

BC ELN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

10:00am – 11:30am

Teleconference

In Attendance:

Jonathan Bengtson, University of Victoria
Rosie Croft, Royal Roads University, *Small Universities*
Brenda Mathenia, College of the Rockies, *Rural Colleges*
Adrian Mitescu, University Canada West, *Associate Members*
Todd Mundle, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, (Chair)
Karen Munro, Simon Fraser University (Alternate)
Susan Parker, University of British Columbia (Vice-Chair)
Trish Rosseel, Douglas College, *Urban Colleges*
Debbie Schachter, Capilano University, *Regional Universities*

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (AEST):

Helen Akulova, AEST

BC ELN Staff:

Anita Cocchia
Leah Hopton
Reba Ouimet (Recorder)
Cristen Polley
Megan Robertson

Regrets:

Gwen Bird, Simon Fraser University
Natalie Gick, Simon Fraser, Host Site Officer

Introductions

T. Mundle welcomed attendees and made introductions:

- K. Munro as the alternate from Simon Fraser University in place of G. Bird
- New representative for Rural Colleges, B. Mathenia from College of the Rockies
- H. Akulova is replacing B. Dwyer from the Ministry of Advanced Education

1. Adoption of Agenda

T. Mundle added Executive Director Performance Review to New Business on behalf of G. Bird.
The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Ministry Report

H. Akulova provided an update from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (AEST).

The Ministry is working with post-secondary institutions and organizations under direction from the Provincial Health Officer to form appropriate responses to COVID-19. Efforts include working with Emergency Management BC to support provincial emergency response measures with assistance from institutions, and working with post-secondary leaders and experts to develop operating guidelines that support safe continuity of post-secondary education, training and research. To further aid students, the Ministry has made a one-time investment of \$3.5M to supplement existing emergency student assistance and \$1.5M for Indigenous public post-secondary students. The Province has also frozen student loan repayments in conjunction with a federal government commitment.

While responding to COVID-19 is the Ministry's current primary focus, work continues towards meeting strategic priorities. H. Akulova outlined a number of Ministry activities in this regard, including:

- Working with the Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners to develop a comprehensive strategy that responds to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
- Providing assistance through the BC Student Housing Loan program to increase the number of student beds available
- Developing a student-centred and sustainable framework for international education
- Allocating funds to support projects to expand opportunities for co-op and other forms of work-integrated learning such as internships, practicums and applied research
- Launching *Here2Talk*, a new mental health counselling and referral service
- Supporting open education resources; funding is being provided to BCcampus which is managing open textbook and OER development projects on government's behalf

A question arose as to whether or not libraries were one of the consulted groups when creating the new workplace guidelines and if they were involved in the discussion. H. Akulova responded that the Ministry guidelines are intended to be high-level and each institution will individually determine how to apply these guidelines to their own operations, due to the diversity of post-secondary institutions.

3. Steering Committee Terms of Reference Update

L. Hopton provided an update on the Steering Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) and possible changes to the structure of the Steering Committee.

Terms of Reference Update

After the All Partner Meeting in December, the Steering Committee endorsed three main changes to the TOR: simplifying the format and language, modifying the Host Site Officer role, and formalizing the Past-Chair role. The TOR were updated and posted on the BC ELN website.

Changes to Steering Committee Structure and Representation

At the All Partner Meeting, the structure of the BC ELN Steering Committee was discussed. Two key areas for improvement emerged: a) length of representative term on the committee, and b) communications around Steering Committee purpose and process. The following activities are planned in response to this feedback.

A) Length of Representative Terms: The Constituency Representative term will be increased from one year with the possibility of a one-year extension, to two years with the possibility of a one-year extension.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair terms will remain at one year
- Representatives will only be eligible to become Vice-Chair in their first or second years on the committee, preventing anyone from serving more than three years in a row
- This approach adds to the continuity of knowledge on the committee and creates an organic “shuffling” of the committee members. The committee will monitor start dates of new and renewing members to maintain staggering of terms and to ensure appropriate continuity of committee knowledge

L. Hopton reviewed sections in the TOR requiring modification to support this change (pg. 5-6 of agenda package document) and then T. Mundle opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Discussion arose about ensuring opportunities for turnover in representation, and the most appropriate place for such procedures to be placed. Options discussed included adding language to the TOR, developing operational guidelines, or creating a best practices document. There was agreement that the discussion, along with the re-drafted TOR, would be brought forward at the June Steering Committee meeting.

B) Communications around Steering Committee Purpose and Process: The BC ELN Office will work to enhance communications around Steering Committee purpose and process and focus on increasing understanding among representatives regarding committee operations and the consortium. Next steps may include: reviewing orientation packages for new and returning members, considering other ways to communicate how the Committee is structured (e.g. how service area Advisory Committees are accountable to the Steering Committee), exploring best practices for intra-group communication and engagement and considering periodic short mini-sessions or workshops for members to discuss process, values, and strategy.

4. Expenditure Plan 2020/2021

T. Mundle reported that the BC ELN funding letter was received on March 25th and thanked the Ministry for their continued support. A. Cocchia provided an overview of the BC ELN Expenditure Plan for 2020/21, included in the Agenda package. Overall, the budget is on track and healthy.

Overview Highlights

- Most service areas ended 2019/20 with some carryforward
- Carryforward is anticipated in 2020/21 for the Core Administration and eHLbc Operations
- The 2020/21 Core Administration carryforward results from unspent, encumbered revenue for the BC History Digitization Program project, unspent funds for the Illume Support Centre, and the timing of project work
- The Licensing Programme ended the 2019/20 fiscal with a negative carryforward due to late payments from partner libraries, mostly in response to the COVID-19 shift to working off campus. At this time almost every late payment has been received and deposited

BC ELN Core Administration, Licensing, and Gateway Highlights

- The Core Plan reflects the funding received by Ministry and shows a prepayment of ~\$138K from BC ELN system partner, Ministry of Education, Libraries Branch. This prepayment is for their share of support costs for the provincial resource sharing network, Illume
- 2020/21 revenue from interlibrary loan transaction fees is not indicated due to All Partner Meeting decision to not charge ILL fees between partner libraries beginning January 1, 2020
- Staffing costs in the 2019/20 Summary are lower than anticipated due to departure of a senior Licensing Manager, reduction to part time of the senior Communication Officer, and a maternity leave. Costs indicated in the 2020/21 Plan reflect the full complement of BC ELN Staff, plus some additional dollars for contractors and potentially co-op librarians.

Service Areas Highlights

- 2019/20 carryforward for Arca is higher this year due to two expected projects that could not be accomplished (the accessibility customization and the theme refresh). These projects are now scheduled for 2020/21
- The service area expenditure plans have been approved by the service area Advisory Committees

MOTION: To approve the 2020/2021 Expenditure Plan as presented.

Moved: B. Mathenia

Seconded: R. Croft

Motion carried.

5. BC ELN Response to COVID-19

L. Hopton provided a summary of BC ELN's response to COVID-19.

The move of BC ELN Office Staff to remote work was seamless. Staff are using multiple communication tools to keep connected. BC ELN communicated externally via various platforms

how resources and services remain online and available to support partner libraries. Finances are on track and institutions have been encouraged to adopt Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) rather than paying by cheque.

Service Area Updates

Arca Digital Repository:

- As Arca is an at-a-distance service there has been continuous service with no disruptions

Licensing Programme:

- Renewals continued as scheduled, with some publishers temporarily opening access to resources during COVID-19; where appropriate, BC ELN has facilitated licence upgrades for institutions
- A. Cocchia is a member of the International Coalition of Library Consortia's (ICOLC) Coordinating Committee, and participated in drafting ICOLC's Statement on the Global COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impact on Library Services and Resources; both BC ELN and eHLbc are signatories
- BC ELN onboarded a new licensing coordinator, R. Ouimet during this time

Illume Interlibrary Loan Service:

- Physical interlibrary loans have largely been suspended but the Administrative Centre continues to support institutions with digital resources, infrastructure needs, and additional training to support workflow needs

WriteAway Online Tutoring: M. Robertson, WriteAway Coordinator, provided an update on the WriteAway service through the COVID-19 pandemic:

- In early March, WriteAway established a COVID-19 contingency plan to prepare for and respond to potential disruptions at post-secondary institutions
- To accommodate assignment extensions for students in April, the WriteAway semester was extended by two weeks
- Student usage increased over 40% during the first two weeks of classes moving online
- In the initial transition to remote instruction, institutions added an additional 246 hours of tutoring and in anticipation of higher usage in the summer, institutions proactively increased their tutoring contributions by 10%
- Alexander College joined WriteAway as the newest member
- All WriteAway institutions should ensure that writeaway.ca links are prominently displayed on library and learning centre websites, particularly now that in-person support is unavailable

AskAway Chat Reference: D. Schachter, AskAway Advisory Committee Chair, provided an update on the AskAway service through the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Beginning March 16th there was significant increase in usage, with an approximate 60% increase in March/April 2020 when compared to March/April 2019.
- Participating libraries increased service capacity by providing an additional 73 hours a week for the remainder of Section 2 (March 23 to April 9)
- An FAQ page for service providers was created for questions related to COVID-19 and its impact on the service
- The AskAway service was extended through the semester break (April 14 to May 15); Libraries continued to support sustained usage with extra staffing
- Several participating libraries have also started staffing their institutional queues during service hours
- AskAway is proactively planning for the expected increase in demand by making space for libraries to contribute additional staffing for the two summer sections (May to June; July to August)
- Feedback from patrons during this time has been positive

6. Summer Meeting Discussion

The summer Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 26th. The Executive Committee recommended that it be held virtually on one day with a substantive break midway through the meeting.

Suggested topics for the meeting included a half day on service area updates, projects in development, TOR review and discussion, and the second half a facilitated discussion on Committee shared values, strategic alignment, and what an orientation to the Steering Committee could look like.

Questions arose regarding the timeline and technology to be used for the virtual session. A. Cocchia proposed 9:30AM-3:00PM with a long break in the middle, adding that technology for the session is TBD.

7. New Business

T. Mundle added a new item on Executive Director Performance Review Process. He noted that the process is underway and thanked the Committee for their feedback. During the June meeting the process will be complete and an in-camera session will be set up to discuss.

8. Wrap Up

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on June 26th. Details will be shared shortly. T. Mundle thanked the Committee members for attending and participating.