



AskAway Advisory Committee

Thursday, June 13, 2019
10:00AM – 11:00AM
Teleconference

In Attendance:

Gregg Currie, Selkirk College, *Chair / Rural Colleges*
Justin Harrison, *University of Victoria (Alternate)*
Sybil Harrison, Camosun College, *Urban Colleges*
Veronika Kollbrand, *University of British Columbia (Alternate)*
Scott Marsden, Alexander College, *Member-at-Large*
Todd Mundle, KPU, *Regional Universities & Institutes with 4 Yr. Programs (Alternate)*
Suzanne Rackover, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, *Small Universities*

BC ELN Office:

Anita Cocchia
Cristen Polley (recorder)

Regrets:

Lin Brander, BCIT, *Member-at-Large*
Lynette Gallant, North Island College, *Member-at-Large*
Lisa Petrachenko, *University of Victoria*
Debbie Schachter, Capilano University, *Regional Universities & Institutes with 4 Yr. Programs*
Lea Starr, *University of British Columbia*
Jenna Thomson, *Simon Fraser University*

Agenda:

1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Expenditure Plan 2019/20
3. Extended Opening Hours Recommendation
4. Admin Centre Update
5. New Business
6. Next Meeting

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as tabled.

2. Expenditure Plan 2019/20

A. Cocchia presented the 2018/19 Expenditure Summary and 2019/20 Draft Expenditure Plan.

2018/19 Expenditure Summary

AskAway is in a healthy financial position with a small carryforward of \$2,524.

Miscellaneous revenue includes compensation for 2018/19 auxiliary hiring on behalf of libraries unable to staff certain sections.

2019/20 Draft Expenditure Plan

At the March 1, 2019 meeting, the Advisory Committee approved a modest 2% increase to Service Support fees. Annual increases are only applied to the base support fee; flexible support contributions are not increasing.

Flexible Support Contribution revenues increased due to one institution shifting from a staffing to funding contribution. As a result, Contract – Auxiliary and Project expenditures, which are dependent on Flexible Support Contributions, increased.

Software / Technical Infrastructure costs decreased due to the lower cost of new LibraryH3lp software.

A. Cocchia reminded the Committee that \$1,000 is set aside in the budget every year for the Extenuating Circumstances Fund. This fund was set up to provide support to institutions with acute financial need. The fund has been used in the past, but there has been no usage in the last two years.

MOTION: To endorse the 2019/20 Expenditure Plan.

Moved: S. Marsden

Seconded: S. Rackover

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Extended Opening Hours

The Committee reviewed the recommendation to open the service one hour earlier on weekdays (two hours earlier on Fridays) beginning in Section 1 (Sept-Dec) 2019.

AskAway has been offering the same hours of service since launching in 2006. This schedule was based on early adopter staffing available at the time, and it was always a goal to extend service hours and open earlier than 10am as the service grew.

Now is an ideal time to extend service hours as students are requesting longer hours in exit surveys, usage trends show that the opening shifts are especially busy, and AskAway currently has the needed service support staff available to work daytime hours.

Meeting student needs

Opening earlier in the morning offers more flexibility to students with busy schedules and provides them with research support at libraries where the research desk is not yet open for the day. In AskAway exit surveys, students say they would like longer hours.

Alleviating Pressure on Opening Shifts

Usage trends over the past few years show that opening shifts are especially busy and have a higher number of calls per hour than the average for the day. These trends show that students

are looking for help first thing in the morning. Opening earlier will alleviate some of the pressure on service providers on these busy opening shifts as students will have the option to visit AskAway at 9am and not flood the service at 10am.

Maximizing Return on Investment

Extending service hours maximizes return on investment for participating libraries. With extended hours, AskAway will expand from the current 67 hours of service a week to 73 hours a week. This would add 12 additional staffing hours, but libraries will not be asked to contribute additional staffing. Existing daytime shifts, some of which are now generously staffed, will be reallocated to the opening shifts. Opening earlier allows the service to use daytime staffing hours more efficiently while extending service hours to the benefit of students and faculty.

Next Steps

As next steps, the Admin Centre will work with libraries to voluntarily reallocate daytime staffing hours to the opening shifts. Libraries will be supported in promoting the new extended hours to their community so they can take advantage of the earlier opening times. The Admin Centre will monitor traffic on the new shifts and adjust the schedule as needed to respond to usage trends and staff the service efficiently.

In response to a question, A. Cocchia clarified that there are no additional costs anticipated as current staffing hours will be voluntarily reallocated. If circumstances make it necessary, the budget can absorb auxiliary hiring for a shift or two.

MOTION: To extend AskAway service hours and open one hour earlier on weekdays (two hours earlier on Fridays) beginning in Section 1, September 2019.

Moved: J. Harrison

Seconded: S. Harrison

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Admin Centre Update

C. Polley provided an update from the Admin Centre:

- AskAway migrated to the new LibraryH3lp platform when the service was closed for spring intersession (April 12th to May 13th)
 - The Admin Centre worked together with LibraryH3lp to develop an implementation plan and provide support to libraries
 - Local coordinators and library staff at participating libraries implemented customized LibraryH3lp chat boxes on library websites, in databases, in LibGuides, etc.
 - Over 180 current and new service providers attended 10 online and in-person training sessions to learn how to staff AskAway using the new software
- AskAway opened for the summer and went live with the new platform on Monday, May 13th
 - The first month of service has gone smoothly and service providers seem to be adjusting to the new software
 - Overall, it appears students have not noticed the change and continue to comment on the service they receive in exit surveys

- Usage is steady and in May, there were over 975 calls, with the average wait time for visitors staying low at 23 seconds
- Over 25 library staff have signed up to attend one of two online software orientation sessions for local coordinators
- The Admin Centre is continuing to develop support documentation and FAQs for service providers and local coordinators
- The Admin Centre will approach LibraryH3lp with requests for high priority features for development
 - Based on feedback from service providers and local coordinators, the Admin Centre is pulling together a features wishlist
 - The Admin Centre would also like to work with Canadian colleagues who use LibraryH3lp (e.g. OCLS, OCUL, and Novanet) to request common high priority features for development
- On May 31st 2019, OCLC announced that Springshare has acquired QuestionPoint. BC ELN's agreement with QuestionPoint ends in September 2019
- The Admin Centre has begun work with libraries to build a more equitable and collaborative schedule
 - Libraries who do not currently staff evenings or weekends as part of their base commitment are being asked to exchange one or more of their daytime shifts for an evening (5pm-9pm) or weekend shift
 - This will provide some relief to institutions who have generously carried the burden of evening / weekend shifts for many years, and institutions who were not aware that there was a need to move to evening and weekend shifts now have the opportunity to fill this need
 - To date, several libraries have expressed interest and the committee can expect to see more information on this

5. New Business

There was no new business.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in the fall and will be in-person. An exact date is to be determined, and the Admin Centre will send out a Doodle poll.

At this meeting, the Committee can begin to move forward on other priorities for the service, such as investigating proactive chat.