



ASKAWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, July 23rd, 2013

SFU Harbour Centre  
Rm 2260 - Diamond Alumni Lounge  
515 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC

Tuesday, July 23rd  
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

**Committee Members:**

Attending In Person	Attending by Teleconference
Anita Cocchia, BC ELN	Sheryl Adam, UBC
Todd Mundle, KPU/Chair	Mary Anne Guenther, NIC/Member-at-large (Alternate)
Sunni Nishimura, AskAway Coordinator	Marjory Jardine, JIBC/Member-at-large
David Pepper, BCIT/Regional Universities	Leva Lee, BCcampus
James Rout, ECUAD/Small Universities	Janis McKenzie, SFU
Debbie Schachter, DC/Urban Colleges (Alternate)	Christina Nilsen, TRU/Member-at-large
	Tracie Smith, UVic
	Melanie Wilke, NWCC/Rural Colleges

Regrets: Lynette Gallant, NIC/Member-at-large; Ross Tyner, OC/Urban Colleges

**Minutes**

**1. Adoption of agenda**

Items to add: None

New business: None

**2. Advisory Committee Membership - Changes for October 1**

*2A: Chair election*

An announcement was made that Todd Mundle has been Chair for two years, and so is not up for renewal. The committee must elect a new Chair at the next meeting in September.

*2B: Committee membership renewals for 2<sup>nd</sup> term*

The following members were asked whether they wish to renew their positions in the committee:

- Rural Colleges (Melanie Wilke)
  - Will discuss when others return from vacation
- Small Universities (James Rout)
  - Will renew
- Member-at-large (Christina Nilsen)
  - Will renew



- Member-at-large (Marjory Jardine)
  - Will renew

**ACTION ITEM:** M. Wilke will discuss her renewal and let the Administrative Centre or T. Mundle know her decision before the next meeting in September.

### 3. 2013/14 Expenditure Plan

A. Cocchia presented the Expenditure Plan document. Changes from last year's numbers were noted and discussed. Significant changes included:

- \$5,000 reduction in BC Campus support
- \$15,000 specified as BC ELN support
- 5% increase in service support fee
- Carryforward from last year's budget and invoices
- \$2,000 for an event to recognize the service providers

Questions were raised about where any carryforward would be kept - whether with AskAway specifically or general BC ELN funds. It was clarified that the funds are kept with AskAway.

#### *3A: VR providers' recognition event*

The recognition event was proposed based on research stressing the importance of making virtual reference providers, who rarely see one another in person, feel appreciated and recognized, and to reward them for their dedication to the service.

The Admin Centre proposes to hold the event during the BC Library Conference, and will seek additional outside funding to match the budgeted funds. VR providers would be able to attend the event even if they are not attending the conference.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Admin Centre will finalize the Expenditure Plan and email copies to the Committee.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Admin Centre will begin planning the recognition event.

### 4. Benefits & Responsibilities

#### *4A: Revisions to the Benefits & Responsibilities document*

T. Mundle went over the proposed revisions to the Benefits & Responsibilities for Participating Libraries. Four changes were proposed:

- Benefits for Learners, Educators, and Researchers:
  - Two new benefits added.
- Participating Library Requirements and Responsibilities:
  - Header added recognizing that AskAway is a year-round service.
  - Options outlined for institutions dealing with acute staffing issues:
    - Short term release
    - Compensation for staff hours
    - Trading hours with other institutions
    - Withdrawing from service altogether

It was agreed that removal from the service is not a solution to acute staffing issues, but is



rather a decision that an institution may choose to make at any time. The difference between acute and chronic staffing issues was also discussed, as well as the process for institutions that are unable to meet their commitments (see 4B).

**QUESTION:** Is withdrawal from AskAway a permanent solution to the inability to staff the service, or a temporary one (i.e. withdrawing and re-joining periodically)?

**ANSWER:** A. Cocchia clarified that the service requires a year-round commitment, and withdrawal from the service cannot be a seasonal option. Several members agreed that changes in service levels and inconsistent hours might frustrate students and cause them to discontinue use of the service.

It was also noted that the document does not presently address Service Support Fees. The membership agreed that language should be added to outline these processes.

#### *4B: Summer staffing difficulties*

The committee discussed how to handle institutions facing chronic seasonal staffing issues.

**QUESTION:** Could summer staffing issues be seen as part of the continuity plan, reducing service accordingly?

**ANSWER:** A. Cocchia explained that the continuity plan is for major disasters and job actions. It was noted that the service reduction steps outlined in the plan steps would cause significant disruptions, and do not fit the scale of the issue. Members discussed how service reductions would result in a frustrated student body and reduced use of the service.

Committee members discussed how the schedule could be made to reflect the challenges of meeting summer commitments, and came up with several ideas for the Administrative Centre to explore, including:

- Increasing those institutions' commitment in other terms, and distributing their summer hours to the remaining institutions
- Polling institutions about their preferred schedules annually (summer hours vs. winter or fall hours), and organizing their commitments accordingly
- Compensating the service for the inability to meet commitments
- Investigating ways to enable members to report available hours and request trades

**ACTION ITEM:** The Admin Centre will modify the Benefits & Responsibilities document to make Withdrawal from the Service its own section, and add language about support fees. The revised document will be brought back to the Advisory Committee in September.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Admin Centre will explore how to implement yearlong commitment scheduling options. This may include:

- A survey of members to discover their friction points
- Research on reference desk shift-swapping strategies at large institutions, including software such as Schedule Source

They will also consider the most appropriate time to set the schedule.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Admin Centre will explore ways of facilitating self-serve scheduling and shift-trading.

## 5. Institutional Queues Approach - Discussion



S. Nishimura provided an update on QuestionPoint's institutional queues and the 10 free trials they are offering AskAway. She highlighted the steep discount offered, due to our existing relationship with QP. She also noted that the use of institutional queues runs in **addition** to regular AskAway hours.

Two institutions have already begun their trials, and are seeing significant increases in the number of calls from their students handled by their own staff. The committee discussed how to approach distribution of the remaining trials queues.

**ACTION ITEM:** Send a message to institutions to find out who is interested in institutional queue trials.

**ACTION ITEM:** If more than eight additional sites are interested:

- Approach OCLC for more trials
- If additional trials are unavailable, explore alternatives:
  - Distribution by lottery
  - Allocation based on a balance of institution types, sizes, geography

## 6. Consortial SMS License Update

S. Nishimura provided an update on the exploration of a consortial licence for SMS products. Of the vendors that were considered, only Mosio and UpsideWireless offer a consortial discount, and these products were selected for further investigation. S. Nishimura provided pricing information, and asked the committee to discuss whether one or both products should be selected for a trial, as interested institutions have split opinions over which they prefer. It was decided to put both products out for trial, but be clear that we may only be able to licence one of them depending on the number of interested institutions.

**ACTION ITEM:** BC ELN will put out trials of both Mosio and Upside Wireless, in late August or mid-September. They will collect feedback from the group.

## 7. Admin Centre Report

### 7A. Summer term report

S. Nishimura provided an update on changes to Admin Centre staffing, student complaints about longer wait times, and a report on AskAway's summer term. She noted a 7.5% reduction in traffic, consistent with similar reductions during other terms. The following factors may have contributed to this reduction:

- Shift to Single Search: Libraries moving to single search drives traffic away from traditional database search interfaces, where the Qwidget is typically located. Adding the Qwidget to Single Search results pages may result in increased traffic.
- Wait times: This year has seen an increase in complaints about wait times. Longer waits may have resulted in frustrated students turning away from the service.

### 7B. Discussion about collaborative citation knowledgebase



S. Nishimura updated the committee on the proposal to create a shared citation knowledgebase. This knowledgebase is intended to give reference providers a centralized resource for citation questions, and to reduce the amount of work for librarians at multiple institutions, each maintaining their own citation guides. The committee was asked to discuss the idea.

The majority were in favor of a collaboratively-created, centralized citation guide, citing the savings in time and resources. However, C. Nilsen reminded the committee to be conscious of the amount of work already expended on existing guides, and the professional development opportunities available to librarians who create and maintain them. It was remarked that librarians seeking to keep their citation knowledge fresh would be ideal contributors to the collaborative guide.

**The proposed model** is a collaboratively-developed, centralized citation resource that would replace those being developed and maintained by individual institutions. An example approach would house it in a wiki environment, where users can make changes, discuss pages in the background, and save and revert to earlier versions. It would be up to individual libraries to decide whether to participate and to what extent.

The committee requested the following features:

- The ability to send properly-formatted citation examples to patrons through QuestionPoint
- A database of well-formatted citation examples, including a sample reference list
- Additional information about style elements (specifically, paper-format questions such as cover pages, headings, spacing, etc.)

**ACTION ITEM:** Survey the libraries about their interest in participating in a collaborative citation guide.

8. Circle Time: Newsworthy items from committee members (Time permitting)

(None)

9. New Business

(None)

10. Next Meeting

- Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00-12:30