**Accessibility Advisory Group Meeting**

**December 11, 2014**

**KC 119**

**Attendees**: Joan Aldis, Doug Mantle, Doreen Vautour, Shaila, Beaudry, Kate Stephenson**,** Tom Jory, Kathy Mitchell, Chris MacNeil, Linda Whidden, Pam Cushing, Veronika Elsie (Chair).

**Regrets**: Jim Zucchero and Nicole Turner

**Updates on Information from Multi-Year Plan**

Disability Studies Program

Pam Cushing provided the committee with an update on the Disability Studies Program. This program has been in existence for 3 years now and for the first time this year the Senate has approved it as an official “minor”. King’s may expand it to a “major” in the future.

Pam also stated that through the support of Residence and Enrolment Services, she continues to get the word out to local and Ontario school boards and first year King’s students about the program. She is also working with leaders of the Thames Valley District School Board to forge stronger local connections, and to keep the program on the cutting edge of new pedagogical advancements.

Physical Plan Updates

Chris MacNeil provided an update on the work Physical Plant is doing with making campus more accessible. Chris and Joan Aldis regularly tour campus and note areas of potential accessibility improvement, but due to a limited budget of $40,000/ year, updates have to be prioritized.

Project Update from 2013 Multi-Year Plan

The following work has been highlighted by the Physical Plant:

* Installing barrier-free ramps at various campus locations - ongoing
* Ensuring further sidewalk and curb accessibility - ongoing
* Adding contrast strips to exterior stair nosings at various locations - completed
* Installing an adult assistance table in washroom in Wemple Residence - completed
* Further signage will be posted indicating accessible entrances - ongoing
* Ensure all accessible doors have accessible signs/stickers - completed
* Ensure all classrooms have accessible seating - ongoing
* Install more automatic door openers – ongoing
* Handrail and bannister completed on stairs in Dante Lenardon Building
* Student Life Center (SLC)– contrasting on glass is completed
* Outside bannister between library and SLC is too sharp and presents a possible hazard– grips are being priced and will be installed
* Working on making all accessible parking spots regulation size. As well the percentage of disabled spots versus non-disabled spots is being reviewed
  + Joan and Doug will count how many students have disabled parking
  + Shaila Beaudry will count how many staff/faculty have disabled parking
  + The numbers will help determine if we have a sufficient number of disabled parking spots.

Library accommodation plans include:

* Ensuring that the public washrooms on the second floor are accessible. - ongoing
* Ensuring the availability of more accessible workstations – it was determined that there are enough accessible study areas and more and not required.
* Accessibility has been taken into account in the planning and design of the new Student Life Centre. Accessibility will also be a consideration in all renovations to existing buildings.
* Accessibility, by means of a checklist, is being incorporated in the Joint Health and Safety building and grounds Inspections at King’s. This ensures that accessibility remains in the forefront of inspectors’ minds while touring the campus - ongoing.

Information and Communications Updates:

* Human Resources are continuing the mental health and ergonomics education sessions as part of the King’s Wellness Series. – completed this year with success and will continue to be offered
* King’s will offer online accessibility-related training pertaining to the Integrated Standard of the AODA – Training is being developed for the IS standard and will be rolled out to the community in January 2015. Concerns were raised over the lack of compliance with Faculty members. Pam Cushing offered to do a brief presentation at Faculty Council on the benefits of understanding and building into the culture accessibility. It is hoped that this measure will help get more buy-in on the part of faculty. Human Resources will work with Pam on possible dates.
* Tom Jory updated the committee on the work ITS is doing to ensure the King’s website is AODA compliant. ITS hired an outside company called Site Improve to review the website and to make suggestions on compliance options. Tom informed the committee that we are in good shape; by Christmas the site should be in responsive design and will view better on mobile and tablet platforms.
* Human Resources will follow up with Communications to ensure that all promotional videos are closed captioned when posted to thewebsites.

Residence and Students Update:

* Residence Services will continue to work with campus partners to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are accommodated within the Residence system, in order to provide a positive campus experience for these students - ongoing
* Residence Services will ensure that accessibility is a key consideration when planning their Residence Staff Training – student leadership including, orientation leaders and sophs are being trained on how they can make their events more accessible.

Assistive Devices and Technology:

* Doug Mantle provided updates from his department. There is a new access lab, with 2 new systems that will open in early January. All the furniture is height adjustable with a motorized table and ergonomic chairs.
* In January the department is starting a pilot project on making a worksite blue tooth enabled, allowing someone paralysed to operate a work station.

**New Business**

Doug Mantle updated the committee on a new transcription service initiative called CART which Students with Disabilities and he are exploring. Western and Fanshawe use this service and King’s will be doing so also in January. The committee is invited to attend. This service is not intended to replace sign language interpreters but to complement it and to provide and additional option for deaf and hard of hearing students. CART can further enhance learning as the information would be directly transcribed and would not have to be translated into American Sign Language first.

Doug Mantle also reported on a conference being planned for June 2015, for assistive device technologists, human resources professionals, IT professionals, counsellors, disability counsellors and librarians from universities and Colleges throughout the province, to discuss new advances in the field and to network. It is entitled “Transitioning and Collaboration” and it is expected that the guest speaker will be Dr. Todd Cunningham. Additional information will be forthcoming.

There being no additional new business, the meeting was adjourned.