



BC ELN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday May 30, 2024

1:00 – 2:00 pm Pacific
Via Zoom

In Attendance:

Jonathan Bengtson, University of Victoria
Gwen Bird, Simon Fraser University
Camille Callison, University of the Fraser Valley, *Teaching Universities and Technical Institutions*
Gregg Currie, Selkirk College, *Rural Colleges*
Ben Ferrel, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Natalie Gick, Simon Fraser University, *Host Site Officer*
Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers University, *Small Universities* (Vice-Chair)
Robert Janke, University of British Columbia (Alternate)
Shirley Lew, Vancouver Community College, *Urban Colleges*
Trish Rosseel, Douglas College (Chair)

BC ELN Staff:

Sunni Nishimura, BC ELN Executive Director
Cristen Polley (Recorder)

Regrets:

Brenda Mathenia, University Canada West, *Associate Members*
Susan Parker, University of British Columbia

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as distributed.

2. PSFS Update

B. Ferrel provided an update on activities at the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS):

- BC's Digital Literacy Framework launched and is available on the [BCcampus website](#), along with a collection of Open Education Resources (OER) related to the Framework.
- A project is being initiated in collaboration with the Cloud Innovation Centre at UBC to enhance access to the resources and guidelines developed under the Digital Learning

Strategy using a Generative AI chat bot.

- As part of the StrongerBC future ready action plan, PSFS continues to support shared- and consortium-based services, including BC ELN's services, to promote equitable access to resources and services in the post-secondary sector.
- PSFS continues to negotiate a Service Agreement between the Government of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University for the administration of several program offices hosted within SFU (BCcampus, BC ELN, and EducationPlannerBC)
 - Initially, PSFS was drafting a single Service Agreement to encompass all three program offices, but multiple agreements may be needed.
 - As a next step, B. Ferrel will meet with G. Bird, SFU's Dean of Libraries, to discuss details of the Service Agreement for BC ELN.

In response to a question from G. Bird, B. Ferrel clarified that the Removing Barriers funding that BC ELN received from PSFS is intended to be used to take action towards reconciliation, whether this be at current BC ELN institutions and/or by reaching out to Indigenous post-secondary institutions that do not currently participate in the consortium.

B. Ferrel left the meeting at the end of agenda item 2.

3. 2023/24 Expenditure Summary and 2024/25 Expenditure Plan

S. Nishimura presented an overview of the BC ELN 2023/24 Expenditure Summary and 2024/25 Expenditure Plan included in the agenda package.

Core Administration, Licensing, and Illume: Highlights

BC ELN's Core Administration, Licensing, and Illume ended 2023/24 with a positive carryforward, which includes early support payments from Public Libraries Branch for the Illume Support Centre, unspent Illume project funding, and PSFS Bridge Funding for AskAway and WriteAway.

Revenues

- The 2024/25 PSFS Removing Barriers Grant of \$110,000 consists of two parts:
 - \$50,000 to investigate the information needs of Indigenous students and potential barriers to BC ELN membership for Indigenous post-secondary institutions, with a goal of developing recommendations for removing these barriers
 - \$60,000 over two years to bolster AskAway and WriteAway services, with a focus on enhancing service models and addressing barriers to participation, particularly for Indigenous post-secondary institutions
- Miscellaneous includes Associate Member fees and funding received from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and GLAM sector clients through BC ELN's partnership in the BC History Digitization Program Support Service

Expenditures

- The BC ELN Website Migration to Drupal 9 is planned for 2024/25, as BC ELN's Technical Lead Brandon Weigel will be available to lead this project once the Arca migration slows down
- Increased Salaries and Benefits are allocated in 2024/25 to hire a temporary position to support the Removing Barriers Grant work
- Governance and Administration costs were higher in 2023/24 due to the transition to a new Executive Director and slightly higher equipment costs related to the BC ELN Office move to temporary space in 2023/24

Service Areas (Arca, AskAway, WriteAway): Highlights

- The WriteAway 2023/24 Start of Year balance was higher than usual due to an extended delay hiring a Coordinator, and 2023/24 Staffing and Coordination Infrastructure costs were higher than anticipated as a senior BC ELN librarian faculty member temporarily coordinated the service during the transition between coordinators
- Arca ended 2023/24 with a healthy carryforward, which will primarily be used in 2024/25 for the migration

Licensing Programme: Highlights

- BC ELN's Licensing Programme budget (flow-through finances for licensing activities) indicates a negative carryforward for 2023/24 because of late partner library payments, which are being followed-up on
- The negative carryforward amount should be reduced in the coming years, as ConsortiaManager licensing and invoicing software makes it easier for the BC ELN Office to track and follow-up on late library payments

MOTION: To approve the 2024/25 Expenditure Plan as presented.

Moved: T. Gottschalk

Seconded: C. Callison

Motion carried.

T. Rosseel announced that PSFS will increase the Core Funding Grant to BC ELN beginning in 2025/26 from \$485,417 to \$600,000 and thanked B. Ferrel and PSFS for the recognition of the value BC ELN brings to the sector. This 27% increase is the first Core Funding lift for BC ELN since 2010. The BC ELN Office will work together with the Steering Committee to determine how the funds will be used to increase capacity at BC ELN.

4. Alternates at Steering Committee Meetings – Proposal

S. Nishimura presented wording changes to the *Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Procedures*. The changes clarify that if a member who represents a constituency group cannot attend a meeting, they should seek a designate from their constituency group, and not their own institution, to act as an alternate.

MOTION: To approve changes to the BC ELN Steering Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

Moved: G. Bird

Seconded: T. Gottschalk

Motion carried.

5. Update from the AskAway Advisory Committee

T. Rosseel, AskAway Advisory Committee Chair, presented an update on AskAway:

- AskAway continues to see high traffic levels compared to pre-pandemic years, with an average 46% increase in traffic compared to the busiest pre-pandemic year (2019)
- To support the service as it responds to increased student usage, PSFS has provided two rounds of two-year funding, in 2022 and 2024
 - In 2024/25 and 2025/26, the \$30,000 will be used to add capacity to the collaborative schedule, to hire a student librarian to support the AskAway Administrative Centre, and to explore removing barriers to participation for BC ELN partner libraries and Indigenous post-secondary institutions
- UVic Libraries gave their 12-month notice of withdrawal from the service, in alignment with the AskAway Partner Benefits and Responsibilities
 - This difficult decision was in response to significant budget cuts at UVic, and consequently, UVic Libraries
 - AskAway expresses gratitude to staff at UVic Libraries, who have been active in the community through their years with the service
 - UVic Libraries will continue to participate and staff the service until March 2025
 - News of UVic's withdrawal notice has been shared widely with the AskAway community
- At the April 4 meeting, the AskAway Advisory Committee agreed to form an AskAway Commitment Models Review Working Group
 - The mandate of the Working Group is to review the AskAway commitment models to ensure AskAway's sustainability and make a recommendation to the Advisory Committee by end of 2024
 - A call for members was sent to the AskAway community, and a representative working group will be formed shortly
- AskAway will also form an Emerging Technologies Subcommittee in late summer or early Fall
 - Some of the first tasks of this subcommittee might include exploring the impact of GenAI on the service or investigating a queuing or load-balancing system to manage traffic

S. Lew asked how AI is impacting live chat services in libraries. C. Polley cited the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) Task Force on Machine Learning and AI [Interim Report on Machine Learning and AI in Academic Libraries](#) and G. Bird and C. Callison referred to the

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) [scenario planning](#) as examples of work that is being done to explore the impact of AI in post-secondary libraries, including collaborative chat services.

S. Lew suggested inviting non-librarian experts to participate on the Emerging Technologies Subcommittee, and C. Polley noted that AskAway plans to invite non-AskAway library experts and could consider inviting non-librarian experts to participate as well.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Wrap Up

The next Steering Committee meeting will be held in-person on Friday, July 12 at SFU Harbour Centre in downtown Vancouver. More information will be sent shortly.

In response to a question, S. Nishimura confirmed that committee membership terms end or renew in September. If members have any questions or concerns about attending in-person meetings, they may reach out to the BC ELN Office or S. Nishimura.