SUBJECT	Update on UBC's Accessibility Priorities
SUBMITTED TO	People, Community & International Committee
MEETING DATE	November 21, 2023
SESSION CLASSIFICATION	Recommended session criteria from Board Meetings Policy: OPEN
REQUEST	For information only - No action requested
LEAD EXECUTIVE	Marcia Buchholz, Vice-President, Human Resources
SUPPORTED BY	Gage Averill, Provost & Vice-President Academic overseeing Equity & Inclusion Office Ainsley Carry, Vice-President, Students Frank Laezza, Vice-President, Finance & Operations Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion

PRIOR SUBMISSIONS

The subject matter of this submission has not previously been considered by the People, Community & International Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is an update on actions taken by UBC to advance accessibility obligations and aspirations, aligned with the *Accessibility BC Act* and the university's Strategic Equity & Anti-Racism (StEAR) Framework.

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2023, UBC sent out a call to the campus community to invite expressions of interests from at-large students, faculty, and staff to serve on a newly formed **Accessibility Committee** to provide on-going guidance and advice to the Executive on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility in accordance with provincial government requirements. The deadline for applications was March 13, 2023, and the call yielded 117 applications, among whom 77 self-identified as disabled students, faculty, and staff. The Executive appointed to the Committee 9 at-large disabled community members to join 6 ex-officio campus service providers and 3 members representing the student government (representing the AMS, GSS, SOU). The Terms of Reference and Membership are posted online.

Since it's establishment, the Accessibility Committee has met three times to review the Terms of Reference, and to discuss the task ahead of selecting a co-chair from among the at-large members. The Accessibility Committee put forward two requests to the Executive, for edits to the Terms of Reference and to approve a Recognition Framework for at-large students, faculty, and staff who take up Co-Chairing responsibilities. Following discussion with the Associate Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion (AVPEI), these were approved and will be implemented in advance of the next Accessibility Committee meeting on November 23, 2023, in which the group will also be discussing nomination of their co-chair. The Executive is working with the AVPEI to confirm the Executive-appointed ex-officio co-chair.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND PLANNING TEAM

Terms of Reference have been developed to constitute an **Accessibility Planning Team,** comprising of senior university officials, to develop and implement an institutional **Accessibility Plan** in consultation with the Accessibility Committee. While the government had expected that BC universities would have an Accessibility Plan in place by September 2023, government liaisons have confirmed that there is considerable flexibility given to universities in the inaugural year, recognizing the need to thoughtfully consult with the disability community to establish the infrastructure and governance processes that will inform planning.

The Members of the Planning Team are:
- Chair: Associate Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion (System-Wide)
- Director, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (UBCO)
- Associate Vice-President, Campus & Community Planning (System-Wide)
- Associate Vice-President, Facilities (System-Wide)
- Associate Vice-President, Information Technology (System-Wide)
- Associate Vice-President, Communications (UBCV)
- Associate Vice-President, University Relations UBCO)
- Vice-Provost, Teaching/Learning (System-Wide)
- Associate Provost, Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning (UBCO)
- Executive Director, OVPS (UBCV)
- Associate Vice-President, Students (UBCO)
- Associate Vice-President, Finance and Operations (UBCO)
- Associate Vice-President, Finance & Integrated Services (UBCV)
- Associate Vice-President, Human Resources (UBCV)
- Vice-Provost, Faculty Planning (UBCV)
- Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services (UBC V)

The AVPEI has convened **one introductory meeting with the Accessibility Planning Team**, *without the co-chairs of the Accessibility Committee as they have yet to be elected/appointed.*

The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update on the issues raised by the Accessibility Committee, identify interest among members to chair the Planning Team, and to inform the group of next steps. It was determined by the group that it was most appropriate for the AVPEI to continue to Chair the Accessibility Planning Team, with the expectation that different members would step up to lead work that is focused on accessibility standards related to areas under their purview: employment, delivery of services, build environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement.

Next Steps

The Co-Chairs for the Accessibility Committee are expected to be confirmed by the end of November, at which time a meeting with the Accessibility Planning Team will be scheduled.

The Planning Team will determine a work plan and timelines for producing a more fulsome Accessibility Plan.