

BC eTutoring Steering Committee
February 27, 2017 10:00am-12:00pm

In attendance:

Lyn Benn, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (Chair)
Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Simon Fraser University, *Member at Large*
Nancy Squair, Douglas College, *Member at Large*
Julie Mitchell, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre Assistant Director
Anita Cocchia, BC ELN Executive Director
Megan Robertson, WriteAway Coordinator, *Recorder*

In attendance by phone:

Meghan Aubé, University of British Columbia, *Medium and Large Universities Representative*
Shahida Rashid, College of the Rockies, *Colleges Representative*
Sara Wolfe, Thompson Rivers University, *Regional and Small Universities Representative*
Denise Goudy, BCcampus

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

2. BCcampus Update

L. Benn invited D. Goudy to offer information about upcoming changes to BCcampus' in-kind support of WriteAway through their hosting of the eTutoring platform. D. Goudy informed the committee that the 2017/18 fiscal year will be the last for BCcampus' financial provision for WriteAway technical infrastructure. BCcampus' funding focus is now on supporting the start-up phase of new initiatives.

The committee discussed alternatives for WriteAway's technical infrastructure. This might be a good opportunity to explore other software that offers the asynchronous tutoring tools that WriteAway requires. The last software evaluation was done in 2012 and much has changed since then. Learning more about existing software programs and hosting options will allow the committee to take effective next steps.

ACTION – The WriteAway Administrative Centre to develop a technology infrastructure action plan for Steering Committee review.

3. Expenditure Plan for 2017/18

A. Cocchia reviewed the draft expenditure plan for 2017/18. A. Cocchia reported that the contribution from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKBLC) is still under discussion. Last year IKBLC contributed \$8,000. Two drafts of the expenditure plan were presented, one with the continued \$8,000 and one without an IKBLC contribution. IKBLC and the WriteAway Administrative Centre are scheduled to complete their discussion later in the week.

The expenditure plan includes a 5% proposed increase to service support fees. This amount reflects the uncertainty of the IKBLC contribution.

A. Cocchia stressed that WriteAway is moving towards a self-sustainable model. AskAway, a service similar to WriteAway in terms of consortial collaboration between institutions, received

external funding (including contributions from BC ELN) for nine years before becoming financially self-sustaining. J. Mitchell asked if WriteAway could receive financial support from BC ELN similar to AskAway. A. Cocchia responded that, unlike AskAway, WriteAway is not an initiative of BC ELN, although many of BC ELN partner institutions are participants. As WriteAway, and the eTutoring Steering Committee, are not part of the BC ELN governance structure, BC ELN does not have funding to support external initiatives.

ACTION – voting on the 2017/18 Expenditure Plan tabled to allow for further discussion with IKBLC. An updated expenditure plan, with associated 2017/18 service support fees, will be circulated electronically for members to vote.

[NOTE – updated expenditure plan with IKBLC contribution of \$5,000 electronically circulated and approved, March 9, 2017]

4. Staffing Commitments – Tutoring Hours

M. Robertson provided an update from the WriteAway Administrative Centre. The September-December 2016 semester was WriteAway's busiest semester yet. The semester saw a persistent backlog, which was exacerbated by 1) low tutoring hours on the weekends and 2) a need for more tutoring hours overall.

The committee discussed potential options for a more prescriptive approach to scheduling tutors. In 2014, WriteAway moved from scheduling tutors for particular days and times to day-set shifts and scheduling on a curve. One unexpected result of this is that weekend shifts go understaffed, contributing to weekly backlogs. Resolving this issue can be addressed by returning to prescriptive shifts for weekend hours. It is understood that not all institutions may be able to move to prescribed hours immediately. Changes to hiring practices may be needed. The new approach to scheduling will be trialed in the May-August semester.

Presently, minimum staffing contributions for institutions are 60 tutoring hours for the January-April and September-December semesters and 30 tutoring hours for the May-August semester. These hours have been consistent since September 2014. With increasing student usage, the Steering Committee felt it might be time to adjust the staffing contributions. Further discussion is needed.

ACTION – WA Admin Centre to request specific weekend hours for May-August semester.

ACTION – WA Admin Centre will provide Steering Committee with options for adjusting institutional tutor hour contributions at the next meeting.

5. Recruitment

L. Benn reminded the committee of the importance of recruiting new members to WriteAway. Committee members are encouraged to reach out to contacts and colleagues at non-participating institutions. The WriteAway Administrative Centre can coordinate communication and can use the upcoming 2016 WriteAway Actions & Achievements report to provide information about the service.

ACTION – WriteAway Administrative Centre to coordinate communication and contact targeted institutions to encourage participation.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Next Meeting

The next BC eTutoring Steering Committee meeting will take place in late April or early May 2017. The WriteAway Administrative Centre will send out a poll for the next meeting.