



## **AskAway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023

1:00pm – 2:00pm (PT)

Virtual Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Michel Castagné, Capilano University, *Member-at-Large*

Elizabeth Fernandes, *University of British Columbia representative (Alternate)*

Lynette Gallant, North Island College, *Rural Colleges representative*

Eva Gavaris, Okanagan College, *Member-at-Large*

Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers University, *Small Universities representative*

Ebony Magnus, *Simon Fraser University representative*

Shannon Moist, Douglas College, *Member-at-Large*

Karen Munro, *University of Victoria representative*

Suzanne Rackover, Langara College, *Urban Colleges representative (Chair)*

Derek Yap, Yukon University, *Teaching Universities & Technical Institutions representative*

AskAway Administrative Centre:

Jaclyn Fong, Student Librarian (Recorder)

Cristen Polley, AskAway Coordinator

### **Regrets:**

Aleteia Greenwood, *University of British Columbia representative*

## **1. Adoption of Agenda**

S. Rackover welcomed committee members and shared a territorial acknowledgement.

A new committee membership term begins October 1<sup>st</sup>. S. Rackover will step down as Chair and Urban Colleges representative. T. Rosseel, the incoming Urban Colleges representative, has been acclaimed as Chair via email. E. Magnus is the new SFU representative, and D. Grace, BCIT, is joining the Committee as Member-at-Large, replacing M. Castagné who has served two terms. D. Yap has renewed as Teaching Universities and Technical Institutions representative.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

## 2. Service Update

C. Polley provided the following updates on the service:

### *Year Two of Ministry Funding*

- In the second year of two-year bridge funding from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, AskAway has again been able to hire a student librarian, J. Fong, to provide additional evening and weekend staffing hours on the collaborative schedule and to support members in areas that have seen increased activity (e.g., service provider training and Admin Centre support).

### *Summer 2023*

- The summer term was the second busiest on record (2020 was the busiest), with a 28% increase in the number of chats compared to the previous summer.
- As requested by libraries, a new [daytime short-staffed button](#) was launched in June, complementing the evenings-weekends short-staffed button. It is now more efficient for service providers to call for help, and it is easier for the Admin Centre to track and follow-up on missed shifts.
- A new approach was adopted to call for volunteers to fill gaps in the more lightly staffed summer schedule. Institutions were asked to take-up shifts on a week-by-week, rather than term, basis. The new approach received positive feedback as it was more manageable for libraries to commit to a week of coverage rather than the entire term, especially during summer months when library staff manage vacation and professional development schedules.
- The summer staffing commitment model should be revisited by the Committee in the future as two providers on the collaborative schedule are often not enough to meet recent demand.

### *Fall 2023*

- Thanks to participating libraries and the second year of Ministry funding, the Section 1 (Sep-Dec) collaborative schedule is well-staffed.
- A new online work party, Prep-a-Palooza, was held in late August to bring local coordinators together to complete common tasks and prepare AskAway for the new term. The session was well attended and received very positive feedback.
- 33 new or returning service providers attended two online training sessions. The new, optional practice session with 12 attendees was also held and has been receiving positive feedback. The Admin Centre will continue to offer practice sessions in the future, alongside the [online training module](#), which now includes more interactive elements such as a scavenger hunt, tags matching activity, and sample transcripts activity.

- A [blog post](#) with service updates and reminders for the new term was shared with all service providers and includes a new quiz to keep skills fresh for those returning after the summer.

#### *Canadian Collaborative Chat Services Group Meeting*

- C. Polley will host a Fall meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup> with other library chat reference service coordinators from OCUL, OCLS, and Novanet. One of the agenda items is to discuss logging into other institution's resources for collaborative services as it becomes increasingly challenging.

#### *AskAway Orientation Module*

- As part of the [BC ELN Orientation Series](#), an AskAway orientation module was launched and made available for all library staff and interested community members.

### **3. Action Planning**

S. Rackover provided background on the draft AskAway Action Planning Framework 2023-28. The Advisory Committee approved a new round of action planning late last year. All AskAway participating libraries were invited to participate in facilitated action planning sessions held online over two-half days in May and June 2023. More than 45 service providers, coordinators, committee members, and library directors attended the sessions. The outcomes of action planning, which were informed by the results of surveys conducted beforehand, were shared with all session attendees. The draft Action Planning Framework is drawn directly from the outcomes document shared earlier with the community.

Referring to the first activity listed under "Maintaining or growing service levels", E. Fernandes asked about the potential challenges of distributing a survey to users at institutions such as UBC and noted that there is already an AskAway exit survey to gather user data. It was clarified that the survey tool referred to in the Framework is intended primarily for non-users and that local coordinators could decide how to distribute the survey at their institutions beforehand (e.g., survey distribution could be optional).

E. Magnus noted that the Framework does not address staffing expectations for service providers and participating institutions, noting that large institutions find it challenging to support the service. S. Rackover responded that the Framework reflects the priorities brought forward by members and serves as a blueprint for upcoming work and that the Committee can also address operational work in future. E. Gavaris added that it would be helpful to review the commitment models on a regular schedule. C. Polley agreed that the commitment models can be revisited to meet the current needs of the service.

**MOTION: To approve the AskAway Action Planning Framework.**

Moved: T. Gottschalk

Seconded: D. Yap

**Motion carried.**

*Next steps*

As next steps, the finalized Framework will be shared with the AskAway community and posted on the BC ELN website. The Admin Centre will then review and prioritize activities. Regular reports on progress will be shared via email, in meetings, or documents on the [BC ELN website](#) (same as with the Past Action Plan).

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

There was no new business.

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

The next meeting will take place in the new year.