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Memo from the Administration on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 3, 2019

From the Office of Human Resources and Equity, University of Toronto

The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The theme of this year's 25th IDPD is 'Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership' and it invites us to focus on the empowerment of persons with disabilities. This is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to creating cultural change through the inclusive design of our policies, practices, processes, and facilities to ensure that everyone can fully participate at U of T with dignity and independence. When we create an environment that embraces the broadest range of people, excellence flourishes.

In Canada and internationally, there have been some important gains for persons with disabilities. However, many still encounter significant barriers to participation, including prejudicial attitudes, negative stereotyping, and the overall stigma surrounding disability.

I invite the University community to learn more about accessibility at U of T. The AODA Annual Report highlights our efforts in creating accessible learning spaces, fostering Universal Design for Learning, and embarking on initiatives to advance mental health well-being at the University. We each have a role in creating an equitable and intentionally inclusive environment for all persons with disabilities. We invite you to engage with us to move forward together to advance equity, diversity and inclusion at the University of Toronto.

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