



## **AskAway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Monday, March 6, 2023  
10:00am – 11:30am (PT)  
Virtual Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Carolyn Caseñas, *Simon Fraser University (Alternate)*  
Lynette Gallant, *North Island College, Rural Colleges*  
Eva Gavaris, *Okanagan College, Member-at-Large*  
Aleteia Greenwood, *University of British Columbia*  
Shannon Moist, *Douglas College, Member-at-Large*  
Karen Munro, *University of Victoria*  
Suzanne Rackover, *Langara College, Urban Colleges (Chair)*  
Derek Yap, *Yukon University, Teaching Universities & Technical Institutions representative*

### AskAway Administrative Centre:

Sydney Brogden (Recorder)  
Anita Cocchia  
Cristen Polley

### Guest:

Leah Hopton, Facilitator

### **Regrets:**

Ania Dymarz, *Simon Fraser University*  
Michel Castagné, *Capilano University, Member-at-Large*  
Tania Gottschalk, *Thompson Rivers University, Small Universities representative*

## **1. Adoption of Agenda**

S. Rackover welcomed committee members and shared a territorial acknowledgement. Committee membership updates included S. Rackover, Chair, transitioning to Urban Colleges representative and T. Gottschalk as the new Small Universities representative.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

## 2. Service Update

S. Rackover shared an update on AskAway's upward trend in traffic in Fall 2022. This upward trend is continuing in winter 2023. C. Polley provided additional updates on the service:

- The Admin Centre has moved to providing proactive chat implementation support for institutions on a first-come, first-served basis. Half of participating institutions are now using proactive chat, including two institutions interested in a summer launch.
- The North American Virtual Reference Online Conference (NAVROC) took place in February and presenters covered a wide range of topics related to virtual reference. Session recordings will be made available on the [NAVROC website](#). A blog post reflecting on the conference will be shared with service providers shortly.
- The Collaborative AskAway Transcript Research Project led by Barbara Sobol from UBCO with collaboration from eight AskAway participating institutions has been completed. The project analyzed over 70,000 AskAway transcripts in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. A research paper is forthcoming. The Admin Centre will facilitate a learning opportunity on the publication. Details to be shared once they are available.

## 3. Expenditure Plan 2023/24

The 2023/24 Expenditure Plan was presented by A. Cocchia.

Expected carryforward into the 2023/24 fiscal year is projected at \$3,816. The finalized total will be determined after the fiscal year ends on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

BC ELN contributed \$10,000 to support AskAway and other BC ELN services during the pandemic. This contribution will continue for AskAway for the 2023/24 fiscal year and be reassessed the following year.

Revenue this year will include the final year of the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills' two-year Bridge Funding, for the amount of \$15,000.

The recommended increase to the Base Service Support fee for 2023/24 is 4%, following modest 2% increases during the pandemic. The 4% increase translates to an increase of \$41 to \$217 for institutions across Tier 1 to 4. There is a cap on Tier 5. This increase applies only to the Base Service Support Fee.

Coordination and Support costs are estimated at \$82,000. This includes the coordinator's three-day per week position, as well as a student librarian who is supporting AskAway work.

Significant service money is currently allotted to contractor expenses used to cover evening and weekend shifts. Many libraries are struggling to work evenings and weekends. Creative work at future meetings will be necessary to determine solutions to this challenge.

At this point before fiscal year-end, the estimated carryforward to support an action planning session is approximately \$4,700.

A question was raised about the history of the Tier 5 Base Service Support Fee cap. The [decision was made in 2015](#), after significant increases to service support fees were implemented following the loss of BCcampus funding.

A concern was raised regarding revenue after the Ministry bridge funding and BC ELN contributions are discontinued. A. Cocchia explained that a gradual reduction in revenue from BC ELN's Contribution, moderate service support fee increases, and reducing contractor expenditures will help minimize the effects of this expected reduction in revenue.

**MOTION: To approve the 2023/24 Expenditure Plan.**

Moved: A. Greenwood

Seconded: L. Gallant

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **4. Action Planning Progress**

S. Rackover reminded the group of the Committee's agreement to an action planning process. The goal of action planning is to establish priorities for AskAway for the next two to three years. C. Polley was invited to share an update on activities to date:

- Canadian Collaborative Chat Reference Services Environmental Scan Survey
  - Chat reference service coordinators at BC ELN, OCLS, OCUL, and Novanet will begin meeting in mid-March to analyze the results of their survey and prepare a report. The survey was developed collaboratively and covers a range of topics from governance to software.
- Surveys of Participating Libraries
  - A summary of all survey results and raw data will be provided to the membership to inform action planning.
  - Survey 1: Where We Are
    - The purpose of this survey is to assess how libraries currently participate in AskAway, to understand the benefits of participation, and to identify gaps in the service.
    - Responses have been received from all participating libraries.
  - Survey 2: Where We Are Going
    - The purpose of this survey is to ask libraries about their vision for AskAway's future.
    - Feedback from the committee on the draft is being incorporated into the survey before it is shared out to library directors.
  - Survey 3:
    - The purpose of this survey is to gather feedback from the institutions that are not current AskAway members (Acsenda School of Management, Columbia Bible College, Royal Roads University, and Vancouver Island University).

- Once prepared, the committee will see the draft of the third survey.

## **5. Action Planning – Facilitated Session**

S. Rackover invited L. Hopton, Communications Officer and Lead Facilitator at BC ELN, to lead the group through a discussion of the Committee’s objectives and aspirations for the upcoming Action Planning session.

The Committee worked through the Event Design Worksheet, which guides the session set-up including participants, the rational and experiential aims, meeting logistics, etc. A completed worksheet will be shared with the Committee.

There was active discussion on whether the meeting should be in-person, online, or hybrid. A straw vote was taken to gauge the Committee’s preferences.

Committee members expressed a desire for interactive, action-based activities where people can come together in mixed groups to get work done. The Chair, in consultation with the facilitator, will review the discussion notes and share a suggested approach with the Committee.

The session is expected to take place in mid to late May.

## **6. New Business**

No new business.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next time the Committee meets is expected to be at the facilitated action planning session.