

Message from the President

The Central Student Association (CSA) at the University of Guelph is the undergraduate student voice on campus and is a semi-autonomous, not-for-profit organization. We advocate for and represent the collective interests of undergraduate students, bringing the student voice to decision-makers on campus and in our community. We also provide programs and services to enhance the student experience and save students money.

The Association consists of an elected Executive, a Board of Directors, permanent and student staff, and volunteers. We are committed to always uphold the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, and CSA bylaws and policies. Those with disabilities face additional barriers to participation in the CSA and this is not always recognized or understood by those who do not identify as having a disability. Barriers to accessibility can be visible and invisible, tangible and intangible, and perceived or real. They can occur in all aspects of the CSA including Board meetings, services, by-laws and policies, events, and space. We are committed to recognizing and dismantling those barriers.

Statement of Commitment

The Central Student Association (CSA) at the University of Guelph is committed to ensuring equal access for people with disabilities and treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence and embodies the principles of integration and equal opportunity.

The CSA is committed to being a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities in employment, in its communications and information, in the delivery of goods and services and in its built environment. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (the “Act”) and associated regulations, including O. Reg. 191/11: *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (the “Regulation”) and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The CSA is committed to ensuring that all its employees are aware of their responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons with disabilities.

The CSA’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the CSA will ensure we meet these requirements and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces

The Multi-Year Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Section 1: Ongoing Initiatives to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The CSA has made significant progress to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in the areas of Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, and establishing a feedback process.

The CSA has an Accessibility Working Group (AWG), chaired by the Vice President Academic, whose role is to act as a forum for discussing and promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities within the CSA:

- a) To act as a resource for accessibility within the organization.
- b) To promote the development of critical disabilities assessment within the CSA.
- c) To examine all aspects of the CSA, including but not limited to, bylaws and policies, operations, space, meetings and events for accessibility barriers.
- d) To explore and deconstruct all real and potential barriers within the CSA.
- e) To promote the reduction of the stigma surrounding disabilities
- f) To promote broader understanding of the experiences of students with disabilities.
- g) To promote an accessible environment for all members of the CSA.
- h) To discuss the experiences of members with disabilities.
- i) To ensure that all CSA bylaws and policies become, and continue to be, accessible for all members.
- j) To make recommendations to the appropriate CSA Executive, staff, committees to reduce barriers within their areas of responsibility.
- k) To uphold and promote the Declaration of the Rights of Students with Disabilities.

The CSA is committed to excellence in serving all users of our services including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Customer Service:

The CSA is committed to maintaining an accessible environment for persons with disabilities in the delivery of its goods and services and will continue to:

- Communicate in ways that take into account the needs of the persons with disabilities;
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and, upon request, the CSA will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities.
- Ensure persons with disabilities who use assistive devices are able to obtain, use or benefit from our services.
- Allow a person with disabilities who is accompanied by a service animal or support person to enter the premises with the animal or support person.
- Provide notification in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.
- Provide information about emergency procedures, plans or public safety in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request.

Information and Communications:

The CSA strives to provide information in formats that all members can access. The CSA is committed to providing accessible information and will continue to:

- Upon request and in consultation with the person making the request, arrange for the provision of documents in an accessible format or with communication support to persons with a disability in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- Ensure the CSA's websites and content conforms with the required standards.

Employment:

The CSA is committed to supporting the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities and will continue to:

- Notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
- Notify job applicants that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used during the recruitment process.
- Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Inform its employees of its policies that support employees with disabilities.
- Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the CSA is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- Accommodate the needs of its employees with disabilities as required by the Ontario accessibility laws and Ontario Human Rights Code by developing individualized accommodation plans for its employees with disabilities as the CSA is made aware.
- Maintain a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations and support in order to return to work.
- Consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as their individual accommodation plans when conducting performance management reviews, providing career development and advancement to employees, and when redeploying employees.

Self-service kiosks:

The CSA is committed to accessible provision of self-service kiosks. The front office houses self-service kiosks for the purposes of printing. Users of the service are assisted by trained staff. The self-service kiosks were designed with consideration of accessibility for people with disabilities.

Training:

The CSA is committed to training its employees and other individuals who provide services to the public on the CSA's behalf on customer service and communications. Training will continue to occur within three weeks of employees' commencement of duties and records will be maintained. The CSA provides training on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the CSA's policies and practices.

Feedback Process:

The CSA is committed to meeting accessibility requirements and continuously taking steps to improve its services and website to comply with the AODA and its regulations. The CSA will continue to welcome feedback regarding the manner in which it provides goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities. Feedback can be provided to the Vice President Academic, Chair of the Accessibility Working Group, or the President:

- In person at the Central Student Association office, 50 Stone Rd East, Unit 274, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1
- By telephone, 519-824-4120 x56742 or x64408
- In writing to the CSA Vice President Academic or President;
- By email to csavpacademic@uoguelph.ca or csapresident@uoguelph.ca

Section 2: Strategies and Actions

The projects and programs the CSA plans to continue to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities:

Customer Service

The CSA will continue to strive to provide services that are accessible to and inclusive of employees, members, and members of the public with disabilities by:

- Evaluating existing programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of persons with disabilities.
- Continuing to embed the focus on accessibility in the development of any new programs or services.

Information and Communications

The CSA will continue to ensure digital accessibility in all services and information provided to members and members of the public, and the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by:

- Conducting regular reviews of compliance and best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility;
- Continuing to evaluate and remediate website content and ensure it meets or exceed accessibility compliance requirements.

Employment

The CSA will continue to ensure digital accessibility in all services and information provided to members and members of the public, and the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by:

- Conducting regular reviews of compliance and best practices in order to identify ways to improve accessibility;
- Continuing to evaluate and remediate website content and ensure it meets or exceed accessibility compliance requirements.

Self-service kiosks

The CSA will continue to incorporate accessibility features and consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Training

The CSA will continue to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities. New staff will receive training in Accessible Service Provision within three weeks of hire.

Design of Public Spaces

The CSA recognizes the need to increase the accessibility of its public spaces where possible. To ensure accessibility in public spaces, the CSA will:

- Continue to implement accessibility improvements when renovating or modifying existing interior and/or exterior public spaces;

- Ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated when setting up temporary event spaces, such as event seating and table layouts, check-in counters, queuing lines or waiting areas.

For More Information:

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact the CSA President, 519-824-4120 x54408 or csapresident@uoguelph.ca.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Walker", is written over a horizontal line.

Signature – Nicole Walker, CSA President 2021-2022

October 27, 2021

Date