**Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2018-2019.
Created and sponsored by McMaster's Equity and Inclusion Office and the McMaster Accessibility Council**

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# Introduction

## Warm Greetings from the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) and the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO)

### What is the Update?

Since 2009, the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) has been tasked with compiling an [Accessibility Annual Report](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/topic/about-us/) that highlights and summarizes yearly accessibility accomplishments and demonstrates how McMaster is meeting AODA legislative requirements on an ongoing basis.

We want to continue moving beyond reporting compliance requirements to facilitate greater awareness of accessibility work happening across campus by connecting students, staff, and faculty who are integrating accessibility into their teaching, work, and school practices and events.

Last year, the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) and the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC) published the inaugural Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update (*the Update*) 2017-2018, for which we received over 40 submissions from McMaster community members. This year, we have exceeded all expectations by receiving close to 70 submissions with a complete cross-section of campus representation, including submissions from students, staff, faculty and volunteers, on the incredible work they are doing to move accessibility forward and enhance disability inclusion.

**This Update has a number of goals:**

* **Recognition:** To highlight the important work that McMaster students, staff, and faculty have been engaged in this year - and to say thank you!
* **Inspiration:** To share tangible and motivating examples of how members of the McMaster are taking up our ethical and legislative responsibilities to “[build an inclusive community](http://fwi.mcmaster.ca/about-this-website/)” through enhanced accessibility.
* **Coordination:** To further develop a network of accessibility initiatives on campus and reduce a sense of isolation, individual responsibility, or working in silos. Accessibility at McMaster is a collective endeavor.
* **Information:** To offer relevant resources for enhancing accessibility in our units, contexts, and roles.

Our goal is to keep gathering this information, so please get in touch with the AccessMac Program at [access@mcmaster.ca](mailto:access@mcmaster.ca) to let us know what you’re working on!

### Contributors and Report Structure

**With special thanks and appreciation to:**

* **Every unit, team and individual on campus who submitted items for this year’s Update –your efforts are sincerely appreciated!**
* Kate Brown, Accessibility Projects Coordinator, Equity and Inclusion Office
* Victoria Kren and Jessica Evans, Accessibility Projects Assistants, Equity and Inclusion Office
* Anne Pottier, McMaster Accessibility Council
* Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice President, Equity and Inclusion
* Dr. Alise de Bie, MacPherson Institute, for their imagining and envisioning the Update into existence

This year, we asked contributors to label within which categories their submissions were best suited. We thank you all for doing so to help sustain our efforts in formatting the document, and to ensure that your submission is best represented. However, we appreciate any constructive feedback on the layout, organization, and navigability of the Update. Contact us at [access@mcmaster.ca](mailto:access@mcmaster.ca) with any questions, concerns or comments.

**\*Please note that underlined sections within submissions represent embedded hyperlinks**. To access these links, please find the **digital version of the Update** in the **Inclusion Initiatives** section on the **Accessibility Hub** at accessibility.mcmaster.ca.

### Message from the MAC Chair

During this last year we continued to see increased awareness of accessibility across campus. We can now see that the way we do our work is changing and progress is being made across all areas of the university, but there is still much work to be done. Policies and processes are in place, but there is a need to communicate all of this information. One of the ways we hope to do this is with the ongoing creation and publication of this Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update, which we plan to provide to campus on a regular basis.

There continues to be more conversation taking place across campus around accessibility in our everyday work, not just in meetings where accessibility is an agenda item. We are regularly incorporating accessibility into discussions related to renovations and new physical design work and how best to ensure that we are taking into consideration the broad range of individuals who may attend classes (either in-person or virtually), meetings or other public events on-campus. We can see that communication is key to advancing this work. We need to share what work is being done across campus, in order to further encourage all areas to work together. We hope that this will help ensure that work isn’t being duplicated, and more importantly, will support the sharing of what is working, what isn’t working, and why.

While the [McMaster Accessibility Council](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/#tab-content-accessibility-council) is working hard to advance accessibility at McMaster, it is important to acknowledge the staff, students and faculty who are also working to move the accessibility agenda forward. Accessibility is a shared endeavour and is not just the work of the Council. We all need to reflect on how we can integrate accessibility into our everyday work and ensure that accessibility becomes part of the way we do things at McMaster.

I am looking forward to a year filled with conversations around carrying out work more accessibly, and to see outcomes which incorporate this work naturally. I encourage everyone to do the same.

Anne Pottier

McMaster Accessibility Council, Chair

Associate University Librarian

McMaster University

### Message from the AVP Equity and Inclusion

The Equity and Inclusion Office houses the AccessMAC Program, hosts the virtual Accessibility Hub, and partners with a network of colleagues to advise on and advance accessibility and disability inclusion goals and priorities. It will be clear to readers of this report that McMaster can certainly celebrate the breadth of activity being pursued across the campus towards advancing these goals and priorities. The opportunity for McMaster is not only to meet and sustain our Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislative requirements, but to achieve our aspirational goals beyond compliance and towards inclusive excellence.

McMaster’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and 2019 – 2022 EDI Action Plan places renewed attention on the need to achieve objectives outlined in the AODA required 2012 – 2025 Accessibility Plan, ***and*** it highlights new aspirational disability inclusion priorities, including the exploration of universal accessibility principles and practices for example.

On behalf of the EIO, I would like to thank and congratulate all of the collective efforts to advance accessibility, some of which are highlighted in the report and many more which may not be listed here but are critically important. Progress will continue to be made with continued commitment to university-wide engagement and with both “top-down” and “bottom-up” leadership.

Arig al Shaibah, Ph.D.

Equity and Inclusion Office

# Campus and Community Projects & Publications

## Enhancing Accessibility by Becoming Age-Friendly

In 2017, McMaster joined the Age-Friendly University (AFU) network, a global body comprised of higher education institutions committed to becoming more universally accessible. Since joining, the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) has surveyed staff, faculty members, students, alumni and Hamilton Community members to understand the current age-friendly status of McMaster. It was determined that areas for improvement include the need for targeted programming for older adults, improved access to existing programs and events, and developing ongoing strategies to ensure McMaster is a welcoming space for older adults.

In partnership with Facility Services, MIRA conducted a walkability study of McMaster’s main campus focused on physical accessibility. Recommendations from this report will contribute to Facility Services’ ongoing efforts to ensure the campus is safe and accessible. Improving access for older adults will improve access for everyone, and supports the University's efforts to ensure an equitable, inclusive and diverse university community.  
*Contributors: Dr. Allison Ward, McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA)*

## Words Matter – An Editorial Style Guide

In 2018-2019, a number of efforts have been made by various McMaster staff members to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity on our campus through:

* A newly updated style guide meant to be used by McMaster staff members called, [“Words Matter: McMaster University’s Editorial Style Guide”](https://brand.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/04/writing-guidlines.pdf).
* Working with the Accessibility Projects Coordinator of the Equity and Inclusion Office (Kate Brown) and the Director of Student Accessibility Services (Tim Nolan) to draft helpful guidelines relating to “Disability Inclusive Language” in the “Notes on Inclusive Language” section of the new style guide.
  + Ensuring the design of the style guide’s cover was more accessible.
  + All references throughout the document to “SEE:” were changed to “GO TO:”
* Inviting Kate and Tim to make a one-hour presentation at the April 2019 monthly “news” meeting, facilitated by Sara Laux, Communications Manager, Communications and Public Affairs, which resulted in a great discussion about accessibility and disability inclusion with a packed room of campus communicators.  
  *Contributors: Allyson Rowley, Sara Laux, Omar Hamdon, Kate Brown, Tim Nolan*

## Distory, Then and Now – A Community Engaged Research Project

***Distory, Then and Now*** is a community-engaged inclusive project led by Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans (School of Social Work). This project brings together a group of survivors from Ontario’s large-scale institutions for people labeled/with intellectual disabilities, younger people labeled/with disabilities who did not experience institutionalization, artists, community members, academic researchers and student RA’s to develop curriculum materials to support college and university students to learn about institutionalization and the ongoing struggles and resistance of people labeled/with intellectual disabilities.

*Contributors: Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans, School of Social Work*

## Partnering For Change (P4C) - Community Engaged Research Project

The [Partnering for Change (P4C) Research Project](https://p4c.mcmaster.ca/news-events/updates-for-city-committee) is a community-engaged participatory project exploring the intersections between disability and homelessness among youth in Hamilton, Toronto, and Niagara. Led by Drs Stephanie Baker Collins and Ann Fudge Schormans (School of Social Work) and supported by several McMaster graduate students and alumni (Tina Wilson, Becky Idems, Lisa Watt, Katie McCrindle), this project brings together community partners from the education, employment, disability, and homelessness sectors, youth co-researchers with lived experience of disability and homelessness, and students to work collaboratively to address how to better support the educational, employment, developmental, and housing needs of disabled youth experiencing homelessness.

The youth co-researchers have co-authored papers with the academic researchers and continue to present the two Forum Theatre scenes that they developed at local and national conferences, including the *Coming Up Together Conference: Towards Ending and Preventing Youth Homelessness in Ontario, Canada and Beyond* conference in Ottawa. Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans has also engaged self-advocates with disabilities in Scotland to present the scenes to an international audience.

*Contributors: Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans, Dr. Stephanie Baker Collins, School of Social Work*

# Community Engagement

## The AbleHamilton Poetry Festival

The AbleHamilton Poetry Festival is Canada’s first literary festival dedicated to disabled writers and performers from Hamilton and the rest of Canada. Founded by Dr. Shane Neilson [PhD English & Cultural Studies 2018, adjunct assistant clinical professor in the Department of Family Medicine] and run by a collective of writers with lived experience of disability, 2018’s festival held events in Hamilton and five other cities in Ontario and New Brunswick. Locally, the AbleHamilton Festival hosted two panel discussions in partnership with *Hamilton Arts and Letters* and the Centre for Community-Engaged Narrative Arts (CCENA). The gala reading event occurred at The Staircase in Hamilton.   
  
Now in planning stages for its second year, the AbleHamilton Poetry Festival remains dedicated to the promotion of disabled voices and to creating spaces for disabled writers from Hamilton and the rest of Canada to meet and share their work.

*Contributors: AbleHamilton Poetry Festival*

## Building Support for Narrative Arts in Disability

The Centre for Community-Engaged Narrative Arts (CCENA), based in Humanities, sponsored and organized initiatives in support of the **AbleHamilton Poetry Collective**, a new community group that involves artists and poets with disability or who engage in a significant way with the topic of disability as a result of caring, loving, and living with persons with disability. The partnership was developed with poet Shane Neilson, who is a recent PhD graduate in English & Cultural Studies, and the editors of *Hamilton Arts & Letters* (HAL) magazine, Paul Lisson and Fiona Kinsella.

Activities included the production of a special issue of *HAL* focused on how, when one is confronted with health issues and illness, “the arts offer empathy and understanding as cure.” CCENA also hosted a community event with performances by four poets that formed part of the inaugural *AbleHamilton Poetry Festival 2018*, one of the first disAbility-focused poetry festivals in Canada.

*Contributors: Centre for Community-Engaged Narrative Arts, Faculty of Humanities*

## Digital Accessibility and the Faculty of Social Sciences Community

The Faculty of Social Sciences has engaged in a number of Accessibility and Inclusion efforts this year in the areas of consultation and policy including:

**Engagement and Consultation:**

* Consultation with Media Production Services and Communications and Public Affairs on various McMaster brand template accessibility issues
* Inclusion of accessibility related topics and workshop in the McMaster Blended & ‘e-learning’ Community of Practice
* Sharing of curated digital accessibility training resources via various accessibility groups and the community at McMaster
* Proposed a central model for disability inclusion and an auditing framework to Central IT leadership, with an offer to establish a pilot test proof of concept in Social Sciences
* Engaged in Digital Accessibility work with students enrolled in a section of Inquiry 1SS3
* Consulted and contributed to the accessibility standards and training requirements for the McMaster Mobile Application Framework
* Consulted with the University Web Accessibility Consultant on the Institutional Web Accessibility Survey
* Consulted, reviewed, and provided a remediation plan for digital materials/properties for MIRA funded initiative for over 17 services in the Hamilton community.
* Participated / Co-Presented on Digital Accessibility with EIO and Human Resources at Inclusive Leadership training session for students.

Presented at the 2018 LinkedIn Learning Annual Regional conference at George Brown College on developing digital accessibility training leveraging the use of [lynda.com/LinkedIn](http://lynda.com/LinkedIn) learning online platform.

*Contributors: The Faculty of Social Sciences*

## The Art of Accessibility and Wellness: McMaster Museum of Art’s N. Gillian Cooper Education Program

**Museum of Art’s N. Gillian Cooper Education Program:**In 2018/2019, the museum’s education team designed and delivered a series of programs focused on community engagement, mental health and wellness. Initiated in response to and collaboration with specific campus audiences, most of these popular activities were later delivered to the wider Hamilton community in the form of:

* A Bookmaking Workshop | [Healthy Workplace Program](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/healthy-workplace/) for McMaster faculty and staff
* Walking Tours of campus art and architecture | [Healthy Workplace Program](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/healthy-workplace/) for McMaster faculty and staff
* A Printmaking Workshop was offered as part of McMaster’s first annual [Thrive week](https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/thriveweek/) organized through the Student Wellness Centre. Thrive Week is a week-long series of events focused on helping students, faculty, and staff at McMaster explore their path to mental health
* Weekly Sketching Thursdays in the gallery sessions which were both self-guided and led by McMaster School of the Arts BFA student instructors| Healthy Workplace Program

*Contributors: McMaster Museum of Art*

## Accessibility and Disability Inclusion within The McMaster Research Shop

The McMaster Research Shop in the Office of Community Engagement works with public, non-profit, and community organizations in Hamilton to provide answers to their research questions. Over 2018-2019, volunteer Research Associates have completed several projects to enhance accessibility and disability inclusion:

* **Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB):** Literature review on early intervention programs for blind/visually impaired students that improve educational success
* **Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion:** Literature review on educational programs for people with disabilities regarding sexual health and protection from sexual violence
* **Body Brave:** Scan and evaluation of the most cutting edge, cost-effective, e-mental health approaches for diagnosing and treating eating disorders
* **Ontario Peer Development Initiative:** Environmental scan of membership benefits offered by inter/national mental health peer support organizations and related professional associations (e.g. social work, nursing)

Students interested in volunteering on future projects, and community organizations with research questions, are invited to apply through the [Community Engagement website](https://community.mcmaster.ca/research/research-shop/#tab-content-ov).

*Contributors: The McMaster Research Shop, Office of Community Engagement*

## Internal Capacity Building Within the Office of Community Engagement

This year the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) has been focusing on the principle of equity and building staff capacity, with our vision being: working together for an inclusive, sustainable Greater Hamilton. The OCE staff attended a building accessible presentations workshop and learned about building AODA compliant Microsoft Word documents.

The Office is also undergoing an equity assessment. As part of this internal project, Office staff participated in a focus group on the accessibility of our annual event, the Community-Campus Idea Exchange. The focus group questions were guided by the AccessMac Accessibility Checklist.

*Contributors: The Office of Community Engagement*

## Defying Barriers to Accessibility and Inclusion Workshop

*Defying Barriers Workshop*, a joint initiative of McMaster University and the artist-run organization Centre[3], was held on May 15th, 2019, in downtown Hamilton. Over fifty participants toured Centre[3] facilities, learned from talks by artists Rebecca Baird and Dave Bobier, and participated in discussions about their lived experiences and knowledge as artists, advocates, and community members with disabilities.

**The workshop aimed to:**

* increase awareness of the need for accessible and intergenerational creative environments
* contribute to research on inclusive design
* facilitate partnerships reflecting the diversity of our communities

Organized by School of the Arts faculty Carmela Laganse and Briana Palmer, with support from the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging and the Wally and Mavis Pieczonka Endowment for the Arts, the workshop generated ideas regarding existing barriers in artistic spaces, practices, and infrastructure and how production, exhibition, and performance spaces could be collaboratively and equitably designed to enrich our creative culture.

*Contributors: McMaster School of the Arts, The Faculty of Humanities*

## The Diversity Adds Value Career Fair Access Hour

The Diversity Adds Value Career Fair Access Hour was held September 20, 2018. The hour-long event was an extension of the Fall Career Fair offering equity-seeking students the opportunity to network with employers in a more relaxed and personal setting. SSC focused on event accessibility, including alternative format programming, increased signage, inclusive menu, and event staff for onsite assistance.

The event was attended by 46 students and 14 employers with ranging diversity and inclusion workplace initiatives. Students asked questions regarding disclosing disabilities, tokenism and technology, company marketing related to disabilities and diversity.

**Post event surveys revealed that:**

* 66% of students said they were either very satisfied or satisfied.

**Testimonial from an employer:**

* “I really enjoyed the Access hour, I found it very informative and inspirational. Thank you again for organizing the event, and helping McMaster be a more forward thinking and inclusive School.”

*Contributors: McMaster Student Success Centre*

## Student Open Circles: Students Engaging with Hamilton’s Disability Community

[Student Open Circles](https://opencircle.mcmaster.ca/volunteer) recruits and coordinates more than 300 McMaster students to volunteer as small groups each week at social service agencies in Hamilton. Each group engages in weekly reflection on social issues related to their placement. Student Open Circles volunteers at Conway Opportunity Homes to assist and interact with residents living with physical disabilities through crafts, projects, providing computer help, games, organizing rooms or desks, going for walks, and visiting. This year, an average of 16 volunteers visited Conway Homes each week, giving 710 hours of service.

*Contributors: Student Open Circles*

# Service Delivery

## Cards for Humanity: Pay it Forward at Bridges Eatery

In March, Hospitality Services launched *Cards for Humanity,*a pay it forward initiative at Bridges. Customers can donate a dollar whenever they can to put a Card for Humanity aside for another customer to use towards a meal purchase when they need it.

Food insecurity is an issue that many students face. The program allows a way for customers who may need assistance paying for a meal to do it in a way that is less stigmatizing and open to everyone. Anyone can donate to the project and any customer can use up to three dollars at a time towards food purchases at Bridges. Hospitality Services is currently developing new programs to support students in accessing affordable, nutritious food options on campus.

*Contributors: McMaster Hospitality Services*

## Making Documents More Accessible One Page at a Time

Library Accessibility Services (LAS) continues to work with students who require print-based accommodations and are referred by Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

**Services offered through LAS include:**

* Obtaining textbooks, library materials, classroom notes and other documents and converting them into the format that a student requires.
* Obtaining textbooks for ASL translators.
* Captioning services for instructors so that they may provide captions for videos shown in class, proactively or in response to an accommodation request.
* Captioning of Echo 360 lecture captures and Described Video as part of an accommodation request.
* Requests for documents to be produced in Braille can also be submitted to LAS by departments across campus.
* Work with students to provide accessible reference help, book collection, and book renewal.

*Contributors: Library Accessibility Services*

## McMaster Continuing Education: Marketing for a Digitally Accessible Future

The marketing team at Continuing Education is developing a new website that is both inclusive and accessible for all audiences ([mcmastercce.ca](https://mcmastercce.ca/)). In preparation, the McMaster Continuing Education marketing team has:

* + Eliminated a large portion of inaccessible and redundant documents from the web site. The quantity of hard copy resources distributed by McMaster Continuing Education staff has also been dramatically reduced. Many of these resources were not AODA compliant or tagged incorrectly when accessed in .pdf form.
  + Altered the language and style elements used in current and future projects to become in line with McMaster’s Brand Writing Guidelines
  + The Multimedia Specialist attended a ‘Making Accessible InDesign Documents’ workshop in order to learn to enhance digital/print materials.

*Contributors: McMaster Centre for Continuing Education*

## Holistic Approaches to Service Delivery within the Student Success Centre

The Student Success Centre’s career and employment team modified its delivery model. The goal was to provide a more customized, flexible experience for students in their career journey.

**Customer service enhancements included:**

* Drop-in hours at the Student Accessibility Services office with the SSC’s career development advisor
* Multiple ways to connect to appointments, such as Skype, phone, email
* Classroom presentations
* A more holistic and individualized approach including personalized action plans

**Student testimonials best capture the impact:**

* “Not only did I feel extremely supported, but knowing that I had someone who was personally helping with my job search made all the difference in my mental health during the months that I spent searching.”
* “This is my first Canadian job offer. And I could not have done it without you.”
* “This program has changed my mindset completely about graduating and has led me to be far more confident in the workplace.”

*Contributors: McMaster Student Success Centre*

# Employment

## The Canadian Disability Participation Project

The [Canadian Disability Participation Project](https://cdpp.ca/) Employment Team, led by McMaster’s Dr. Catherine Connelly, aims to design, test, and implement evidence-based practices to increase both the number of people with disabilities in the labour market, as well as their quality of participation. Our projects made great progress in 2018-2019. For our Feedback Study, we collected data with managers and over 300 undergraduate students at McMaster, to look at the effect of disability on managerial feedback. For the Job Carving Study, we conducted focus groups and interviews about the facilitators and hindrances to effective job carving. We presented early results of both of these studies at academic conferences and to practitioners, including a workshop for McMaster managers on effective feedback. We also completed a [project about employer concerns about disability](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10869-018-9602-5) and are continuing work on our Cost-Benefit Analysis project, to measure the net value of hiring and accommodating workers with disabilities.

*Contributors: Employment Team of the Canadian Disability Participation Project, Dr. Catherine Connelly*

## Creating an Inclusive McMaster for Employees with Disabilities

McMaster University is committed to removing barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and promoting inclusive workplaces. Human Resources Services in collaboration with the McMaster Accessibility Council and the Equity and Inclusion Office led the following programs and initiatives to advance employment equity for employees with disabilities:

* Increased awareness of accessibility through focused conversations with staff and faculty on how to integrate accessibility into our day to day work responsibilities
* Co-developed *Equitable and Accessible Workplace Accommodation Training* with the AccessMac Program, Equity and Inclusion Office, and in consultation with McMaster’s [Employee Accessibility Network](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/#tab-content-communities-groups), for staff and faculty, as part of the ‘*Advancing Employment Equity and Inclusive Excellence Workshop Series’*
* Continue to develop *Individual Accommodation Plans* for employees requiring accommodation, as well as *Individual Evacuation Plans* for employees who may experience mobility limitations in exiting a building during an emergency
* Continue to support and manage return to work and redeployment processes available for employees
* Collaborated with the Learning Technologies Consultant (Faculty of Social Sciences) to provide training for staff and faculty on ‘[*Building Accessible Presentations*](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/marquis_mcmaster_ca/EfWq9pdquspFtVBju90IRY8BC5z4_X6ArH-ttqOv7UlKdA?e=hSjBNh)’ and ‘[*Building Accessible Media: Accessible Word Documents*](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/marquis_mcmaster_ca/EVWsx9yGFiFEmhFZmi_sBu4B7KwnVRKQ_Tg0NlqSfHm5Lg?e=trM8si)’
* Provide ongoing recruitment support to Student Accessibility Services and other department and faculties
* Ongoing support to [Employee Accessibility Network](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/#tab-content-communities-groups)

*Contributors: Human Resources Services, Employment Equity Program, Organizational Development Unit*

## The Employee Accessibility Network

The Employee Accessibility Network for employees with disabilities is now in its second year of meeting, where disabled employees / employees with disabilities at the University are invited to connect, network and collaborate, and where the Network acts additionally as a consultative unit to the MAC. This past year, the Network has worked together to consult and provide feedback in several areas, including:

* The Employee Accessibility Network’s Terms of Reference and promotional material
* The McMaster Accessibility Policy
* The McMaster Tobacco and Smoke Free Policy
* Tuition rates for graduate students with disabilities in Masters studies
* Parking and parking lots on the main campus and satellite campuses
* The development of Accessible and Equitable Workplace Accommodations training for the entire McMaster community
* The (emerging) McMaster Accessibility Award
* The Post-Secondary AODA Education Standards Development Committee Mandate and Overview (provincial committee)

The Network has additionally hosted several educational opportunities and discussions for employees with disabilities, including:

* PATH Employment Services
* Employee Health Services workshop on workplace accommodations processes
* Career Advancement and Recruitment for employees with disabilities
* The emerging Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategic framework for the University

Moving forward, some of the Network’s goals include outreach and (flexible) recruitment of employees with disabilities, as well as continue to find ways in which the Network can remain a safe and inviting space for those who self-identify. To join the Network, please contact (confidentially) [access@mcmaster.ca](mailto:access@mcmaster.ca).

## Career Access Professional Services (CAPS)

[Career Access Professional Services (CAPS)](https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/professional-development/caps/) are for students and alumni who identify as a member of an equity-seeking group or have barriers to employment. The CAPS program was developed by the Student Success Centre (SSC) in consultation with Student Accessibility Services to assist students with disabilities (and other identified student groups) in support of their career and employment readiness needs.

The CAPS team provides individualized support to assist with all aspects of career development including exploration, preparation and the building of skills and confidence. As part of CAPS, we foster employer and partner connections to support students and alumni in gaining access to experience building and career opportunities. These connections occur both on and off-campus and involve a variety of opportunities including mentorship, job shadowing, informational interviews and employment.

These partnerships have contributed to more than 500 CAPS participants securing opportunities to develop skills, explore careers, access scholarships, and practice self-advocacy in order to ready themselves for workplace transition and success.

**Partnerships include, but are not limited to:**

* Citi Canada, Rainbow’s End Community Development Corporation,
* Loblaws Companies Limited,
* RBC, and
* Dolphin Disability Mentoring Day.

*Contributors: The Student Success Centre (SSC), Student Accessibility Services (SAS)*

## The Diversity Accommodation and The Diversity and Inclusion Awards

The Student Success Centre (SSC) recognizes the importance of inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, accommodation, and equity when pursuing experiential learning and career development opportunities. The Diversity Accommodation and The Diversity and Inclusion Awards were launched as part of the new Career Access Professional Services. The awards provide funding for skill building and career development for students and alumni who identify as a member of an equity-seeking group or have barriers to employment.

**Funding is available to assist with the costs such as**:

* Access Services,
* Accessibility Equipment,
* Job Coaching,
* Settlement Supports, and
* Wage Subsidy

towards participation in co-op, internships, volunteering, professional development, for on- and off-campus events and opportunities.

Attendance for an out of province co-op, accessible transportation toward a community engagement project, support at employer events resulting in a job offer, and a contract extension due to the wage subsidy, are just a few of the outcomes as a result of the awards. *Contributors: The Student Success Centre (SSC)*

## Student Accessibility Services Hiring a Student Support Specialist

[Student Accessibility Services (SAS)](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) created a new staff position “Student Support Specialist” This position is intended to provide additional support to students who experience Autism Spectrum Disorder / identify as Autistic, and other students with similar needs. This staff member works one-to-one with students and closely with the transition program staff working toward the development of new programming in support of students on the spectrum and related needs.

*Contributors: Student Accessibility Services (SAS)*

# Financial Aid

## McMaster Disability and Accessibility Scholarship Calendar

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) has compiled a list of external scholarships available to McMaster students with disabilities and accessibility needs. We have created new descriptions for these scholarships in order to clearly outline eligibility criteria such as program, diagnosis, academic, and financial requirements. This will allow students to quickly determine which scholarships are applicable to them.

From this information, we have created the Disability & Accessibility Scholarship Calendar. This tool allows students to view information on upcoming scholarships directly through their web browser. Alternatively, students can synchronize this calendar with their personal Google calendar to be reminded of upcoming deadlines.

This information is also available in a Word document format, which sorts scholarships by application deadline. This allows students to access the same information as the Google calendar through a digital or print version. Students using screen readers may find this document easier to navigate.

The SAS Disability & Accessibility Scholarship Calendar will be available in January 2020 through the [SAS webpage](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/)  
*Contributors: Calvin Prowse, Student Accessibility Services*

# Policy / Plans

## Emerging McMaster Accessibility Strategy

* MAC and the AccessMac Program have been working with the AVP Equity & Inclusion on finalizing accessibility priorities for inclusion in McMaster’s 2019 – 2022 EDI Action Plan, which is guided by the EDI Strategic Framework and Principles of Practice.
* McMaster’s Policy on Accessibility will be reviewed and revised as one of the strategic priorities.
* Information about the EDI Strategy and Action Plan can be found on the Equity and Inclusion Office website: [equity.mcmaster.ca](file:///Users/Raihanna/Desktop/Seafile/Accessibility%20and%20Disability%20Inclusion%20Update/ADIUpdate2018-2019/DRAFTS%20ADIU%202018%202019/equity.mcmaster.ca).

# Spaces and Environments

## The University Wayfinding Project

Parking Services led and funded the first two phases of the University Wayfinding project. A committee was formed at the onset of the project to allow different areas across campus to contribute to the University’s wayfinding strategy. Other campus partners such as Athletics and Recreation, Student Recruitment Office, Hospitality Services and Housing and Conference Services were also consulted.

Ten fingerpost signs have been installed at key locations around campus with imagery for services within the building, walking distance and time. Four new large campus maps were installed on Sterling St / Forsyth Ave, University Ave/ College Cres., north-west of ITB building and in front the west side entrance to Mary Keyes. The maps include LED tickers managed by Public Relations for messaging. The map affixed to the wall of the Commons breezeway was also updated as part of this project. These initiatives have improved pedestrian experience and navigation on campus.

*Contributors: Parking and Security Services*

## Improvements Implemented at the Campus Store After Accessibility Audit Conducted

In 2018, an accessibility audit of the physical environment of the Campus Store was conducted.

**The following improvements have been implemented as a result:**

* In-store signage redesigned with clearer fonts and contrasting colours.
* Vertical merchandising implemented where possible to help people access a greater variety of products.
* Inventory control discs used to ensure that products remain visible and easily accessible.
* Pathways around the store and floor sign placement re-evaluated to ensure ample space for people with a mobility device or walking aid.
* A PowerPoint presentation shared with full time staff to inform them of the findings and new service standards and expectations.
* AODA service expectations incorporated into training for new hires.
* Website re-designed to increasingly meet AODA web accessibility standards
* Liaised with McMaster Accessibility Council to address building issues such as automatic door opener placement/timers, and the lack of colour contrasts for stairways/handrails.
* Developed forward-looking strategy for future changes to increase accessibility/disability inclusion on sales floor and service desks.

*Contributors: McMaster Campus Store, Louise Walker (Sales Floor Manager)*

## The Centre for Continuing Education’s Revamp of Physical and Communication-Focused Spaces at One James North

The Centre for Continuing Education has made several efforts to continue ~~and~~ to create more accessible spaces for disabled community members including:

* Wheelchair accessible building, elevator to 2nd floor. Accessible washrooms on the main level with a large adult change table and floor 2
* Movable tables and chairs
* Microphones
* Space for prayers (Our study rooms and meeting room 210 are available as spaces to pray)
* Study rooms for nursing moms
* Sign language interpreter when required
* Adjustable lighting in classrooms

*Contributors: Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), Jennifer Rutkowski*

## Campus-Wide Accessibility and All-Genders Audit of McMaster Washrooms

**Accessibility Audit of Campus Washrooms**

In Summer 2019, the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) conducted an internal accessibility audit of campus washrooms, including those in One James North (OJN) and the David Braley Health Sciences Centre (DBHSC). This audit was an extension of the All-Genders Washroom Project; its aim was to determine the number and locations of washrooms marked as accessible and ensure they were compliant with the Ontario Building Code’s requirements for universal washrooms.

Numerous non-compliant washrooms were found, and a list of concerns to be addressed by Facility Services (FS) was drafted. Some recommended further steps are for universal washrooms to have posters with information for washroom users on who to contact about issues with the washroom, and for the EIO to hire mobility device users to test the universal washrooms (to ensure that legislative compliance translates to actual accessibility).

*Contributors: Fiona Gordon, Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), McMaster Accessibility Council*

## Making Residence Feel Like Home with Accessible Spaces and Communications

Housing & Conference Services (HCS) continually invests in creating an inclusive experience for our residence students, guests, and staff. This year they have made exceptional progress in the areas of Space and Environments and Communications.

**Spaces and Environments:**

In 2018, we initiated an external accessibility audit of all residence buildings to ensure legislative compliance and meet the needs of our communities. This year we've invested in new power door operators in Commons Building, Mary E. Keyes Residence, and Woodstock Hall. Wayfinding has been updated in Woodstock to direct visitors to accessible entrances. Hedden Hall has undergone fire alarm upgrades including hearing-impaired strobe devices. Renovated North and West Quad Service Centres now have new accessible-height desks.

**Communications:**

We are also improving our training and communications. In November 2018, we relaunched our website and have invested in software that will help us reach WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance. This year, Residence Life, in partnership with the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), has revamped accessibility training and accessible event planning for Welcome Week volunteers.

*Contributors: Housing & Conference Services (HCS)*

## Accessibility Audits for Mills Memorial Library and Thode Science & Engineering Library

Accessibility audits of both Mills Memorial Library and Thode Science & Engineering Library were undertaken by Sterling Frazer Associates in the late Spring. Reports with recommendations have been received for both locations.

Many of the issues raised were related to the age of the buildings, which we will work to address, but there are other areas we hope to start working on shortly:

* Issues with automatic door operators not working consistently
* Height-adjustable desks not working consistently
* Re-visit/communicating the libraries emergency evacuation plans
* Adding or replacing visual indicator strips on large window sections
* Provide signage leading to emergency call systems
* Inaccessible door hardware – use of round doorknobs, not levers (Mills)
* Reworking access to service desks on main floor (Thode)
* Greatest challenge in Mills is wayfinding and signage

We expect to be able to report that many of these most pressing areas of concerned have been addressed by the time of the next update!  
*Contributors: McMaster Libraries*

## Mobile Sit-Stand Student Desks Introduced in Campus Libraries

Fifteen LearnFit Sit-Stand desks have been introduced in Innis, Mills and Thode libraries. The library will be very interested to learn how students choose to make use of these new portable, height-adjustable tables. If popular we can consider adding more and in different locations.

Additionally, more tall study tables and stools have been added to the Lyons New Media Centre on the 4th floor of Mills Library and standing Bring Your Own laptop stations have been added to the 1st floor of Thode Library.

*Contributors: McMaster Associate Librarian, Anne Pottier*

## Library Accessibility Services: Provide Accessible Formats for Students with Disabilities

Library Accessibility Services (LAS) continues to work with students who require print-based accommodations and are referred by Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

**Services offered through LAS include:**

* Obtaining textbooks, library materials, classroom notes and other documents and converting them into the format that a student requires.
* Obtaining textbooks for ASL translators.
* Captioning services for instructors so that they may provide captions for videos shown in class, proactively or in response to an accommodation request.
* New this year, captioning of Echo 360 lecture captures and Described Video as part of an accommodation request.
* Requests for documents to be produced in Braille can also be submitted to LAS by departments across campus.
* Working with students to provide accessible reference help, book collection, and book renewal.

*Contributors: Library Accessibility Services*

## The CATS Space - A Quiet and Accessible Assistive Technology Space

[CATS is McMaster’s Assistive Technology Lab](https://library.mcmaster.ca/spaces/las), named the Campus Accessible Tech Space during a student naming contest at our Fall 2018 Open House.  CATS is a quiet hub on campus for students registered with SAS and LAS to study.  CATS contains height adjustable tables, two private workspaces, an area with low light, an area for group work, and a lounge area. This space is staffed the majority of the hours that the space is open, and assistive tech, such as laptops, keyboards, magnifying glasses, microphones, headphones and some fun activities can be signed out from the CATS service desk.

*Contributors: Library Accessibility Services, Nancy Waite, Lynne Serviss, Paige Maylott*

McMaster Museum of Art – Creating Welcoming and Accessible Spaces

**Creating Welcoming and Accessible Spaces:**   
McMaster Museum of Art is committed to working proactively to ensure visitors of all abilities are able to access our galleries and events. In 2018/19 it introduced:

* a new multi-level accessible reception desk was constructed to better welcome and accommodate a variety of heights and mobility devices
* new seating, both portable and stationary easy access chairs, were placed in all public spaces
* large font versions of interpretive texts and object labels are provided in galleries
* a safe, private space for [McMaster Student Open Circles](https://opencircle.mcmaster.ca/) sessions, exploring mindfulness practice, creative expression, and discussion

*Contributors: McMaster Museum of Art*

## Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in McMaster Convocation Ceremonies

The Office of the Registrar continues to identify ways of improving accessibility for the 14 convocation ceremonies it delivers annually. For many years, the Office offered a process whereby graduates and guests could request accessibility arrangements for their ceremony in advance of the event. Seating with barrier-free access remains a top request, while the delivery of other supports may be requested including the provision of Personal Support Workers, ASL-English Translation, and other graduate- or guest-centered accommodations. The Office works to improve and streamline the accessibility request process every year and is developing an online tool that allows it to track, support, and implement accessibility requests.

*Contributors: The Office of the Registrar, Brad Colburne*

## A New Allergen-Friendly Station at Centro

This year, SMPL was added as a new dining station to [Centro@Commons](https://twitter.com/MacHospitality). SMPL is an allergen-friendly concept, offering lunch and dinner options prepared without the use of many of the top 10 allergens in Canada (milk, eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, mustard, shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, gluten).

The Hospitality Services team has worked tirelessly to ensure that students with allergies have a safe place to eat and enjoy their meals. Student surveys identified that those with food allergies on campus often experience feeling stigmatized or singled out from their friends who may not have to be as conscious about their food choices.  With the increasing number of students with food allergies, it was important to provide an environment where students have healthy options every day and are comfortable to dine regardless of their dietary concerns.

*Contributors: Hospitality Services*

## Accessibility in Intramural Sports

The Department of Athletics and Recreation is committed to working proactively to ensure members of all abilities are able to access recreation and sport programs and facilities and events. Accessible sport leagues being offered are Sitting Volleyball and Parasport Tournament including Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair European Handball. Contact Peter McComie at [mccomiep@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mccomiep@mcmaster.ca) or Debbie Marinoff Shupe at [marinof@mcmaster.ca](mailto:marinof@mcmaster.ca) for more information.

*Contributors: The Department of Athletics and Recreation*

## Department of Athletics and Recreation Special Needs Assistance Program

Getting a great workout is a SNAP! This program is designed to assist all McMaster students, staff, faculty, and our community members who have accessibility needs. If you need physical assistance to complete your workout or activity, this program is for you. The program coordinator will pair you with one of our student volunteers who will meet you for your workout and provide you with assistance. The program is free of charge to all McMaster students and any **member** with accessibility needs.

Contact Lee-Anne Wilson at [wilsol16@mcmaster.ca](mailto:wilsol16@mcmaster.ca) for more information.

*Contributors: The Department of Athletics and Recreation*

## Wheelchair Sign-Out

The Department of Athletics and Recreation has [three specialized wheel chairs available for sign out](https://rec.mcmaster.ca/welcome-mcmaster-athletics-recreation) (to students and McMaster employees). Two chairs are sport chairs and can be signed out at the Joan Buddle Service Desk in the David Braley Athletic Centre. The third chair, the Hippocampe all-terrain wheelchair can be used on trails, grass and beaches. Contact Wayne Terryberry at [terryber@mcmaster.ca](mailto:terryber@mcmaster.ca) or Debbie Marinoff Shupe at [marinof@mcmaster.ca](mailto:marinof@mcmaster.ca) for more information.

*Contributors: The Department of Athletics and Recreation*

Student Initiatives

## Cripping Graduate School: A Disability/Mad Studies Reading and Activities Group

With SPICES funding from the School of Graduate Studies, the [Disability and Mad Studies Reading Group](https://gs.mcmaster.ca/graduate-student-life/spices/2019/cripping-graduate-school-disability-and-mad-studies-reading-group) endeavors to cultivate a social and intellectual disability community on campus for those with disabilities, developing Disability Studies scholarship, and/or interested in learning more.

Over 2018-2019 the group hosted six ‘book club’ meetings on a range of topics such as:

* ableism during ethics review,
* stigma,
* disability representation in kidlit (children’s literature),
* disabled student activism,
* disability in grad school reference letters
* And more!

These meetings drew 25 individual participants and a membership list of over 40 participants. Members also facilitated a session on ‘Teaching with a Disability’ at the annual *Teaching and Learning Forum* for TA’s. The success of this pilot led to the renewal of the SPICES grant, and so activities will continue over 2019-2020. Anyone is welcome to participate, including community members without affiliations to McMaster. Interested attendees can email cripgrad@mcmaster.ca to be added to the mailing list.

*Contributors: The Disability and Mad Studies Reading Group*

## CFMU McMaster University Campus Radio – Now Airing New Show “Ability”

Starting in November, 2019, CMFU, McMaster’s campus radio station, will have a new show every Thursday from 1:30pm-2:00pm called Ability.

**Ability aims to:**

* support and play music by artists who have experience with disability;
* have guest hosts (such as staff, students, and faculty) in areas relating to disability, accessibility, and inclusivity;
* discuss topics relating to disability, such as inclusivity, ableism, neurodiversity, accessibility, and more

We hope to encourage listeners to actively think about inclusivity, accessibility and disability related topics, in order to aid the McMaster community in becoming a more socially inclusive space.  
*Contributors: Sarah Williams-Habibi*

## Open Accessibility – An Illustrated Story of Disability Advocacy

[*Open Accessibility: An Illustrated Story of Disability Advocacy*](https://macblog.mcmaster.ca/flexforwardresource/2019/02/04/open-accessibility-an-illustrated-story-of-disability-advocacy/) was released as a webcomic in the fall of 2018. Developed by graduate student Michelle Sayles in close collaboration with Alise de Bie, this piece aims to enhance the adoption of accessibility practices in the classroom as an integral part of the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. As a digitized resource with screen-reader accessibility, this comic serves as an educational addendum to the FLEX Forward training guide for all campus instructors on accessible education.

The narrative weaves together a history of policy change with student and faculty stories to share the evolution of campus disability and accessibility changes since the 1980s. Aiming to dismantle the stigma and barriers facing persons with disabilities in academia, the story presents recommendations from community members to advance a barrier-free campus environment.

*Contributors: Michelle Sayles, Alise de Bie*

## DISability Discussions

The Equity and Inclusion Office has been working with MSU Maccess to amplify this year’s “Disability DIScussions” series to both meet the needs of the students participating, and to connect students with disabilities to various services on-campus (for example, the School of Graduate Studies and the Student Success Centre). One of the central goals of these DIScussions continues to be capturing the gaps in accessibility in services and environments that continue to exist at McMaster, and which impact students with disabilities in complex and often, harmful, ways at the University. Salient points from this year’s DIScussions will be documented and presented to the MAC to discuss ways in which the barriers students are describing can be acknowledged and acted upon for removal.   
*Contributors: MSU Maccess, the Equity and Inclusion Office*

## The McMaster Health Advocacy Symposium

The [McMaster Health Advocacy Symposium](https://www.facebook.com/MacHealthAdv/) is an annual student-led event that fosters the development of effective, responsible advocacy skills amongst health professional students. Since 2017, we’ve developed and revised an Accessibility Plan, striving to create an event accessible to people with a range of abilities and disabilities, gender identities, dietary needs, cultural identities, and income levels. Our plan includes issues related to everything from our website, to costs to participants, to our venue, to our workshop format; we continue to communicate with both participants and workshop facilitators to improve the accessibility of our event. We see accessibility as a process rather than a product, and continue to look for ways to improve our sixth annual symposium, which took place September 21, 2019.

*Contributors: Jesse Bauman, Christina Ma, Kolina Tavares, Jane Tooley, Alice Cavanagh, Angela Ma*

## SPIE McMaster Student Chapter – Wayfinding App Ways to Navigating Accessibility

We have identified on campus wayfinding as a major challenge in the accessibility/disability-inclusion areas. The SPIE McMaster Student Chapter organized a summer undergraduate student team (7 students, 1 French Exchange, 1 PhD) to develop an indoor localization system that allows indoor positioning and wayfinding. A mobile app has been developed that can incorporate both indoor and outdoor (Google Map) navigation and mapping capabilities. Over the summer, the team has demonstrated the feasibility of the technology development and will continue to work on this project towards a fully function prototype system using BSB sub-basement as a demonstration site. Through these activities, the students gained firsthand experiences in design for accessibility/disability applications in addition to hands-on experiences in wireless and mobile application.

*Contributors: Qiyin Fang, SPIE McMaster Student Chapter*

## December 3rd International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebration

This December, 2018 International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebration was carried out through the organization of a 3-part discussion series in partnership with the EIO/AccessMac Program, the Disability and Mad Studies Reading Group and MSU Maccess. From November 29-December 3, participants in the series explored topics and discussion around disability, accessibility, stigma and celebration. Additionally, and leading up to December 3, a 6-week social media campaign to launch the inaugural [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Update 2017-2018](https://equity.mcmaster.ca/news/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion-update-2017-2018) paired illustrations from the newly published [*Open Accessibility: An Illustrated History of Disabled Advocacy at McMaster*](https://michellesayles.com/projects/accessibility-comic/)comic with excerpts from the Update on Facebook and Twitter platforms. The campaign culminated on December 3 with the release of a celebratory and commemorative email to the McMaster campus community.

# Teaching and Learning: Accessibility and Disability Inclusion in Research, Instruction and Course-Level Enhancements

## Living A Mad Politics: Affirming Mad Onto-Ethico-Epistemologies Through Resonance, Resistance, and Relational Redress of Epistemic-Affective Harm/ Living A Mad Politics – A School of Social Work PhD Dissertation

Alise de Bie from the School of Social Work and Gender Studies and Feminist Research Diploma Program defended their PhD dissertation - [*Living A Mad Politics: Affirming Mad Onto-Ethico-Epistemologies Through Resonance, Resistance, and Relational Redress of Epistemic-Affective Harm*](https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/24439) - in April 2019. Alise will be assuming a Postdoctoral Fellowship position in the MacPherson Institute on campus.

*Contributors: Alise de Bie*

## Companions in this Age: A Study of Pain in Canadian Literature – A Disability Informed Dissertation

Shane Neilson, a PhD candidate in the English and Cultural Studies Department, completed his disability studies-informed dissertation [“Companions in this Age: A Study of Pain in Canadian Literature"](https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/23854) in December 2018.  
*Contributor: Shane Neilson*

## Arts-based Methods in Inclusive Research with People with Intellectual Disabilities

Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans (School of Social Work) gave a keynote address on the use of the arts and arts-based methods in inclusive research with people labeled/with intellectual disabilities at the Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability Conference, Goldcoast, Australia. At this same conference she engaged a local self-advocacy group to perform with her a forum theatre scene, produced by academic researchers and co-researchers labeled/with intellectual disabilities as part of the *Re-imagining Parenting Possibilities* project.

Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans (School of Social Work) and Ph.D. candidate Alan Santinele Martino (Sociology) presented their work on sex, sexuality and intellectual disabilities at the Social Work and Sexualities conference in Montreal.

*Contributors: Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans, School of Social Work*

## Research as Activism – A School of Social Work Book Chapter

**Co-Produced Book Chapter**

A co-authored book chapter, “Research as Activism? Perspectives of

People Labeled with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Inclusive Research and Co-production of Knowledge”, written by faculty member Ann Fudge Schormans and co-researchers (from three inclusive projects) Heather Allan, O’Neil Allen, Christine Austin, Romeo Pierre, Kareeme Elbard, Kevin Head, Tyler Henderson, Rainbow Hunt, Nathan Gray, Karrissa LaRoche, Rex Marchi, Donna McCormick, & Sean Rowley, has been accepted for the *Routledge Handbook of Disability Activism.*

*Contributors: Dr. Ann Fudge Schormans, School of Social Work*

## Enhancing Teaching Capacity for Universal Design, Accessibility and Inclusion Through a Critical Engagement with the Confluence of Mental Health, Madness, Sanism, Eugenics, Ability and Colonization in the Classroom

This research aims to answer the question of how an attention to Mad pedagogy, ablism, sanism, eugenics and Universal Design can support inclusion within course design, teaching and learning. Research in social work education has suggested that “professors and field supervisors did not understand the importance of accessible learning environments. Instead of being understood as having a recognized disability, students were viewed as needy, difficult, and unworthy of what was perceived as special treatment” (Reid, Poole, 2013, p. 217). Other scholars have suggested the social work education has an ethical obligation to teach mental health from a critical perspective, attentive to the contributions and voices of those who have experienced the mental health systems rather than any allegiances to the biomedical model of mental illness (Joseph, 2013).

**Purpose and objectives:**This project aims to take a pedagogical leadership role to re-design and deliver the course *Social Work 4Y03: Critical Issues in Mental Health & Addiction: Mad & Critical Disability Studies Perspectives for Social Work.* Through focus groups, this research will gather data on 4Y03 students who will have an opportunity to share reflections on the course. The reflections will be analyzed with an imbricated, respectful analytical attention to influences, contexts, perspectives and philosophies on mental health, madness, sanism, ability/disability, eugenics, holistic wellness and illness. Through this project we aim to:

* Generate discussion of diverse ontologies, epistemologies and positions on mental health, wellness, madness, ability, eugenics and sanism on the McMaster campus
* Develop an articulation of what Mad pedagogy is and how Universal Design might be understood in relation to teaching students with mental health disabilities

*Contributors: Dr. Ameil Joseph, Dr. Alise de Bie*

## Collaboratively Developing a Prototype Code Editor for Visually Impaired Users

In the course CS 4EN3 Software Entrepreneurship, we developed a concept and prototype for a code editor suited to visually impaired users, and a curriculum theme (based on pitch and rhythm) suitable for beginning users which would leverage the new interface and work for visually impaired individuals. The project team comprised both sighted and non-sighted students to collaboratively inform the design process.

*Contributors: Christopher Anand, Omar Hamdon, Kerala Brendon, Jenell Hogg*

## Politicizing Self-Advocacy: Improving Access to Learning through Disabled Student Workshops

This project, initially evolving out of a final paper for SocSci 1SS3 and with support from the MacPherson Institute’s Student Partners Program, is working towards creating a workshop series unpacking different elements of self-advocacy that center disabled student experiences.

Based on relevant literature and interviews with McMaster students, each workshop will include concepts for attendees to apply to skill-building activities and scenarios. This project aims to help disabled McMaster students foster the skills needed for the self-advocacy work that will likely be necessary throughout their time at university. It is created with students who are new to McMaster, new to disability, or new to self-advocacy and accessing accommodations in mind.

The first workshop in the series took place during Welcome Week 2019 and was titled “Proactive, Reactive, and Retrospective Self-Advocacy”. Those interested in learning more or attending future sessions can email Emunah Woolf at [woolfe@mcmaster.ca](mailto:woolfe@mcmaster.ca).

*Contributors: Emunah Woolf, Alise de Bie*

## Design-Thinking Workshops with the Faculty of Engineering

Faculty of Engineering students were given a chance to tackle accessibility on campus through a [Design-Thinking workshop](https://medium.com/@themoiz94/community-engaged-design-thinking-workshop-for-mcmaster-university-a2fb745cd23a) with the Experiential Program Coordinator from Co-op and Career Services (ECCS) in October 2018.

Kate Brown, [AccessMac Projects Coordinator](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/), advocated for student accessibility needs for over 2 hours, while fifteen students asked questions, listened, brainstormed, created, and prototyped various solutions. The workshop was so successful in promoting awareness of issues around accessibility in public spaces, one of the engineering students exclaimed “I now have to re-think my whole capstone project and let my group know we need to include accessibility features in our design.”  The manager from the Good Shepherd Food Bank and staff from Empowerment Squared were in attendance as well working with their own groups of students.

Due to the success of this human-centered design workshop, there is another one planned for fall 2019, where accessibility will be the theme for the whole event.

*Contributors: Louise Gazzola*

## 1SS3: Inquiry in the Social Sciences – Independent Research Projects Surrounding Disability on Campus

In the Winter 2019 term, 20 students in Dr. Alise de Bie’s *1SS3: Inquiry in the Social Sciences* section on *Disability, Accessibility, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* collaborated with campus partners to complete individual research projects on accessibility and disability inclusion topics pertinent to post-secondary education. Working with the Student Success Centre, Equity and Inclusion Office, Social Sciences Learning Technologies Consultant, Student Accessibility Services Transitions Program, and Maccess, students completed literature reviews on employment for disabled students, experiences of international and racialized students with disabilities, (in)accessible media/technology on campus, transitions from high school to post-secondary, and disabled student activism. Students also conducted an investigation into how disability is visually represented on campus and made suggestions for improvement.

*Contributors: Alise de Bie*

## A New Course Coming in Winter 2020 – Geographies of Disability

Dr. Vera Chouinard will be teaching a fourth-year course on Geographies of Disability in Winter 2020 - she usually gets quite an enthusiastic response from students in the class. She is also working on a book project on Geographies of Disability with University of Toronto Press. One of the goals of the book project is to demonstrate how ableness/ableism affects all our lives and the workings of an unjust global capitalist order.

Dr. Chouinard is also supervising a Ph.D. student who is completing a thesis on her own and others' experiences of care in and outside the home. In addition, she is writing a chapter on Feminist Perspectives on Disability for the Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Disability.

*Contributors: Dr. Vera Chouinard*

## Incorporating Accessibility and Disability Justice into the Delivery Health Geography

As part of the MacPherson Institute Student Faculty Partnership program, we engaged in research regarding how undergraduate geography students interacted with issues of disability and accessibility, while also endeavoring to implement the principles of universal course design and accessibility best practices in the delivery of the course. Autoethnographic research was taken on by the student partner to analyze how students engaged with disability and supplementary resources on disability justice issues were written and provided to the students in an effort to broaden their understandings of disability and how it relates to issues of health geography. A publication based on the research is forthcoming.

*Contributors: Sophie Geffros, Dr. Alison Williams*

The MacPherson Institute: Accessibility and Inclusion in Teaching and Learning Programming

The MacPherson Institute has been a critical partner in achieving accessibility and inclusion on campus through a number of efforts such as:

**Programs:**

* The MacPherson Institute offers in-person education on accessibility in teaching and learning through Accessibility Seminars offered as part of their [Educator Enhancement Series](https://mi.mcmaster.ca/eep/) and [Emerging Educators](https://mi.mcmaster.ca/teaching-learning-certificates-of-completion/) program for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. The [September 2018 Annual Teaching & Learning Forum](https://teaching.mcmaster.ca/teaching-and-learning-forum/) for TAs featured a workshop on Accessibility and Accommodation, as well as one on Teaching with a Disability.
* Members of the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Team at MacPherson have also been working with departments under IQAP review to complete [section 3.4 of the Self Study document on Accessibility](https://mi.mcmaster.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Self-Study-Guidebook_2018-Edition.pdf).
* The MacPherson Institute’s [Accessibility & Equity Teaching & Learning Network](https://teaching.mcmaster.ca/teaching-and-learning-networks/)hosted two accessible education debriefs at the end of May 2018. Further events will be planned for the fall.
* The [2018 Learning Technologies Symposium](https://lts.mcmaster.ca/) included sessions highlighting principles of Universal Design for Learning in blended and online education.
* Ongoing blended and online course design consultations and educational technologies use include accessible and inclusive practice and evaluation (e.g., Avenue to Learn WCAG 2.1 standard and MacVideo (Kaltura) video streaming closed captioning)
* Member of the Educational Technologies team authored an open module on “[Inclusive Design for Open Educational Resources](https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/page/view.php?id=138729)”

## The MacPherson Institute: The Student Partner Program

**Student Partners Program (SPP):**

* A new stream of the [Student Partners Program](https://teaching.mcmaster.ca/student-partners-program/) focused specifically on enhancing equity and inclusion was piloted in Winter 2019, and will run again in Fall 2019. This stream created opportunities for students from equity seeking groups to partner with faculty on making courses/programs more equitable and inclusive (including for disabled students).
* Other work funded through the Student Partners Program included a project focused on generating recommendations for addressing social barriers faced by students with invisible disabilities, efforts to enhance access to field education for equity-seeking students in Social Work, and research exploring the experiences of teaching assistants in relation to their social locations (which included TAs who identify as disabled).
* Ongoing research (funded through the SPP) also focuses on identifying factors that encourage or discourage instructional staff (faculty and TAs) to engage in accessible teaching. Recommendations from this research will be shared both on campus and beyond in order to contribute to enhancing training and development efforts connected to accessible education (including, but not limited to, the [FLEXForward resource](https://flexforward.pressbooks.com/)).

*Contributors: MacPherson Institute*

## Surveying Students’ Experiences of Echo360 in the Life Sciences Program

In October, we surveyed students in the Life Sciences program about their experiences with Echo360 lecture capture software. We had 247 respondents, of which 76% reported having used Echo360 in courses administered in the Faculty of Science. Of these respondents, 92% believe Echo360 has made course content more accessible and 84% believe it has aided their understanding of course content. Roughly 88% of respondents who have used Echo360 identified as having some type of flexible learning need (i.e. they commute, care for a loved one, are registered with Student Accessibility Services, etc.). All of these individuals believe Echo360 made course content more accessible and engaging, and all of them said it enhanced their participation in the course and their understanding of course content.

*Contributors: Pulkit Sahi and Stefan Mladjenovic in the Life Sciences program, within the School of Interdisciplinary Science*

# Teaching and Learning: Educational Technologies, Online Course Design, and Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Training

## Accessible Online Course Design at McMaster Continuing Education

### Creating Digitally Accessible Online Course Frameworks

Continuing Education (CE) continues to incorporate accessibility standards into their design of online course materials. Below are some examples of this work as completed in 2018-2019:

* CE’s educational development team has eliminated the use of images/photos embedded with text as they are non-readable with assistive technologies.
* The use of images/photos is restricted to pedagogical purposes and always complies with accessibility standards.
* All videos uploaded to YouTube/on the CE website include transcripts and captions. Continuing Education’s multimedia specialist works with Rev and Inclusive Media to ensure alternative formats are provided for all audio and video components.
* When required, videos include described-video captioning and transcription.
* The use of PDF format has been discontinued for CE-produced course content in favour of Word documents which are more accessible.
* Templates and guidelines support the work of subject matter experts and instructors in their development of multimedia material, so they comply with provincial accessibility standards.

### Experimenting with Enhancing Accessibility in Course Content and Delivery Methods

* Experimenting with new course content delivery methods (e.g. interviews) is central to the work of the educational development team. The multimedia specialist has designed new Brighter World templates to enhance interviews and display media in course content.
* Subject matter experts (SMEs) are informed of accessibility requirements, provided with resources and asked to produce content that meets accessibility standards. Supporting materials are now available to SMEs and instructors, such as:
  + [Continuing Education Toolkit](http://libguides.mcmaster.ca/cceinstructors)
  + [Course Development Hub](https://sites.google.com/view/course-development-hub/home)
  + [Instructor Handbook](http://libguides.mcmaster.ca/cceinstructorhandbook/home)
* SMEs and instructors are encouraged to include open educational resources in course design to reduce students’ costs and increase access to study materials.
* Content writing and editing follow universal design for learning principles and provincial accessibility standards.
* The educational development team continuously reviews its design and development practices to discover opportunities to improve accessibility features in courses and programs.

*Contributors: Lorraine Carter, McMaster Continuing Education Marketing Team*

## Echo 360 Lecture Capture and Video Engagement Platform

[Echo360, McMaster’s classroom lecture capture and video engagement platform](https://library.mcmaster.ca/services/lecture-capture-echo360), continues to evolve and be utilized in more classrooms on campus. The platform enables instructors to have their voice and slides captured and published into video; for students to submit questions, flag where they are confused, engage in polls; and to create bookmarks and notes that are timestamped to the exact point in the video. Your notes and bookmarks can be reviewed anytime as part of a self-generated study guide.

In addition to these great features, we have now also enabled Echo360’s Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) on all videos captured via Echo360. ASR automatically creates text transcripts from the audio track in your videos and makes them available to view directly from within Echo360. Transcripts are searchable allowing you to go to jump to the exact moment your search term appears in the video.

*Contributors: McMaster Campus Classroom Technology Services, Chris McAllister*

## Echo360 Sandpit: A Collaborative Online Learning Platform

Echo 360 enables in-class and online teaching and learning at McMaster to be more inclusive and accessible to all students from a variety of backgrounds. The MacPherson Institute created an Echo360 Sandpit Course for McMaster instructors to aid them and their students in using this active, online learning space. We focused primarily on student participation and how Echo360 can be used to promote the participation of all students in class. Our team strives to make learning at McMaster inclusive, and thus accessible, to all students, no matter their situation or accessibility needs. The Echo 360 Sandpit course and online support community promote instructor and student, by offering online student support, and allow McMaster instructors the opportunity to experience being a student in an Echo360 course.

For more information please contact Christa Morrison at [morric17@mcmaster.ca](mailto:morric17@mcmaster.ca).

*Contributors: Christa Morrison, Dr. Katie Moisse, Josh Mclellan, Sarah Williams-Habibi, Stefan Mladjenović, and Giancarlo Da-Ré*

## Faculty of Science: Blended Learning Conversion for Accessibility

With support from the Strategic Alignment Fund, the Faculty of Science is converting our existing blended learning courses into a more accessible format to ensure adherence to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA.  
  
The development team is working closely with instructional groups and accessibility experts on campus to complete this project by 2021. Additional priorities include incorporating research on best-practice, creating accessible interfaces and navigation, content that can be updated and maintained sustainably, and using tools that are accessible to all members of the university.  
  
The Faculty prioritizes student experiences and feedback and will be looking for volunteers in the upcoming year to pilot created course content.  
  
For more information or to be included in our community of interest, please email Jessica Blackwood at [blackwja@mcmaster.ca](mailto:blackwja@mcmaster.ca).  
*Contributors: The Faculty of Science, MacPherson Institute, Student Accessibility Services*

## Faculty Of Social Sciences Training: Accessible Digital Media

From March 13, 2018 - June 19, 2019:

* A total of 49 training workshops or presentations on various digital accessibility techniques and information on the Information Communication standards in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

From March 2018-June 2019

* Trained over 150 individuals on digital accessibility core skills, [document accessibility techniques](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/marquis_mcmaster_ca/EfWq9pdquspFtVBju90IRY8BC5z4_X6ArH-ttqOv7UlKdA?rtime=gvGUvsVm10g), and the [facilitation of delivering accessible presentations](https://mcmasteru365-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/marquis_mcmaster_ca/EVWsx9yGFiFEmhFZmi_sBu4B7KwnVRKQ_Tg0NlqSfHm5Lg?e=trM8si).

*Contributors: Nick Marquis, Faculty of Social Sciences: Office of the Dean*

## Professor Hippo-On-Campus: Student Mental Health Education Program for Educators and Navigators

**Mental Health Positive Learning Environments for Students**

The *Professor Hippo-on-Campus: Student Mental Health Education Program for Educators and Navigators*is a collaborative initiative built with the support of the Office of the Provost, Office of the Vice-Provost (Faculty), Office of Student Affairs, and Paul. R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation, and Excellence in Teaching, in response to the interest and demand for student mental health training among faculty and staff at McMaster University.

The Professor Hippo on Campus initiative consists of a set of 8 online e-modules, coupled with in-person workshop opportunities, with the overarching aim to engage and support educators and navigators to build their mental health literacy, skills and confidence to address student mental health and well-being issues, as appropriate to their roles, and to create increasingly mental health-positive learning environments at McMaster. In this context, educator refers to all faculty members or educators in all departments and programs, and navigator refers to all staff in roles supporting students.  **The Intent of Professor Hippo-on-Campus is:**

* Not for faculty and staff to become mental health “experts”
* But is to provide them with the information they have identified that they need in their roles as supportive, engaged educators and navigators.

**This Includes:**

* Specific, practical tips on responding to students in difficulty or distress or with mental health or substance use difficulties at McMaster University
* Providing academic accommodations to students, as well as a self-care component.

In the Fall of 2019, a widespread dissemination of a new and improved set of e-modules is scheduled to begin, coupled with workshop opportunities, for academic leaders, educators, and navigators.

*Contributors: Dr. Catharine Munn*

## Equity-Informed Workshops in the Student Success Centre

To further enhance diversity, equity and inclusion within the Student Success Centre, the team participated in a number of teaching and learning events throughout the 2018 – 2019. The training began in partnership with the Equity and Inclusion Office, as part of a Winter 2018 fireside chat series. Topics included:

* Experiences of Jewish Students at McMaster
* Reverse Racism: Is it a thing?
* Gender Identity/Gender Expression and the Law
* Accessibility (Reclaiming Our Bodies & Minds)
* Land acknowledgement: Where, Why & When

The Student Success Centre concluded this training by participating in a session at the Woodland Cultural Centre, a museum that was established under the direction of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians upon the closure of the Mohawk Institute Residential School.

Following this Winter training series, the Student Success Centre has hosted a number of other trainings for staff-wide learning and development, including sighted guide techniques training and accessible design.  *Contributors: Student Success Centre, Gisela Oliveira*

# Technology & Communications

## Accessible Communications and Public Affairs at McMaster University

The Communications and Public Affairs team prioritizes supporting the University’s accessibility and disability inclusivity strategies in many ways such as:

* Prioritizing and amplifying editorial coverage of accessibility and disability issues and solutions on campus
* Participating and supporting a variety of committees and working groups on campus including the McMaster Accessibility Council
* Producing/posting stories on these issues including:
  + [For the ages: How McMaster is becoming age-friendly](file:///C:\Users\victoriakren\Downloads\o%09https:\dailynews.mcmaster.ca\articles\for-the-ages-how-mcmaster-is-becoming-age-friendly)
  + [New initiatives, resources help improve accessibility in teaching and learning on campus](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/new-initiatives-resources-help-improve-accessibility-in-teaching-and-learning-on-campus/)
  + [iBioMed students win national design award for accessibility](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/ibiomed-students-win-national-design-award-for-accessibility/)
  + [Taking accessibility to the next level](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/putting-refreshment-within-reach/)
  + [Celebrating and commemorating International Day of Persons with Disabilities](file:///C:\Users\victoriakren\Downloads\o%09https:\dailynews.mcmaster.ca\articles\celebrating-and-commemorating-international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities)
  + [Social Sciences students recognized for their advocacy work](file:///C:\Users\victoriakren\Downloads\o%09https:\dailynews.mcmaster.ca\articles\social-sciences-students-recognized-for-their-advocacy-work)
* Facilitating training for campus communicators by the [AccessMac Program](https://accessibility.mcmaster.ca/services/) in the Equity and Inclusion Office so that all those across campus producing content and editorial stories are fully trained on accessibility and inclusivity
* Updating the [Campus Editorial Style Guide](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/words-matter-updated-mcmaster-style-guide-now-available/) to include accessibility and inclusivity language
* Ensuring all video content produced by the central team is captioned
* Adding alt-text to photos on websites and in digital communications
* Enhancing digital communications, including the weekly McMaster Update newsletter (distributed to 14,000 faculty, staff and retirees) to be compatible with screen-reader technologies

*Contributors: McMaster Communications, Gord Arbeau*

## Increasing Website Accessibility Within the Faculty of Social Sciences

The Faculty of Social Sciences has been able to enhance website accessibility this year in the form of:

* 60+ websites being affected by Accessibility remediations within the Faculty of Social Sciences
* A preliminary audit of a selected website in the Faculty of Social Sciences recently took place this summer of 2019

*Contributors: Nick Marquis, Faculty of Social Sciences*

## McMaster Museum of Art: Working Toward Accessible Print and Online Materials

The McMaster Museum of Art continues to work towards making sure all material, on or offline, is accessible to all. Closed captioning updates and corrections are underway for all videos uploaded to the McMaster Museum of Art’s YouTube channel to support students with hearing impairments, diverse learning styles, and those who aren't native speakers of English.

*Contributors: McMaster Museum of Art*

## Captioning Convocation with Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) Technology

In Spring of 2019, the Office of the Registrar launched an initiative in collaboration with its video stream provider LiveMedia Inc., and the venue, FirstOntario Concert Hall, whereby Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) technology displays captions on a large video screen as the presenter speaks for all McMaster convocation ceremonies. At the moment, captioning graduate names is not possible using CART, but the Office is developing a ticket system where at the point that a graduate crosses the stage, the graduate’s name card will be scanned, and their preferred name will be inserted into the captioning feed.

*Contributors: Brad Colburne, Office of the Registrar*

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated