

Framework sets out new direction to enhance accessibility

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With a shared vision and commitment to bring greater accessibility to their communities and direct and enhance institutional accessibility plans, the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) are pleased to endorse the [Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework](#). The work was developed by the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group.

“It’s important that Nova Scotia’s post-secondary leaders take this important blueprint and put it into action so that we can offer our communities full and equitable access to education, employment, and services within our institutions,” says NSCC President Don Bureaux. “The working group focused on the development of a values-based commitment to accessibility that prioritizes institutional accountability within a human rights framework.”

The framework outlines a vision, principles, goals and commitments for accessibility in post-secondary education, focusing on the following areas: awareness and capacity building, teaching, learning and research, information and communication, goods and services, employment, transportation, the built environment, and monitoring and evaluation.

“The framework will be implemented through each institution’s Accessibility Committee and Plan,” says Prof. William (Bill) Lahey, President, University of King’s College and Chair, CONSUP. “Universities are working at establishing action plans and timelines that reflect their respective institutional policies, priorities, processes and budgets to fulfill the commitments outlined in the framework.”

The working group members will continue to collaborate to ensure the commitments are met. Nova Scotia’s post-secondary education institutions are now working to set up their own accessibility advisory committees and develop their accessibility plans.

Accessibility Act

The Accessibility Act, enacted in 2017, recognizes accessibility as a human right and sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

Nova Scotia’s universities and NSCC were prescribed as public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act. This means they must create multi-year accessibility plans, establish accessibility advisory committees, and comply with accessibility standards when they are developed.

“When we eliminate barriers to access, we open the door to endless opportunities” says Minister of Justice Mark Furey. “The work undertaken by our post-secondary institutions is setting the stage for equitable learning and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. My colleague and Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, Lena Metlege Diab shares my appreciation for the tremendous work undertaken by the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents and Nova Scotia Community College. Their post-

secondary accessibility framework is a first in Canada and will be an example of excellence for others to follow.”

About the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group

The Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group was established in March 2019 by CONSUP, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the Accessibility Directorate, Department of Justice to support collaboration in accessibility among post-secondary institutions. The Working Group is made up of staff from Nova Scotia universities and Nova Scotia Community College.

To develop the framework, the working group consulted with students, and employees, with an emphasis on consulting with those with first-voice perspectives. Information was gathered through an online survey, focus groups, and campus consultations.

[Read the Framework](#)

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