



## WriteAway Advisory Committee

Thursday, August 6, 2020

12:00 – 1:00pm (PDT)

Virtual meeting

### In Attendance:

Lyn Benn, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, *Four-Year Representative*

Gregg Currie, Selkirk College, *Chair*

Kari Karlsbjerg, Vancouver Community College, *Member at Large*

Julia Lane, Simon Fraser University, *Member at Large*

Brenda Mathenia, College of the Rockies, *Two-Year Representative*

Donna McGee-Thompson, Simon Fraser University, *Four-Year Representative*

Trish Rosseel, Douglas College, *Two-Year Representative, Alternate*

Sandra Smith, University of the Fraser Valley, *Four-Year Representative*

Laurie Waye, Coast Mountain College, *Two-Year Representative*

### Administrative Centre:

Anita Cocchia, BC ELN Executive Director

Leah Hopton, BC ELN, Moderator

Megan Robertson, WriteAway Coordinator, Recorder

### Regrets:

Shirley Lew, Vancouver Community College, *Two-Year Representative*

## 1. Adoption of Agenda

Adopted as approved.

## 2. Service Update

G. Currie provided a WriteAway service update:

- The contingency plan developed in March 2020 has allowed for WriteAway to expand capacity to serve students during the move to remote instruction:
  - Institutions added over 246 tutoring hours to March and April to respond to increased usage
  - Institutions provided survey feedback on extending the semester, resulting in two weeks being added to the schedule
  - Anticipating higher than normal usage, the Advisory Committee increased minimum tutoring contributions by ten percent for the May-August semester

- 17 of the 18 participating institutions were able to meet the ten percent increase
- Submissions for the May-August semester were, on average, 35% higher per week than in 2019
- Alexander College became the 18th institution to join the service
- The Admin Centre fielded inquiries from a number of institutions interested in how WriteAway can support students and will continue to follow up with these institutions

### **3. Minimum Tutoring Contributions September – December 2020**

G. Currie introduced analysis by the WriteAway Admin Centre regarding a ten percent increase to the September-December 2020 semester. A. Cocchia and M. Robertson were invited to present and speak to this analysis.

A. Cocchia offered a reminder on the background of tiered minimum tutoring contributions, first set in 2017, and how hours are allocated throughout the semester to meet anticipated student demand.

WriteAway has consistently seen close to 20% year-over-year growth in usage. A larger conversation regarding adjusting contributions that were originally set in 2017 is on the agenda for a future discussion. At this time, institutions are still adjusting and adapting to the realities of ongoing remote instruction.

M. Robertson outlined the specific increases per tier, noting that a ten percent increase translates to an additional 6.5 – 10-hour difference, depending on institution size, for the entire semester.

A ten percent, increase for the September-December 2020 semester would allow WriteAway to proactively plan for higher than normal student usage, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During discussion, members offered insight into 1) the possibilities of adjusting the tutoring approach to lower tutor response time and 2) the benefits of setting increased tutoring contributions for the academic year.

#### *Adjusting Tutoring Approach*

Members discussed how the current tutoring approach may be modified during the pandemic to increase capacity. Potential ideas for consideration included reducing the number of drafts that students may submit and limiting the number of concerns that tutors focus on. Members acknowledged the need to balance efficient tutor responses with maintaining the quality of feedback provided to students.

The Advisory Committee asked for more analysis regarding the number of students submitting multiple drafts and comments from the upcoming coordinators meeting related to streamlining tutoring approaches. Information will be summarized for the Advisory Committee.

#### *Setting Contributions for the 2020/21 Academic Year*

There was general agreement among committee members that a ten percent increase to minimum tutoring contributions made the most sense when considered for the entire academic year.

Several members stressed that funding and staffing requests can be more easily secured for the academic year, rather than on a semester by semester basis.

There is the possibility that many institutions may continue with remote instruction for the 2020/21 academic year and advocating for an annual increase to tutoring contributions aligns with this timeline.

Members also commented that with WriteAway's current high submission statistics, the value of the service can be particularly emphasized by sharing recent student usage information.

A. Cocchia reminded the Advisory Committee that an increase to minimum tutoring contributions provides a structure for participating institutions to advocate for resources for WriteAway. Individual institutions will use different measures to contribute the increased minimum tutoring hours. Institutions that face challenges meeting the increased minimum tutoring contributions may choose to use the Flexible Contribution Plan or work with the Admin Centre to develop a plan to meet their contributions.

After summarizing the discussion, G. Currie asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** To increase minimum tutoring contributions by 10% for the September-April 2020/21 academic semester

Moved: B. Mathenia

Seconded: L. Benn

**Motion carried unanimously.**

The next step will be to share the information on the ten percent increase of tutoring contributions with WriteAway Deans and Directors and Institutional Coordinators.

#### **4. New Business**

No new business

#### **5. Next Meeting**

G. Currie reminded the Advisory Committee that member terms conclude on September 30. The Admin Centre will contact members regarding extension or renewal as appropriate. The next meeting will likely take place in Fall 2020. The Admin Centre will circulate a Doodle poll to select a date.