



Case Study: NSCC's Social Justice Approach to Accessibility Initiative

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) first Accessibility Plan is titled "Setting the Stage: A Social Justice Approach to Accessibility." This plan is a foundational step towards redefining disability within the context of social justice and laying the groundwork for a progressive approach to accessibility in post-secondary education.

Goals and Strategic Actions

The goal of NSCC's Accessibility Plan is to reframe disability as a social justice issue, initiating a comprehensive and revolutionary approach to accessibility that permeates every aspect of the college's operation.

Strategic Framework

The plan employs an intersectional lens that recognizes the multiple identities within the disability, Deaf, and Neurodivergent communities, ensuring that diversity of experience remains central to NSCC's accessibility and inclusion efforts. The framework lists specific pillars and commitments, assigns leaders accountable for each priority area, identifies key stakeholders, and sets specific goals and timelines. It further details the resources required and outlines metrics to measure progress. The priority areas include:

1. Awareness and Capacity Building
2. Teaching, Learning, and Research
3. Information and Communications
4. Delivery of Goods and Services
5. Employment
6. Transportation
7. Built Environment
8. Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Implementation and Impact

Existing Buildings: NSCC enhanced accessibility through updated student services, clear signage, improved parking, washrooms, and installations like ramps and power-door operators. Upgrades to kitchens and classrooms ensure usability for all.

Major Renovations and New Construction: New facilities, like the Sydney Waterfront campus, are designed with RHFAC guidelines from the start, aiming for high accessibility ratings and creating inclusive spaces.

Ongoing efforts are necessary to ensure that all aspects of the educational environment are inclusive, particularly as new accessibility standards are developed and implemented.

Outcomes and Future Directions

The implementation of the Accessibility Plan has established NSCC as a leader in integrating accessibility into the educational environment. Through strategic renovations and new constructions, NSCC has significantly enhanced the physical accessibility of its campuses. The plan's comprehensive approach ensures that teaching, learning, and operational practices are inclusively designed to meet the diverse needs of the community. The case of NSCC highlights the critical importance of institutional commitment, community engagement, and adaptive strategies in advancing accessibility within higher education, setting a benchmark for other institutions in the province and beyond.

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