



BC ELN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes Friday, December 13, 2024

2:45 – 3:40 pm PT

Wilson School of Design, Room 4900

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

5600 Kwantlen St.

Richmond, BC

In Attendance:

Gohar Ashoughian, Simon Fraser University

Jonathan Bengtson, University of Victoria

Rita Cavaliere, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, *Rural Colleges*

Ben Ferrel, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

Mar González Palacios, Simon Fraser University, *Host Site Officer*

Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers University (Chair)

Brenda Mathenia, University Canada West, *Associate Members*

Christina Neigel, Capilano University *Teaching Universities and Technical Institutions*

Susan Parker, University of British Columbia

Trish Rosseel, Douglas College (Past Chair)

BC ELN Staff:

Leah Hopton (Recorder)

Sunni Nishimura

Regrets:

Shirley Lew, Vancouver Community College, *Urban Colleges*

Introduction

T. Gottschalk introduced herself and welcomed attendees. She welcomed T. Rosseel as Past Chair, and five new Steering Committee members:

- G. Ashoughian is the new Simon Fraser University Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, and as such steps onto the committee as the SFU representative;
- R. Cavaliere is the new Rural Colleges representative;
- M. González Palacios joins the committee as the new Host Site Officer;
- D. Gullacher is the new Small Universities representative; and
- C. Neigel is the new Teaching Universities and Technical Institutions representative.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved with an amendment to move the item 'All Partner Meeting Debrief' to the end of the agenda, to be discussed if time permitted.

2. Vice-Chair Selection

T. Gottschalk reviewed the following procedures for selection of a Vice-Chair, taken from the Steering Committee Terms of Reference:

- The Vice-Chair serves from the winter meeting until September 30th of the following year, then moves into the Chair position.
- The Vice-Chair is a member of the Executive Committee along with the Chair.
- At the end of their term, the Vice-Chair becomes Chair and no longer represents a governance category.
- The governance category of the outgoing Vice-Chair selects a new representative.

T. Gottschalk reminded the committee that past practice is for the Chair to identify someone on the Steering Committee who would be willing to sit as Vice-Chair. She then thanked C. Neigel for putting her name forward and invited additional nominations.

Hearing no further nominations, C. Neigel was elected as Vice-Chair by acclamation.

3. PSFS Update on SFU Service Agreement

B. Ferrel updated the committee on the service agreement between BC ELN's host site, Simon Fraser University (SFU), and the Government of British Columbia. A draft of the service agreement was presented to SFU in May, and SFU submitted its feedback on the draft in November. The Ministry is now reviewing SFU's feedback. B. Ferrel expressed confidence that the feedback can be addressed.

4. Associate Membership Criteria Recommendations

B. Mathenia summarized the activities of the Associate Member Criteria Working Group, which

was formed at the July Steering Committee meeting to review Associate Member criteria and provide recommendations. The working group developed a set of guiding principles for membership, including commitment to the public good, inclusivity over exclusivity, and accountability to quality standards, which informed the group's discussions and decisions. She highlighted that while the group considered potential impacts of BC ELN's upcoming Removing Barriers Initiative, which is focused on the inclusion of Indigenous-led institutions, they acknowledged that not all future scenarios could be anticipated. She then explained the rationale behind each of the working group's three recommendations.

Recommendation 1: *That the criteria for Associate Membership eligibility be revised per the redline document.*

The group's key recommendation with regards to Associate Member criteria is to limit membership eligibility to institutions with Ministerial consent to offer degrees through the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB). This ensures alignment with BC ELN's commitment to excellence and guarantees minimum degree standards. The group noted that institutions designated solely by the Private Training Institutions Branch vary widely in quality, lack sufficient academic oversight, and their high numbers could strain BC ELN's resources. Additionally, institutions legislated to offer credentials without Ministry oversight raise concerns about consistency and quality. The recommendation will affect two current Associate Members: Columbia Bible College, which does not have DQAB consent to offer degrees, and Vancouver Premier College, which currently holds provisional status while awaiting DQAB approval.

Recommendation 2: *That all BC ELN partner libraries meeting the criteria for Associate Membership be designated as Associate Members and are required to fulfill associated expectations, including the payment of annual fees.*

This recommendation addresses two 'legacy' institutions that do not fully align with current Associate Member requirements. If the recommendation is accepted, Columbia College would be required to pay membership fees, and Trinity Western University would transition to the Associate Member category and also be required to pay fees.

Recommendation 3: *That the BC ELN Office revise the annual fee structure for Associate Members to align more closely with current market value. The Office should adopt a transparent process regarding the periodic review and revision of associate member fees to ensure fees remain fair, predictable, and appropriate.*

Associate Member fees haven't changed since 2007, and the group suggests an increase is justified to account for inflation and rising costs. The working group recommends the BC ELN Office consult with other consortia and sector partners and communicate any changes well in advance, giving libraries time to provide feedback and adjust their budgets.

Should the recommendations be accepted by the steering committee, the working group recommends providing ample notice to all affected members.

T. Gottschalk invited questions from the Steering Committee. D. Gullacher sought confirmation that both Full and Associate members have equal access to all consortial services. This was affirmed. Following this, D. Gullacher proposed that the Steering Committee consider renaming "Associate Member," as the term "Associate" may imply reduced access to services, which is not the case. The committee agreed that the Office should provide a recommendation on alternative nomenclature along with a recommendation on fees.

D. Gullacher inquired whether the working group had considered the quality oversight provided by other governing bodies for institutions legislated to offer credentials. B. Ferrel, a working group member, responded that aligning BC ELN with peer organizations like BCCATS and BCNet would be very beneficial. He clarified that institutions legislated to offer credentials are separate from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills' quality assurance process. He suggested BC ELN would need to assess the validity of external accreditation bodies and develop related policies, but ultimately recommended staying aligned with sector peers.

G. Ashoughian clarified that only Associate Members pay membership fees. The primary distinction between categories is that Associate Members are private institutions, while Full Members are publicly funded. There were no further questions from the Steering Committee.

MOTION: That the BC ELN Steering Committee approve the Associate Member Criteria Working Group recommendations with the addition that the 'Associate Member' category be renamed.

Moved: C. Neigel

Seconded: B. Mathenia

Motion carried.

5. Vancouver Premier College Membership

T. Gottschalk reminded the Steering Committee that Vancouver Premier College (VPC) was granted Associate Membership for a one-year provisional term in 2022 while awaiting degree authorization approval from the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB). Last December, the Steering Committee voted to extend VPC's provisional membership for an additional year while they continued to await DQAB approval. As the second one-year extension is now coming to an end, a decision needs to be made regarding the next steps for VPC's Associate Membership, considering the recommendations just accepted.

The committee discussed how to proceed. B. Mathenia asked whether losing BC ELN membership would affect VPC's application to the Degree Quality Assessment Board. B. Ferrel explained that access to library services supports DQAB applications, so the loss of BC ELN membership and access to licensed library resources could affect VPC's application. The committee also discussed VPC's current licenses. The committee further acknowledged that VPC began its membership application process with BC ELN before the recent changes to membership criteria were introduced.

MOTION: That the BC ELN Steering Committee approve Vancouver Premier College's provisional Associate Membership for an additional 1-year term beginning January 1, 2025, contingent upon the results of its Degree Quality Assessment Board application.

Moved: T. Rosseel

Seconded: D. Gullacher

Motion carried.

Committee members brought up BC ELN's efforts to support Indigenous-led institutions and acknowledged the potential need to revisit membership criteria in the future. It was noted that ongoing discussions around membership will be necessary, particularly as the Removing Barriers Initiative progresses.

6. Administrative Updates

S. Nishimura provided an administrative update, including the following:

- BC ELN remains short-staffed but anticipates some relief in February 2025, as the bulk of the Arca migration work will be completed, allowing staff to focus on other areas.
- The Office has transitioned to mostly remote work, with a few staff members continuing to work on the SFU campus.
- BC ELN will soon relocate from its temporary swing space back into the library. S. Nishimura expressed enthusiasm about returning to the library and being more closely connected with SFU colleagues.

7. All Partner Meeting Debrief

The committee debriefed on the All Partner Meeting. Members provided positive feedback, noting that Dr. Askey's talk was well-received, the audiovisual setup was effective, the food was excellent, the agenda flowed smoothly, and the Birds of a Feather conversations were valuable.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Wrap Up

The next Steering Committee meeting is expected to be held in May 2025 and will be scheduled in the new year. The meeting will focus on the expenditure plan.

T. Gottschalk thanked committee members for their participation and extended wishes for safe travels home.