2022-2024
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN UPDATE

ASSINIBOINE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.
Please contact **accessibility@assiniboine.net** or **204.725.8700** (ext. 6052).

Date of first approval: January 2016

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Years applicable: January 2019 to December 2024

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Accessibility Committee representatives: Student Success Advisors,
Students' Association, staff, faculty, students, senior management &
Student Accessibility Coordinator

Message from the

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

We the members of the Accessibility team at Assiniboine Community College present our Accessibility plan update for 2022 and 2024. Based upon The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), Assiniboine Community College is responsible for:

» Identifying, preventing and removing barriers
» Assessing our Policies, Programs and Services
» Continuous improvement across the college

To update this plan, we solicited feedback from staff, students and the college community. These stakeholders provided us with critical priorities for focus, specifically the reduction of physical barriers at all our campuses. Through this process, we identified new opportunities to make our Assiniboine Community College Campuses even more accessible, especially in the context of staff development. We will ensure this plan meets, and where practicable exceeds the requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) while ensuring fiscal accountability. We look forward to implementing the strategic goals outlined in our plan.
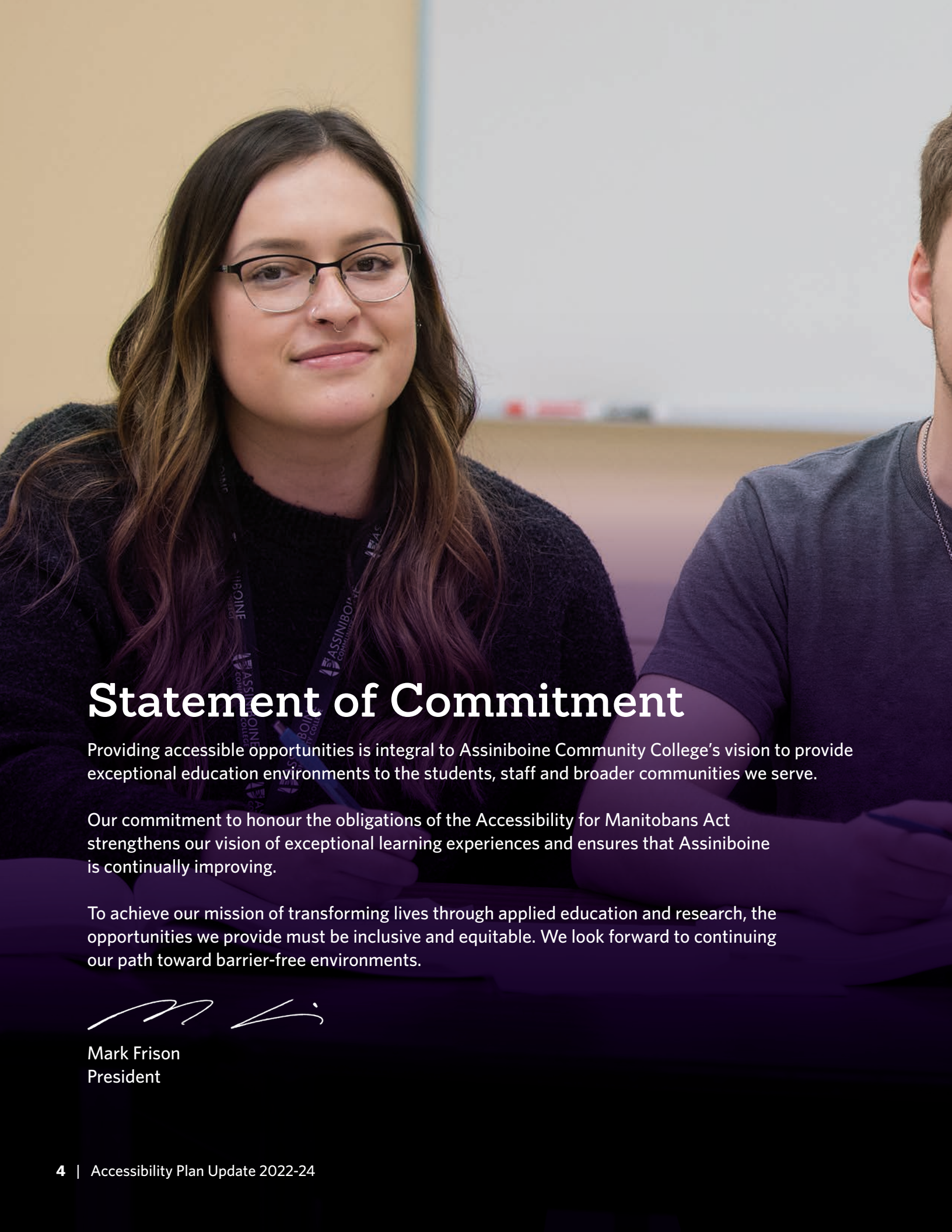
Statement of Commitment

Providing accessible opportunities is integral to Assiniboine Community College's vision to provide exceptional education environments to the students, staff and broader communities we serve.

Our commitment to honour the obligations of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act strengthens our vision of exceptional learning experiences and ensures that Assiniboine is continually improving.

To achieve our mission of transforming lives through applied education and research, the opportunities we provide must be inclusive and equitable. We look forward to continuing our path toward barrier-free environments.

Mark Frison
President

PROGRESS

In our Accessibility Plan, we identified barriers and identified actions to address them. This section provides an overview of our progress to date and our achievements.

1. The Accessibility Committee

We have previously established an Accessibility Committee that is chaired by the Student Accessibility Coordinator. The committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The chair of the committee presents bi-annual reports to the Senior Leadership Team.

Going forward: We will continue to update the college community on the plan and actions of the Accessibility Committee and engage them in the implementation of the plan.

Lead: Chair of the Accessibility Committee

Timeline: ongoing, with progress reported at quarterly committee meetings.

2. Ongoing employee education

Assiniboine Community College is committed to educating employees and providing resources on accessibility standards including the use of the Accessibility Style Guide and the creation of accessible documents. We will accomplish this by providing ongoing employee education. For example, in collaboration with the Post-Secondary Institution Network, we have developed a Customer Service Standards Training online course available to all staff and students in our Learning Management System. As outlined in the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, we have made this training mandatory.

Course Design and Instructor Presence:
The course was intended to support instructors in converting their course from the emergency pivot of remote instruction into an intentionally designed blended course for the 2021-2022 academic year. This includes the development of a Moodle course that meets Moodle Minimum Presence Standards. Elements of the training included accessibility considerations and how to reduce barriers for learners through intentional course design.

Moodle Minimum Presence Standards:
Launched this year, Moodle Minimum Presence Standards are intended to provide a consistent student experience in Moodle and ensure that students can access the critical information they need to be successful. There are 16 standards that can be categorized into (a) elements the Moodle course page contains, and (b) the on line presence of the instructor. The Moodle Minimum Presence Standards support accessibility by reducing barriers.

Our CLI team has created workshops and training in the areas of Universal Design for Learning, accessibility and inclusive classrooms. Training and job aids in assessment, instruction, and classroom management are often grounded in UDL mindset.

Going forward:
Our Faculty Development Coaches, Instructional Designer, Student Accessibility Coordinator, Learning Strategists, and Educational Technology Specialist will provide leadership on Universal Design for Learning. Their goal is to support staff and faculty in creating a more inclusive teaching and learning environment. This team will facilitate the application of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in a postsecondary context, helping Assiniboine Community College develop a deep understanding of what it means to provide accessible customer service as college employees. We will continue the development of training plans for Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation, and the Built Environment as the standards are released.

Lead: Learning Curve staff go through more extensive training on assistive software, creating accessible documents, learning strategies and disability-specific issues. Learning Commons and Human Resources will work collaboratively to develop an employee education plan for 2022 and 2024. This plan will embed accessibility into existing staff development opportunities (such as our Faculty Development workshops and Manager's Toolkit training), as well as new sessions dedicated to accessibility.

Timeline: New training offerings occur throughout the year, while existing the Customer Service course will continue to be available on an ongoing basis.

3. College information and communications

Informed by our Customer Service policy, we have developed a dedicated page on the college website for information on the Accessibility Plan. We have also provided training and resources for accessible event planning.

A large part of communicating with everyone on campus is to make sure we have consistent messaging, wording and accessible formats across all documents.

To help keep the wording cohesive across the college, Communications has created a document with useful information and wording that follow our brand standards.

The college also has a visual identity guide to help with visual design (margins around logos for legibility and logo use on colour and photo backgrounds, font usage, colour elements to help with legibility, etc.).

Our recruitment team ensures information about accessibility supports for students at the college is shared with prospective students, counsellors, and sponsors during on line information sessions and in person presentations and appointments.

Marketing strives to include representation of people of all ages, gender, culture, and ability in their materials. All major publications include a statement of availability in alternate formats. Online materials such as the website include alt tags for all images.

Going forward: Assiniboine Community College students, faculty and staff will be required to participate in training regarding Accessibility Standards across the college. Training will include, but not be limited to, the college's legal responsibilities to provide student accommodations and assistive supports and will be facilitated in a multitude of ways including being embedded in student orientation, presented during lunch and learns, and taught in courses in our Learning Management System Moodle (currently under development).

Work is being done to examine and implement ways to make our online events more accessible to attendees ie: closed captioning and descriptive audio for images.

Lead: Learning Commons

Timeline: ongoing

4. Identification of systemic barriers

We have identified opportunities and developed support materials to educate employees and students about accommodation and accessibility at Assiniboine Community College. For example, the roles of the Student Accessibility Coordinator, Student Success Advisor and the Learning Curve team are explained during student orientation and staff onboarding.

As a team, we will evaluate new software and technology and pilot them with students and staff, and we will continue to offer assistive technologies such as Read and Write to all staff and students. Additionally, the college website and publications are currently updated to include an active offer for alternate formats. All Assiniboine Community College marketing materials were reviewed to ensure they were representative of individuals with disabilities.

We have created a Student Success Course called College Foundations. Because college asks students to take greater responsibility for their learning than they might have experienced in their previous learning contexts, many often find the transition to college unexpectedly difficult. College Foundations is a learning course intended to help students better manage this transition. It provides students with the opportunity to proactively develop self-awareness, increase academic preparedness, and become active learners who take responsibility for their learning. In this course, students are introduced to accessibility services and assistive technology.

An Individual Emergency Response Plan procedure has been developed to ensure a safe working and learning environment for all staff and faculty. Employees who have disabilities (whether permanent, temporary, visible, or invisible) that require assistance during an emergency, are asked to complete a self-assessment form which is submitted to Human Resources. Human Resources will work with the staff person to develop an appropriate individualized emergency response plan.

Going forward: We are creating a Faculty Handbook that accounts for some of the most common accommodations present in a post-secondary classroom and presents strategies for effective instruction of students with a variety of learning and disability-related needs. This handbook will also help faculty apply the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and accessible customer service to the teaching and learning context. We are reviewing and updating college policies and procedures to identify gaps or revisions. We will continue to be committed to including an active offer for Accessibility and Disability Services at all college events.

Lead: Accessibility Committee and Accessibility and Disability Services

Timeline: Faculty Handbook is in development. The College Foundations course continues to be evaluated and updated yearly to align with accessibility standards.

5. Access and improvement of college infrastructure

We have completed an internal assessment that included doors, meeting spaces, offices, washroom, and other barriers to participation. This assessment informed the creation of an Accessibility Campus Map and the identification of barriers on campus, which is reviewed & updated annually.

In our last update we identified several barriers on our campuses. To date, all substantive projects identified since 2019 have been completed:

» The North and South main entrances of the Victoria Avenue East campus were redone to incorporate new concrete walks and ramps.

» Evacuation chairs were installed in stairways at the Victoria Avenue East and North Hill campuses to assist individuals with reduced mobility.

» New barrier-free desks were implemented at the Registrar's Office on the Victoria Avenue East campus and at other main campuses.

» Fourteen (14) Automatic door openers have been installed at the Victoria Avenue East and North Hill campuses to promote barrier free access to our spaces.

In addition, accessibility maps have been created and widely distributed within the College community or all major campuses, outlining accessible entrances and elevators, accessible washrooms, and stair lifts.

We have also implemented the use of a phone application, SafetySmart, which provides digital access to accessibility maps, as well as campus security and other useful resources to promote access within our campuses.

Going forward: Having completed all substantial projects that related to accessible access, we will continue to work with community stakeholders to identify any accessibility issues that are brought to our attention in both our physical and digital environments. We will also commit to meeting or exceeding all accessibility requirements in future space designs.

Lead: Facilities (campus projects)

Timeline: Ongoing, with reports provided to the Accessibility Committee at quarterly meetings.

6. Quality assurance

The Assiniboine Community College Accessibility Committee has created Terms of Reference and defined quality assurance actions and roles.

We have established an Accessibility Committee that is chaired by the Student Accessibility Coordinator.

The Accessibility Committee is responsible for the following quality assurance actions:

» Establish and maintain a terms of reference.

» Establish and maintain an accessibility plan in line with current legislation and standards.

» Develop and present bi-annual reports to the Senior Leadership Team.

» Develop, update, and maintain accessibility training and resources.

» Establish sub-committees to develop, review, and revise ongoing accessibility projects.

» Solicit feedback from internal and external stakeholders in order improve the accessibility plan and policy updates.

The committee meets on a quarterly basis.

Going forward: We will continue to support accessibility at Assiniboine Community College by developing and communicating the Accessibility Plan over multiple years. Staff development, soliciting feedback from internal and external stakeholders, identifying resources and periodically preparing progress reports are some of the ways we will accomplish this.

Lead: Accessibility Committee

Timeline: Ongoing

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