300.

E. Katzman suggested using some funds for education. Current AODA training tells us about AODA but not how to use it in our everyday job. Also mentioned that despite there being information available on how to create accessible PDF, the information is not clear.

D. Mantle asked about AODA website compliance and suggested having an individual complete the audit versus software. D. Perreault is considering the use of the software for short term use as ITS does not have the capacity currently to have an individual doing the compliance auditing. Once the website is redesigned then it would be more appropriate to bring in an audit team. D. Perrault plans to put it in his budget for May, but knowing how budgets are currently going, this is something that we can make it happen now with the use of the PAAC budget.

S. Mahipaul mentioned a discussion with the previous HR Director in regards to certain things that we could and could not request as part of the budget. Inquired whether this should be something that needs to be discussed. Perhaps need to review the TOR and determine if there are any conflicts.

J. Bedgood mentioned that its fairly new for this committee to have a budget, it's only been a few years so there is not a lot of history regarding how we have made these decisions to use the funds in the past.

D. Perreault mentioned that if C. MacNeil were to get denied budget for the Wemple lift, this committee could put together a statement to strongly recommend it. D. Mantle suggested a letter of support is completed in advance of the budget submission. Committee in agreement.

Committee to have further discussion on PAAC budget at next meeting. Budget must be spent prior to April 30, 2024 for this fiscal year.

L. Wemple Lift

C. MacNeil is looking at small elevator that will replace where the Wemple lift is located. We do not have the space to make that changes without significant construction costs. Lift needs replacement and C. MacNeil has added this to his budget for the upcoming year. A complaint about the chair lift is the method of operation. It is key operated and the button need to be continuously pressed while the lift goes up and done. Not able to change this, even the new lift will have a constant pressure mechanism. C. MacNeil shared that what this can do is remove the need for physical keys. The new lift will have a key pad and anyone that needs to use it will have a code to punch in instead of a physical key.

S. Mahipaul mentioned that another issue with the lift is that the door doesn't close behind you. C. MacNeil acknowledged the issue and shared that it is partly due to the age of the lift. On a monthly basis security does patrols and checks in various areas which include the lift. If security come across an issue, they submit a work order to issue a repair.

D. Mantle inquired if the lift could be open to everyone rather than with a specific code. C. MacNeil said the legislation of the construction doesn't allow that. Accessibility has to be through either a key or a key pad. D. Mantel asked if a phone would be installed in the new lift and C. MacNeil will look into this further.

M. Accessibility Audit Summary

Defer to next meeting. C. MacNeil to provide an update

A. Core inquired as to whether there are companies that do scans of the non-physical areas of the environment. D. Mantle suggested more internal first and engaging in a sub-committee of PAAC to address some of the non-physical items that are not being addressed through C. MacNeil's

accessibility audit. Further discussion to be held at next meeting.

3. New Business

a) AODA Post-Secondary Accessibility Standards

J. Henry spoke to the AODA alliance and ongoing freedom of information requests to get the audit report which has still not been made public. At this point they are still recommendations so we do not know what standards will be accepted and what will be recommended. There is a report from higher education accessibility council and some recommendations were made to the government around funding and what post-secondary are being funded for. J, Henry shared we do not yet know what the fundamental result will be. D. Perreault suggested that although they have not been formalized, they may serve as great guide for us to use. J. Henry shared that King's is not visible to the government as an affiliate, we do not get direct funding, we only receive a fraction of what Western gets. If we were a stand-alone institution, we would get close to \$700,000, however, we as affiliate we do not get close to that.

S. Mahipaul shared concerns from students who are not feeling supported and included in their courses. Suggested as something to continue to explore.

Action Items

- a) S. Lobsinger to send a doodle poll to reschedule March meeting to February and increase duration back to two hours.
- b) S. Lobsinger will re-circulate the updated Accessibility Plan and Appendix A for committee review and feedback.
- c) K. Gingrich and S. Lobsinger to draft a letter of support for the Wemple lift budget submission for committee for review.
- d) C. MacNeil to confirm if a phone can be installed in new Wemple lift.
- e) S. Lobsinger to enable chat for meetings on a go forward basis

4. Adjournment

Motion for meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm (Erika Katzman/Angela Core)