

Student Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Kim Miller, Co-Chair	Elizabeth Mohler	Leighton Schreyer
Alex Fortier-Engs	Emily Good	Melissa Brideau
Andrew Speer	Havina Rajeswaran <i>regrets</i>	Sahiba Badyal <i>regrets</i>
Asil El Galad	Jacqueline Sally Co	Sandy Robinson
Brianne Lallean	Jonathan Alexander <i>regrets</i>	Sarah Brunke
Britney Lamb	Joy Cameron <i>regrets</i>	Sohini Chatterjee
Courtney Young	Lauren Sanders	Steph Atkinson

1. Land Acknowledgement

2. Website focus group

- a. Facilitated by Tea Hadwen, Digital Engagement Coordinator, Student Experience
- b. Joined by Mathew Hoy, Senior Web Designer, Western University

What is working for you on current websites?

- Visible contact information
- Live chat function
- Looking at it from phone, and seems good for phones
 - If just looking something up, I use phone
 - Colours are good
- Using the app a lot, which is useful, and calendar built into OWL is useful for someone with memory issues
 - WesternU app
- Accessibility Education site: liked how a lot of text is more bolded compared to King's website
- Easier to find information in Western site than King's
- Links to Facebook, Instagram and other platforms make sit feel more modern
 - Shows how ingrained student experience is into these websites
- Section for a feedback questionnaire; really important
 - Not how way is set up, but having an **anonymous** opportunity is good

What is not working for you on current websites?

- Looked at McMaster and University of Toronto
 - 4 sections: options on main page and on the side; like options of general areas, but on front page you can see all the hubs, so less overwhelming
- Videos where people talking or explaining things have no closed captioning or subtitles
- Some of the lists are on opposite side of page on certain tabs; keep uniformity

Western Student Experience

- Not accessible
- Overwhelming in general; lots of tabs and every time you click, more options come up and it is hard to know where to go; lots of information
 - On main page, 4 categories, then when click into one of the categories, some open in new tab and whole new website in and of itself; not all housed on one site per se
- A lot of writing compared to other examples, who utilized images and icons, white space a lot better
- Don't want to read through a lot
- Pie chart of services example: blurry image and text not legible
- Considered how hard it was to find info on Western's site versus others; getting around campus from accessibility perspective is much more prominent on other schools' sites (e.g. McMaster)
- Don't know what subheadings mean compared to McMaster's website
- General Western: so hard to know what resources are there; a master page of where to find things would be helpful
- A lot of pages don't have a lot of information, lots of unnecessary information, some open into new tabs which isn't ideal; compile into one page rather than clicking through
- AE has a lot of links to click; would be easier to separate by audiences
- Areas where links are required but missing e.g. Transition, Leadership, and Enrichment lists all different programs, and explains everything available, but no links on overview, so as user, need to go in and find links themselves
 - If referenced in text, link to specific site or subpage to make it easier to know where to go
- Lack of information on website for international students e.g. connecting to mental health resources what can they access, how to highlight that
- Department on site and overview of department, and then list what they actually do (King's example from Stephanie); helps with wayfinding
- Rename some of the categories (e.g. four units and subheadings) because not clear what will find in individual page (better words, phrases to get at core of what is being provided)
- Chatbot function: when go on main department page, pop up survey or seething similar to say what interested in/want to achieve and then based on responses, an automated answer could direct you to what page you want to go to
- Looking at Huron's page and what liked and what Western could improve on-break up by audience (guest? current student? future student?); can help break up information
- Main problem is that I don't know what AE covers versus learning development; writing feels like it might go under learning development
- Learning Development & Success lacks tab for undergrad students
- As lvey grad student, confused about who to contact and need to lay out more clearly
- McMaster's page: like idea of really big hub and has everything about accessibility in one section
- Too many tiers of website...not focused enough; needs organized summed up, proper categories, so people don't need to hunt rather than linking off to new pages
- No general search bar; not sure if used heavily
- Carleton has list of community organizations that you might need as a student with a disability coming to university (e.g. CNIB, attendant care services, ASL)
- Contact information for specific people (i.e. accessibility counsellor) rather than directory; more inviting
- Advice from peers tab and maybe peer support centre would be relevant here; so many services, and feels fragmented; better coordination between services on campus and AE

Is there anything that you would like to be able to do/learn on the websites that you can't already do?

- Font size changer and contrast feature
 - More valuable to have present or prefer ability to incrementally adjust it
 - Incremental better because vision lies on a spectrum and people should be able to control for themselves
- Search bar
- Pictorial descriptions
- Where jargon, could you hover over it for a brief definition; jargon can be a real barrier to participation; for those with memory/cognition challenges this would be helpful
- Subtitles or closed captioning on everything
 - When uploading videos to YouTube is better to allow YouTube to convert then we clean it up?
 - As baseline is this a good approach?
 - Subtitles need manually entered or fixed from what is autogenerated
 - Talking too fast and words get slurred together
 - Not acceptable to leave autogenerated as baseline
 - Good place to start; transcription services are available if there is lack of personnel REV
 - We upload, let YouTube do its thing and then we clean it up; in online classes, found that common words converted ok, but some stuff is so specialized
 - CTL has done nice things with videos and transcripts
 - Audio description is also very important; integrated description
 - If being uploaded directly and then mistakes caught after, this past year had to message numerous profs who used otter or AI, which works for live, but I had to catch errors on my own; advice is to try to edit before uploading
- Link or area for scholarships or bursaries, section talking about that
 - Talked to counsellor so feels secretive
 - Complicated process and steps
 - Education has some new scholarships for students with disabilities, so could be added as well
- More accessible working tour of campus; not a pdf but more virtual
- Access van, and more specialized services, paratransit app link and LTC; need to know this exists and process

Do you have any favorite Western websites or websites from other organizations that you like or serve you well?

- The new academic calendar website at Western
 - Aesthetically look good
 - Cohesiveness
 - First page you can see breakdown of main topics
- Mental health resource guide was really helpful with list; could be another one that is for Western resources wholly
 - Hard to find online and don't know where to get it on campus
 - Generally distributing in more efficient way
 - Tea noted that this resource is no longer being produced
- McMaster was simpler and hub was user friendly; U of T has specific stuff for different types of disabilities and what is needed
- Is it possible to have affiliates mimic similar design as what gets created on main campus

Western Student Experience

- Some partners, including Ivey and affiliates, follow their own design and development for many reasons
- Each faculty and area has its own web team so not possible to come together to build one consistent; goal is to form working group that brings everybody together and we could learn things like what we are learning here at this meeting
- Lots of fundamental framework pieces that could be used commonly and be more collaborative
- Option of having individual disabilities to sleet for certain resources, need to proceed with caution; how can it be inclusive and exhaustive
 - If information is only available for more common disabilities, then those who don't see selves represented may feel excluded, no resources available for them
 - Ignores intersectionality and comorbidities
- Science academic counselling site; submit docs, talk to counsellor

Thoughts on hub/portal/what would be useful here?

- Walking tours
- Scholarships
- Services
- Accommodated exams: Is it a mini portal? Kind of confusing.
- Like idea of portal; different for different audiences
- Like idea of portal/hub
 - Log in and contact back easier makes it feel like you are closer
- Master hub because a lot of things that didn't think about right away that could be helpful (e.g. accessible events planning guide)
- Don't think a sign-in would make sense; a lot of information should be public information
- Wayfinding and inclusion of accessible washrooms, gender neutral washrooms
- Prospective student information
 - Does Western offer tutorial services; external services
 - Services offered if you come into AE (Waterloo)
 - Notetaking
 - Bursary
 - Specific learning strategist that work with people with disabilities
 - Assistive technology and what is available in different labs
 - What do I need to know to make a decision that is going to be right to me?
 - ASL
 - Attendant care services
 - Links to places we work with where we don't offer something on campus
 - Can request some accommodations, like notetaking, transcripts, feel like can be good for everyone
 - How to make events accessible for everyone who is doing planning; accessible rooms
 - McMaster has a hub for this