

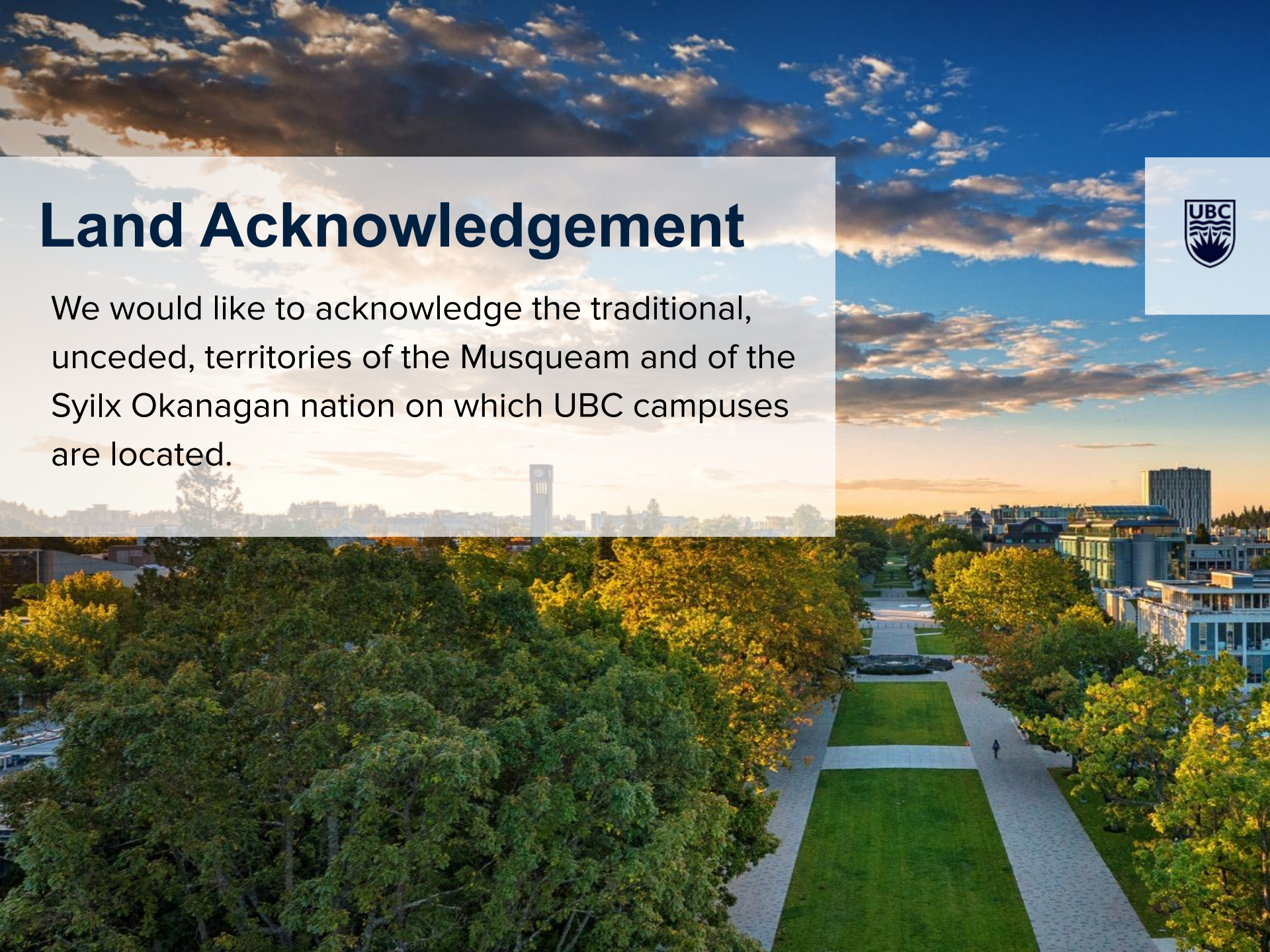
# UBC Students with Disabilities Presentation

September 23, 2022



# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the traditional, unceded, territories of the Musqueam and of the Syilx Okanagan nation on which UBC campuses are located.



# Outline

- **Experiences as Disabled Students**
- **Experiences of UBCO Students with Disabilities**
- **Calls to Action**
- **Discussion + Next Steps**



# Experiences as Disabled Students

## Letter: UBC's Centre for Accessibility and its outdated policies fail students

Written by Lonnes Leloup Aug. 29, 2021

When I wrote to the UBC Centre for Accessibility in 2020 to ask for help with a special accommodation, I ended my email with this sentence: "I invested a lot of time and effort in my studies, and I don't think this mistake is representative of that." Almost a year later, I realized that this was no mistake at all. The blame is not on me; it is on my disability.

The Centre's purpose is to provide "Accommodation to promote human rights, equity and diversity, and to comply with its duty under the British Columbia Human Rights Code to make its services and facilities available in a manner that does not discriminate," as per their [official policies](#). Good work the Centre has done to ensure safe access to education.



## 'It's pretty devastating to feel unsafe at your workplace': disabled, immunocompromised community members worried over end of campus mask mandates

Written by Charles Brockman July 18, 2022

Many immunocompromised and disabled community members say ending the mask mandates on campus threatens their lives, careers and education.

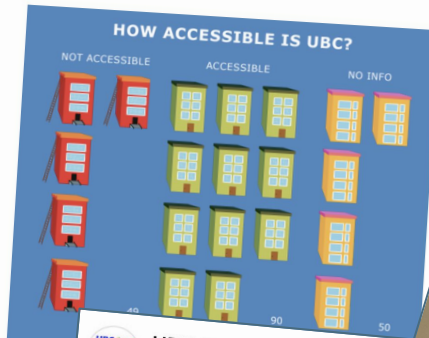
On June 27, President and Vice-Chancellor Santa Ono and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Lesley Cormack [announced](#) that UBC would no longer require masks in public indoor spaces on campus. Two days later, the AMS [announced](#) it would also be ending mask mandates in the Nest. Notably, [the Life Sciences Institute](#) announced it will keep its mask mandate in place.



"The end of the mandate is something that is going to disproportionately impact disabled folks." *Isabella Falsetti / The Ubbyssey*

## UBC strives for inclusion — but nearly a third of buildings are inaccessible to disabled students

Written by Bailey Martens July 29, 2020

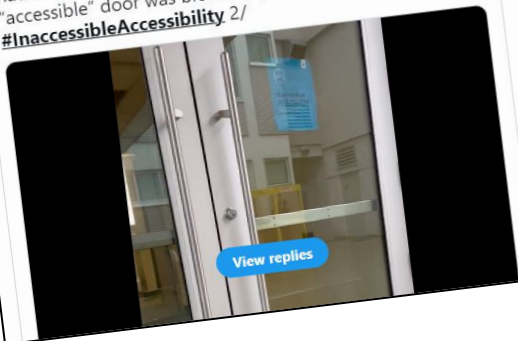


## Elevator closed for energy saving.

In 2021, UBC's Board of Governors approved UBC's latest Climate Action Plan, including measures to achieve a 36% reduction in electricity use. Thank you for allowing us to meet our climate goals by reducing elevator usage and using the stairs.

Haley Branch · Nov 4, 2021  
 @HaleyABranch · Follow  
 Some days I don't feel like going to campus @UBC not because I don't want to teach or research, but because I'm tired of hurting myself trying to navigate the #inaccessible campus. 1/n

Haley Branch  
 @HaleyABranch · Follow  
 Trying to enter the building I teach in. The video shows me pressing the button to open the door and it not working. I had chose this door because the laneway to the other "accessible" door was blocked by vehicles  
 #InaccessibleAccessibility 2/




View replies

UBC Confessions  
 March 26, 2021 · 3  
 #13653

I just wanted to post on here after getting inspired by a few previous posts. I am a student with a disability in my first year at engineering and honestly the shame, guilt, isolation and incompetence I feel regularly has really made life a struggle. I feel so alone here. There are barely any students I know who are disabled in STEM, let alone engineering. I'm even afraid to mention my disability because I'm sure it would be a clear giveaway about who I am. My



An aerial photograph of the University of British Columbia campus. In the foreground, a large circular fountain with multiple water jets is surrounded by a paved walkway where many students are walking. The middle ground shows green lawns and more paved paths with people. In the background, there are modern university buildings and a range of mountains under a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent white box containing text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*“Graduate degree programs at UBC are tailored to non-disabled students’ needs. Those of us who don’t ‘progress’ in the anticipated fashion or at the anticipated pace find ourselves facing enormous barriers and pressures to drop out.”*



**Experiences of Disabled Graduate Students**

*“UBC Okanagan is a unique campus with inconsistent procedures associated with policy combined with lack of adequate supports that lead to misunderstands and further barriers to students with disabilities.”*



**Experiences of UBCO Students with Disabilities**

# Understanding the context of UBC Okanagan

- The DRC is not meant to provide support or accommodations for students with short-term disabilities or accessibility issues;
- The establishment of a student led and focused accessibility advisory group that aims to
  - Consult with University stakeholders as necessary
  - Audit learning spaces accessibility
  - Provide clarification on procedures to ensure consistency and reduce barriers
- Work must occur at various levels to have impact on the campus



# Calls to Action

- Promoting Equity through Administrative Changes
- Improving Existing Disability-Related Services
- Increasing Representation of Openly Disabled Scholars and Staff
- Supporting Disabled Students with Funding, Scholarships, and Research Grants
- Addressing Graduate Student Need
- Making the Built Environment Accessible
- Creating an Accessible Culture in Teaching and Learning
- Ensuring Equitable Public Health Decision Making





# Promoting equity through administrative changes

## ***By creating:***

- A fully resourced Disability Task Force composed of members of the disability community, with diverse lived experience, and across campuses

## ***By engaging in:***

- A “nothing about us without us” approach, and co-creating with the disability community in equity initiatives
- A commission of a review of the current mechanisms and supports for disabled community
- The integration of accessibility in institutional priorities and plans, such as Campus Vision 2050, the President’s Academic Excellence Initiative



# Improving existing disability-related services

***To address significant shortcomings in current Disability-related services, the University must make the following commitments:***

- Modify the current practices of the Centre for Accessibility and the UBCO Disability Resource Centre
  - i. Shift from a medical model to a social model of disability approach
  - ii. Create a formal feedback and complaints process
  - iii. Fully funding and resourcing these centres
  - iv. Create mechanisms of community outreach
  - v. Streamlining the process across units and faculties
- Update Policy LR7 re: Task Force recommendations
- Ensure that mobility aids such as the Accessibility Shuttle offers more availability and accessibility.



# Increasing representation of disabled scholars and staff

*To address and promote academic excellence and diversity of thought, the UBC should engage the academic community by:*

- Meet with the Disability Affinity Group
- Increase hiring and retention of faculty and scholars at all faculty ranks
- Uplift disabled scholars' voices, promote and feature disabled scholars' research, and create professional development opportunities

*UBC should create:*

- Permanent Senior Advisor positions to the Provost and President, held by disabled people
- Fully resource a new Centre for Disability Studies and Activism
- Disability affirming cross-campus culture



# Supporting Disabled Students with Funding, Scholarships, and Grants

**To ensure that funding supports reflect the realities of disabled students, *UBC must provide:***

- Bursaries on an extended timeline for students taking a reduced course load;
- Relaxed course load requirements for disability-related scholarships; and,
- Flexibility around extenuating circumstances.

**To eliminate the “disability tax”, *UBC must implement:***

- Accessible housing for the same cost as the lowest-cost housing unit in the residence building; and,
- Free UBC parking passes for those with government-issued disabled parking placards.



# Addressing Graduate Student Needs

**In order to support disabled graduate students currently falling through the cracks, UBC *must address*:**

- Timeline-related barriers to degree completion, including the time-consuming and patronizing “surveillance without support” approach to degree extensions;
- Inequitable funding timelines and tuition fee schedules;
- Fragmented accommodation for grads in their various capacities as students, researchers, and employees;
- Precarious and power-laden unit-level approaches to graduate students’ access needs; and,
- Inadequate professional development opportunities.



# Ensuring Equitable Public Health Decision Making

**All public health decisions, policies, and statements made by UBC *must include*:**

- A description of whether and how such decisions will impact disabled students, faculty, and staff;
- An explanation of what steps UBC is taking to proactively mitigate any increased risk to disabled students, faculty, and staff; and,
- Consultation with campus organizations representing disabled staff, students, and faculty.



# Creating an Accessible Culture in Teaching and Learning

***Delivering on its educational mission requires that UBC make the following commitments to fostering accessible teaching and learning:***

***By incorporating:***

- Disability rights and disability justice into the curriculum across all disciplines.

***By creating:***

- Training, institutional guidance, and infrastructure for supporting recorded lectures and hybrid programming.
- A permanent position within the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology for an expert on accessible teaching and learning.



# Accessible Culture in Teaching and Learning

## Cont'd

### ***By providing:***

- Opportunities for training, professional development, and staff education.
- Resources for peer-led mentorship programs for disabled students.

### ***By supporting:***

- Disabled students in labs and experiential learning.
- Disabled instructors by applying the recommendations from the EIO-funded Professional Development for Disabled Instructors Project.





# Making the Built Environment Accessible

*In order to eliminate barriers that disabled students face from the built environment at UBC, the University must prioritize accessibility by:*

- Seeking to build in accessibility beyond what is mandated in building codes and construction guidelines



Vehicular Access



Exterior Approach and Entrance



Interior Circulation



Interior Services and Environment



Sanitary Facilities



Signage, Wayfinding and Communications



Emergency Systems



Additional Use of Space



Residential Units



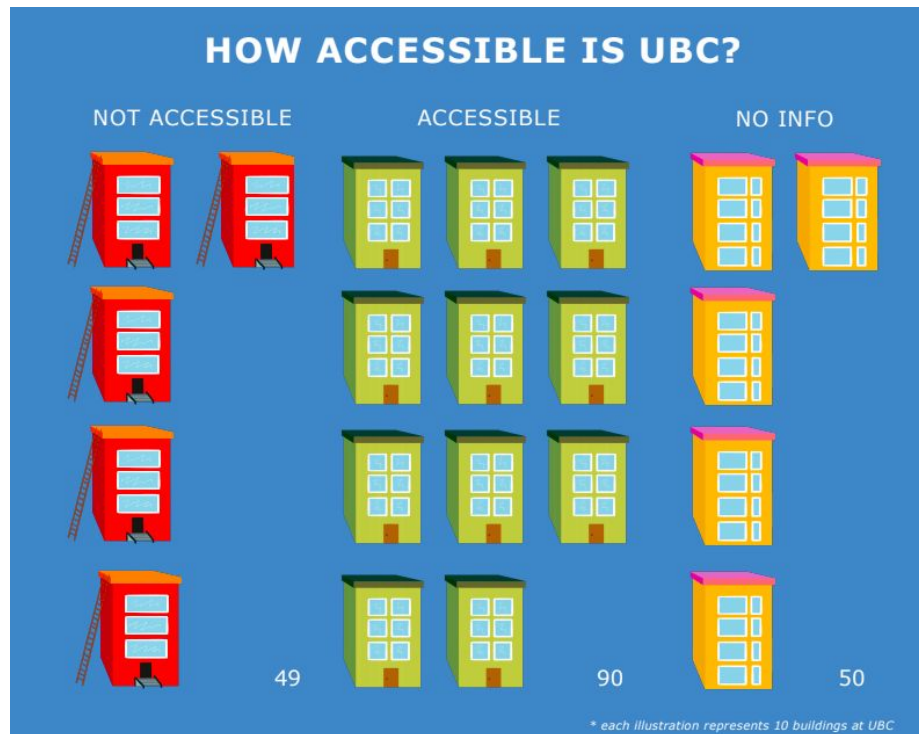
Trails and Pathways

*Accessible features rated under the Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC)*



# Making the Built Environment Accessible (Cont'd)

- Auditing the campus for accessibility on a regular basis and make the results public.
- Providing an accessibility guide for all learning spaces on campus.



UBC Wayfinding program (2020)



# Thank You!



**ams**

— EST. 1915 —



# Discussion & Next Steps

