



MCGILL ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Draft document for consultation
October 2024

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McGill Accessibility Strategy Working Group Report

Introduction

The McGill Accessibility Strategy (MAS) is a plan designed to strengthen access and promote the full inclusion of students, faculty and staff with disabilities at McGill. It builds on the objectives embedded in McGill's [EDI Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#), and goes far beyond them, as our early work on the EDI plan made clear that a distinct strategy was needed to advance McGill's work in the critical domains of accessibility and ableism.

Following an open discussion with the McGill community in 2022, a Working Group was established to lead the creation of the MAS. The Working Group included students, faculty, and staff from key units and groups across McGill, as well as individual representatives chosen via a nomination process. A core tenet of the Working Group composition was significant representation of persons with disabilities.

The results of that work have led to the production of this document, which is intended to serve as a roadmap for understanding and addressing systemic ableism and for strengthening measures that strive for the full inclusion of disabled students, staff, and faculty at McGill.

It integrates metrics and measures to maintain accountability for making concrete and measurable progress over the next five years in a manner that consistently furthers our university's deep and transversal commitment to inclusive excellence.

In line with the spirit that led the development of the MAS, a key marker of its success throughout its implementation will be the inclusion of disabled communities, including disabled scholars, students and staff, as main partners.

We are grateful for the diligent work of the Working Group that led to the creation of the MAS and for the many partners across and beyond McGill who have long been working to make McGill a more inclusive place for people with disabilities.

Their contributions deserve to be recognized, appreciated, and celebrated.

Accessibility Strategy Working Group Terms of Reference

Mandate

The McGill Accessibility Strategy Working Group (MAS-WG) will:

- identify and seek to remove or reduce barriers to accessibility at McGill for persons with disabilities.
- develop and recommend specific, measurable, ambitious, and feasible goals that will enhance accessibility for students, faculty, and staff at McGill, which are aligned with the University's Strategic EDI Plan.
- identify and propose resources and measures needed to ensure the success of the Accessibility Strategy and accountability in its implementation.
- ensure that all five elements of the [Strategic EDI Plan](#) are accounted for in McGill's Accessibility Strategy:
 - Student Experience
 - Research and Knowledge
 - Outreach
 - Workforce
 - Space
- hold open consultations with members of the McGill community to crowdsource ideas and perspectives that should find reflection in the Accessibility Strategy. In particular, designated opportunities will be established to hear from members of the McGill community who are persons with disabilities.

Selection of members of the McGill community will be based on expertise and lived experience in connection with disability and building/contributing to enhancing institutional accessibility. At least one member of the Working Group should be from MacDonald Campus.

Student members will be given an opportunity to serve as research assistants, supporting with the logistics of consultations associated with the development of the Accessibility Strategy, research that informs the development of the Strategy including benchmarking with other institutions of higher education, note-taking, and support with drafting and editing the Strategy. They will be duly compensated and supervised by the Accessibility Advisor.

Timeline

The Working Group met over the 2022-2023 Academic year and the first draft of the plan was penned thereafter. Following delays, the document was reviewed by Senior leaders and members of the Senate and Board EDI committee (EDIC) in 2023-2024 and revised based on that feedback. Consultations for the entire McGill community are scheduled to take place in Fall 2024, after which the final version of the strategy will be presented to the Senate and Board for review and approval.

Membership

The Working Group was comprised of 21 members, including:

Associate Provost (Equity & Academic Policies) or delegate	Angela Campbell (and delegate Tynan Jarrett) (Chair)
Members of the McGill Equity Team : Accessibility Advisor Senior Employment Equity Advisor	Catherine Roy Andrea Clegg
Health and Wellbeing Advisor, Human Resources	Pichara Chhe
Senior Advisor, Talent Acquisition	Yannick Rouleau
Dean of Students	Robin Beech (and delegate Cindy Mancuso)
Director, Student Accessibility & Achievement	Teri Philips (and delegate Catherine Loiselle)
Director, Design Services, Facilities Management and Ancillary Services	Emmanuelle Lapointe
Associate Director, Operations & Engagement, McGill Office of Sustainability	Shona Watt
Manager, Digital Communications	Joyce Peralta
5 students' representatives (at least 1 undergraduate, 1 graduate, 1 from the School of Continuing Studies, and 1 Student Society Accessibility Commissioner)	Sal Cuthbertson Natasha Robillard Rain Hye Genevieve Mylocopos Risann Wright
3 academic staff representatives	Andrea Miller-Nesbitt David Covo Jonathan Sterne
2 administrative and support staff	Annie Lussier Amanda Saxe

Language and Definitions

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are key terms that are defined within the McGill Strategic EDI Plan for 2020-2025 to support a shared understanding. These terms remain relevant to the MAS, and we invite readers of this document to consult the definitions within the EDI [plan](#).

We offer some additional notes on the language below.

People-First and Identity-First Language

Throughout this report we use both **people-first** and **identity-first** language.

People-first language avoids defining people in terms of their disability. In most cases, this involves placing the reference to the disability after the reference to a person, as in “a person with a disability,” rather than “the disabled person.” With **identity-first** language, the disability is mentioned first. For example, “Deaf girl” or “autistic boy.” Regarding most disabilities, people-first language is often preferred, but in some cases – for example in the Deaf community and among autistic people – identity-first language is used.

The terms **Disabled people** (identity-first language) and **Persons with disabilities** (people-first language) are used interchangeably within this report, to reflect different preferences within the communities themselves.

Ableism

Ableism may be defined as a belief system and structure analogous to other forms of systemic discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism, ageism), based on the false notion that persons with disabilities are less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value to society than others.

Ableism gives priority to non-disabled experiences and points of view in a conscious or unconscious way. It may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. It can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in the life of their communities. Ableist attitudes are often based on the view that disability is abnormal (see above) rather than an inherent and expected variation in the human condition.

Accessibility/Accessible

A building, facility, structure, program, activity, resource, product etc. that is readily usable (or the extent to which it is readily usable) by a person with a disability.

Disability

Disability can be described as a broad range of functional or social limitations that impact an individual's ability to perform an activity. Disabilities can be visible or invisible, permanent, temporary, or episodic, and can include, but are not limited to:

- Addiction (e.g., alcohol, drugs, gambling)
- Developmental disability (e.g., autism, ADHD, Down syndrome)
- Health disability/chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, cancer, asthma)
- Learning disability (e.g., dyslexia, dysnomia)
- Mental health condition/mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorder)
- Physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, amputation)
- Sensory disability (e.g., hearing or vision loss)

McGill Context

According to the [Report on the Biennial Results of the McGill Student Census](#) as of April 2023, 8.8% of McGill students identify as persons with disabilities. Invisible disabilities, such as mental health, ADHD, and learning disabilities are, by far, the most prevalent disabilities that our students report experiencing (see pages 14-17 of the Report for additional data). Such data in the McGill context are not surprising; information from the Canadian Survey on Disabilities indicate that 13.1% of youth in Canada (ages 15 to 24) have one or more disabilities.¹

With regard to our workforce demographics, data from McGill's [Biennial Report on Employment Equity 2023](#) show that 4.6% of McGill employees self-identify as persons with one or more disabilities, including 5.1% of ranked CAS, 4.8% of tenure-stream faculty, and 4.6% of administrative and support staff. Information from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disabilities indicates that 27% Canadians over age 15 have one or more disabilities, up from 22% in 2017.²

Several factors particular to McGill and to higher education provide an important backdrop to understanding our university's current dynamics vis-à-vis the challenges of navigating McGill with a disability, and available supports. These include:

- The fact that McGill is known and lives up to its reputation as an elite academic and research environment where students and faculty are expected to be high- (some might say, over-) achieving. Our university prizes rigour, resilience, and perseverance in the face of adversity.
- While awareness about, and stigma associated with, disabilities – especially those tied to mental health, neurodiversity, and learning abilities – are evolving, reticence to disclose and talk openly about disability persists. There remains a deep and understandable preoccupation that revealing a disability will prompt negative perceptions about one's ability to succeed.
- Most disabilities are invisible. According to [McGill's 2023 Biennial Report on Employment Equity](#), invisible disabilities represent the largest group among employees with disabilities, accounting for 3% of employees (faculty and staff). Additionally, data from the [2023 Student Census](#) indicates that among disabled students, who account for 8.8% of McGill's student population, disabilities related to neurodiversity, learning disabilities and mental health issues took the top spots, the latter accounting for over 59% of reported disabilities at McGill.

¹ Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. (2024, April 3). *The disability rate in Canada increased in 2022*. Statistics Canada. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5980-disability-rate-canada-increased-2022#shr-pg-pnl1>

² Ibid.

- A thorough understanding of the University’s duties to accommodate, as established both by law and by established promising practices for institutions of higher education, is not universal across all offices that make decisions about the needs of students and employees with disabilities.
- Our campus’ physical layout presents significant challenges for those with mobility limitations. Many of our buildings are dated, rendering them impossible or prohibitively expensive to renovate to render them more physically accessible. Our learning and research spaces are spread across two main campuses, with our downtown campus located on an impressive slope, often riddled with physical barriers and detours in place due to needed construction projects. All these hurdles become exponentially more difficult during our long winters, when grounds are covered by ice and snow.
- A growing cohort of faculty at McGill working on disability-related topics is drawing critical attention to ableism and how it manifests across institutions, including universities. Their work can inspire important steps as we move forward toward a more accessible and inclusive McGill.
- Relatedly, a faculty and staff caucus of person with disabilities is emergent at McGill.
- McGill’s students with disabilities are served by our Student Accessibility and Achievement (SAA) unit (formerly the office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)), which is situated within Student Services.
- A Universal Access Capital Projects fund is dedicated to projects that are designed to improve accessibility at McGill. Since 2010, \$10 278 987 has been earmarked from the accessibility funds to 38 projects that have or seek to enhance the physical accessibility of McGill’s campuses. During this same period, a significant number of other efforts not funded through the program, further contributed to the improvement of the physical accessibility of McGill’s campuses, in particular through the application of McGill’s enhanced [Design Standard](#) for accessibility, which was adopted in 2019.

Format

The MAS is intended to complement and build on the [EDI Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#); it draws inspiration from the [Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism](#), and the [Final Report of the Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#).

As such, this Accessibility Strategy is built on the same five pillars that ground McGill’s existing equity plans: student experience, research and knowledge, outreach, workforce, and space. Although issues of space in other places have foregrounded physical space, in this context the plan integrates virtual space (information technology (IT)) under this heading.

Student Experience

What We Heard

- Students with disabilities face frequent ableist microaggressions both within their learning environment and in the wider campus community, contributing to a sense that they are considered “lesser than” or that they don’t belong at McGill.
- There are few opportunities for the disabled McGill community to form and strengthen connections that centre disability pride.
- While some courses are designed to provide a robust learning experience premised on principles of universal design, thus minimizing the need for individual accommodations, presently this is far from the norm. Students with disabilities drop or refrain from enrolling in courses that do not employ universal design principles and/or where they believed that their learning would not be facilitated.
- Students with mobility impairments face additional and specific challenges, such as:
 - Being unable to access office hours for their instructors, whose offices are in buildings that are not physically accessible.
 - Not having enough time to travel between classes.
 - Having insufficient access to accessible washroom facilities in their learning spaces.
 - Not feeling like full members of the McGill community and being unable to participate in all aspects of campus life.
- Some students face barriers when trying to access accommodations necessary for their success. They noted encountering arduous and lengthy administrative processes, bureaucratic “red-tape”, and “one-size-fits-all” solutions that did not meet their needs. Some students noted the lack of a clear pathway for recourse when they believed they had not been treated equitably or their needs had not been met through accommodations processes.
- Students with disabilities want to see themselves, and their communities, reflected in curricular offerings across disciplines, including in ways that:
 - highlight the ongoing, decades-long contributions and achievements of disabled persons, at McGill and in wider communities.

- represent the voices of disabled scholars and perspectives of broader disability communities, especially when teaching or conducting research on topics likely to have significant impact on disabled communities locally and globally.
- recognize the potential contributions and rich learning that can come from integrating disability studies perspectives across all domains of study.
- centre and celebrate faculty and staff with disabilities, who can serve as crucial role models and mentors.

McGill's Commitment to Action

1. Comprehensive review of accommodations processes, including pathway for recourse

The Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Deputy-Provost, Student Life and Learning, together will conduct a comprehensive review of accommodations policies and processes, with benchmarking relative to other U15 institutions, of accommodations processes for students with disabilities and legal norms in Quebec to assess our whether our standards can be improved. This review will also include an assessment of whether McGill can institute clearer channels for seeking a review of a proposed accommodation measure where a member of the community believes this to be unsatisfactory.

2. Student Affairs Liaison for Disabled Students

Appoint a Student Affairs Liaison (SAL) for Disabled Students. This role would have a mandate to support students with disabilities by acting as a point person and one-stop resource for students who wish to talk about their experiences, who need support, and/or who seek resources but need accompaniment to obtain these resources as they navigate the channels of our university. The SAL also will work with student associations/clubs and help organize events that celebrate the lived experiences and identities of disabled students from particular disability communities. This role is intended to be a source of support, validation, and pride for students with disabilities. It will also serve as a key source of information and advice for university leaders working to implement effective measures to ensure student success and wellness for all. It is modeled on SAL positions that have been instituted at McGill for Black, Muslim, and Jewish students, who have proven to be valuable resources of support and information.

3. Training and Professional Development for Instructors

Expand training opportunities for instructors to increase capacity to create and teach courses using the principles of universal design, with a view to enhancing McGill's learning environments overall, with the consequence of deepening the capacity for students with disabilities to flourish. Metrics will be established to gather feedback from participants in training sessions and from students to ensure the latter's effectiveness.

4. Training and Professional Development for Frontline, Student-Facing Staff

Create more accessible living and learning environments for disabled students at McGill by strengthening and expanding training and professional development opportunities for administrative and support staff who are student-facing. This training will seek to increase awareness and understanding of disability and ableism and build staff capacity to create more accessible and inclusive living, learning, and working spaces.

5. Develop, adopt, and promote a policy on service animals in learning and living spaces

Develop, adopt, and promote a policy that ensures students who require support animals as a disability-related accommodation, can access the support that they need to be able to integrate their support animal within the University environment.

Research and Knowledge

What We Heard

- The perspectives of disabled researchers are sorely underrepresented within academia, including at McGill.
- Disability remains highly stigmatized and difficult to discuss and acknowledge within the academic realm.
- While the university undertakes an extensive scope and quantity of research that carry significant implications for persons with disabilities locally and nationally, the perspectives of persons with disabilities in these research settings are not centred, and rarely considered.
- McGill would benefit from the establishment of a disability studies program that would attract faculty and students with research interests and expertise in disability studies and with lived experience as disabled persons.

McGill's Commitment to Action

1. Earmarked Opportunities for Disability-Related Research
 - Work with University Advancement to create opportunities to support research in critical disability studies, via programs and initiatives including fellowships and, with a long-term goal of creating an endowed chair in Critical Disability Studies by 2029.
 - Before 2029, issue at least two Canada Research Chair open calls in areas that advance knowledge and engagement with disability, accessibility, and universal design topics.
 - Explore with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies the possibility of interdisciplinary PhD programs that center disability studies.
2. Building Research Networks
 - Support research networks at and beyond McGill that bring together scholars working on disability issues.

Outreach

What We Heard

- McGill can do more to establish and make more public its connections with disability advocacy groups and community-based organizations across Montreal.
- McGill could benefit from opening a dialogue with the [Rick Hansen Foundation](#), which is based in Vancouver.
- Mobility on campus is linked to that of the city. Opportunities to partner with the Ville de Montréal can be explored to work toward seamless accessibility across and beyond the campus, including via our public transit systems.

McGill's Commitment to Action

1. Building Connections:

- Establish partnerships and collaborations with disability-focused community organizations in Montreal, including through special invitations to events that celebrate disability pride at McGill.
- Initiate dialogue and partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation to benefit from their expertise and resources.
- Foster ongoing communication and collaboration about disability and accessibility with government officials at various levels to ensure McGill's efforts to improve accessibility on campus are aligned with and draw strength from broader initiatives across the city, province, and country.
- Initiate a dialogue with other institutions of higher education Canada-wide to develop, share, and implement, promising practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities in postsecondary contexts.

2. Establishing and Supporting a Vibrant Disabled Alumni Community

Over the last decade communities have formed within McGill's broad alumni network to bring together former McGill students with shared identities. These alumni communities support the university's advancement efforts and provide an excellent foundation for mentorship and networking opportunities for our current and past students. A similar such network for persons with disabilities holds extensive promise. Moreover, there is real potential in our alumni and donor communities to tap into philanthropic supports earmarked for students with disabilities at McGill.

As such, the Equity Team will work with University Advancement to explore and support the creation of:

- scholarship and student aid opportunities to enhance supports for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students with disabilities; and
- under the auspices of the McGill Alumni Association, establish a constituent group of the MAA for Persons with Disabilities, including through support for events that focus on celebrating disability pride and establish mentorship and networking opportunities for studies with disability, including at key times such as Homecoming and during the convocation periods.

Workforce

What We Heard

- Persons with disabilities are significantly underrepresented among academic and administrative and support staff, which represents an important loss of talent to the university and contributes to a sense of alienation and isolation for disabled employees at McGill.
- Leaders (including Chairs, Directors, and other managers) do not always have the understanding or skills required to support the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce, including familiarity with common barriers that might adversely impact recruitment, retention, promotion, and work satisfaction of disabled staff and faculty.
- Staff and faculty with disabilities have witnessed a lack of understanding at the University level of what constitutes a reasonable accommodation. Further, the process for receiving accommodations can sometimes feel adversarial and dehumanizing, and accommodations offered by the University often feel like a “one size fits all” response, that fails to consider the specificities of an individual’s needs and limitations or the range of potential accommodations that might be feasible in different work contexts.
- There is significant stigma attached to identifying as a person with a disability within the university community. Some disabled faculty and staff do not feel at ease with letting colleagues know about their disability status for fear it would negatively affect their professional opportunities and experiences and how they are treated and perceived in their work environment.

McGill’s Commitment to Action

1. Increase Representation of Persons with Disabilities

McGill’s most recent reports to provincial and federal governments on employment equity confirms that persons with disabilities are among the groups most underrepresented in McGill’s workforce. We will commit to Increasing the representation of employees with disabilities across ranks and job categories, including working towards specific targets:

- As of May 2023, there were 69 tenure stream faculty (4.8%) and 18 ranked CAS (5.1%) who self-identify as having a disability.³ This Accessibility Strategy sets a target of **6.5% representation by 2029 and 7.5% representation by 2032** among both tenure stream and ranked CAS faculty.

³ https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/06_d22-72_biennial_report_on_employment_equity.pdf From the May 2023 Biennial Report to Senate on Employment Equity, p. 26

- As of May 2023, administrative and support staff who are disabled represented 4.6% of our staff complement. This Accessibility Strategy sets a target of **6.5% by 2029 and 7.5% by 2032**.

Information from the Canadian Survey on Disabilities indicate that 27% of working age adults in Canada (ages 25 to 64%) have one or more disabilities.

To reach these targets, deploy the following strategies:

- create and strengthen relationships with community partners that support people with disabilities in seeking employment.
- conduct a comprehensive, end-to-end, review of recruitment processes for all employees to identify potential barriers for persons with disabilities and to remove these wherever possible; ensure processes are designed with maximum accessibility in mind.
- create an online resource for hiring managers and chairs of search committees on accessibility considerations in hiring; and
- explore and design a program to hire adults with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorders (ID-ASD) at McGill, drawing on relevant community inclusion programs and public subsidies to advance this goal.

2. Support faculty and staff retention

Employment equity success requires effective workplace support and retention measures to complement strategic inclusive recruitment efforts. As such, McGill will:

- support, through a financial allocation of \$10K/year, the creation of a caucus for faculty and staff with disabilities, to resource activities that build community and network.
- create opportunities organized through the Equity Team for faculty, student, and staff with disabilities to come together in community.
- establish, within the Equity Team, an employee resource group for administrative and support staff with disabilities.

3. Foster Disability Pride

Significant work is needed to reduce stigma and shame associated with identifying as a person with a disability at McGill, and to foster a sense of pride and community among disabled faculty and staff. To this end, McGill will:

- Revitalize and grow the reach and impact of the employee resource group for disabled staff, including by establishing: an active online forum, regular opportunities to connect and forge community; and professional development opportunities tailored towards the needs expressed by the group.
- Undertake multi-pronged efforts to educate staff and faculty at McGill about ableism and disability pride, including by:
 - expanding reach and scope of regular training offerings. McGill’s Accessibility Advisor currently offers workshops to faculty and staff on topics such as onboarding staff with disabilities, disability disclosure, and accommodating employees with disabilities. Additional offerings will focus on topics such as: neurodiversity in the workforce and understanding and addressing disability microaggressions.
 - marking commemorative dates including the International Day for Persons with Disabilities and Disability Pride Month.
- Increase communications that highlight the contributions of persons with disabilities to the McGill community and the important ways in which members of the McGill community can boost inclusion for persons with disabilities.
- In accordance with My Healthy Workplace’s (M.H.W.) new multi-year plan and Excellence Canada’s Gold Healthy Workplace Certification standards, Organizational Development and M.H.W. partners will include considerations for persons with a broad range of disabilities when addressing themes of psychological safety, inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging – reflected in workshops and learning events with principles of universal design and consultative structures that facilitate co-creating a healthier workplace for all.

4. Fulfilling our “Duty to Accommodate”

To assist McGill in upholding its legal responsibility to accommodate persons with disability and implementing the most promising practices in this domain to the extent of its capacities, the following measures will be pursued:

Comprehensive review of accommodations processes, including pathway for recourse

- Conduct a comprehensive review of accommodations policies and processes for faculty and staff with disabilities, with benchmarking relative to other U15 institutions, to assess whether our standards can be improved in line with the full scope of our institutional legal obligations and with a view to first-in-class approaches to accessibility. This review, which should include consultations with Legal Services, the Equity Team, and Academic Personnel, will also include an assessment of whether McGill can institute clearer channels for seeking a review of a proposed accommodation measure where a member of the community believes this to be unsatisfactory.
 - Develop a resource guide for managers and academic leaders related to disability inclusion and the importance of understanding, and responsibility in implementing, accommodations when required.
 - Increase awareness of the [Central Accommodations Fund](#), established since 2020 to streamline, support, and standardize the process for financing workplace accommodations; While the fund has been a success to date, more can be done to ensure it is a resource that is widely known and easy to access.
 - Procurement to work on creating a catalogue for accessible procurement in order to streamline approved requests to the [Central Accommodations Fund](#).
5. Develop, adopt, and promote a policy on service animals in working spaces.
- Develop, adopt, and promote a policy that ensures employees who require support animals as a disability-related accommodation can access the support that they need to be able to integrate their support animal within the University environment. Inspiration can be drawn from the policy on service animals that presently is being developed for students. To be led by Equity Team in consultation with faculty and staff associations and unions, Human Resources, and Academic Personal Office, and Legal Services.

Space

What We Heard

Physical:

- At the moment, campus facilities and planning related to issues such as parking, snow removal, and construction projects treat accessibility and the needs of persons with disabilities as an afterthought, if at all.
- Renovations and modernization of buildings require consideration of the whole experience of McGill community members navigating these spaces. For example, it is more than door openers and elevators that matter; issues such as where plugs are located, the height of lab benches, signage, and parking, all have accessibility implications.
- McGill would benefit from extending its adapted transport services, in terms of frequency of service and operating times.
- McGill needs more proximity parking spaces for staff and students with disabilities.
- A physical accessibility plan is needed to identify our campuses most inaccessible spaces, which should consider barriers within and the use of those spaces. These should be prioritized among capital projects aimed at boosting accessibility.
- Capital projects teams must have the ability to ensure that accessibility is foregrounded in planning and execution of projects.
- The University requires a centralized communication that sets out the accessibility features of each classroom and building on its campus. There must also be a contact provided so that a person who is unable to access a space can signal the issue and know that it will be addressed.
- The University lacks a guide on accessible learning and event-planning, which should be developed through an intersectional lens and include an audit tool.

Digital:

- It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of digital spaces and their potential to enhance campus accessibility for people with disabilities.
- The University can achieve full alignment with digital accessibility requirements, but this will require additional resources.

McGill's Commitment to Action

1. Enhancing Accessibility in Our Physical Spaces

- Develop an accessibility audit that describes the accessibility of McGill buildings, updating this as buildings are modified or renovated. This should be a living report that exists on a website that can be consulted by any McGill user or guest.
- Work with Campus Planning, Design Services and Project Management Office to ensure that project design teams foreground accessibility in all capital projects, when applicable.
- Work with Campus Planning and Parking Services to improve flexibility, availability, and reliability of proximity parking on campus. Evaluate the need for proximity parking with the Accessibility Advisor and the Office for Student Accessibility & Achievement. Communicate widely options for students, faculty, and staff who require adapted transport and/or proximity parking.
- Sustain the work of the Universal Access Capital Projects Working Group, updating the community through a dedicated webpage about projects that are approved and their status.

2. Enhancing Accessibility in Our Digital Spaces

- Build connections with other universities to learn about and implement at McGill good examples of accessible digital spaces.
- Strengthen and maintain accessibility standards for all McGill digital assets. Web Services has developed web digital standards, which ensure that web sites are meeting accessibility requirements and standards:
 - [Resources | Web Services - McGill University](#)
 - [Make sites accessible | Web Services - McGill University](#)
- Via [McGill's Digital Strategy](#), improve the Student Digital Experience, including by increasing accessible online services.
- Increase access and awareness to McGill's Lecture Recording System (LRS), a tool which can greatly improve access to learning for students with disabilities. This is also an opt-in service for instructors and instructors are encouraged to use it. (see LRS: [Knowledge Base - IT Portal \(service-now.com\)](#)).

Update and consolidate the Accessibility Website. This includes research and curating resources and working with their team regarding programming and universal design (UX).

Moving Forward: Accountability for Accessibility

An institutional strategy of any kind is only as valuable as its commitments to action and accountability. It also requires recognition that any equity-related work is necessarily iterative. As such, the Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, is committed to the ongoing review and meaningful operationalization of commitments set out in this report.

So that the McGill campus community can monitor progress and assess for itself McGill's record of implementation of the MAS, the following steps shall be put in place:

- Creation of an Accessibility Strategy Implementation Committee (ASIC), which will meet at least three times annually to track implementation of the commitments set out herein. The ASIC shall be chaired by the Director, EDI and shall include representation of faculty, students, staff, and alumni who are persons with disabilities. Its membership shall also include representation from Human Resources, Office of the Dean of Students, Students Services, F.MAS, and Communications.
- One of the ASIC's annual meetings shall be an open meeting held in a town hall format (i.e., focused on listening and receiving input, no agenda) at which all persons with disabilities within the McGill community shall be welcome.
- Annual reporting to Senate and the Board of Governors on initiatives taken in relation to this Strategy.

Development of a website to update the McGill community on tracking and progress in relation to the commitments set out in the strategy.

Resources

[Infographic on Persons with Disabilities in Canada](#)

Furrie, Adele D., Lacey Croft, and Donna S. Lero. "People Experiencing Disability with Episodic Limitations: The Impact on Their Experience in the Workplace." (2022).

McGill Reports

[Biennial Report on Employment Equity 2023](#)

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>