



WriteAway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

1:00-2:00pm PT

Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Evan Daigle, Alexander College, *Two-Year Representative*
Gregory Holditch, Langara College, *Two-Year Representative*
Kari Karlsbjerg, Vancouver Community College, *Member-at-Large*
Emily Keery, Trinity Western University, *Four-Year Representative*
Donna McGee Thompson, Simon Fraser University, *Chair*
Patricia Pryce, Coast Mountain College, *Two-Year Representative*
Sandra Smith, University of the Fraser Valley, *Four-Year Representative*
Kim Tomiak, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, *Four-Year Representative*

Administrative Centre:

Cristen Polley (she), Interim WriteAway Coordinator (Zoom moderator)
Alena Rosen (she/they), WriteAway Support (Recorder)

Regrets:

Julia Lane, Simon Fraser University, *Member-at-Large*

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

D. McGee Thompson thanked the Committee members who agreed to extend their term by one year and continue to serve: E. Daigle, K. Karlsbjerg, J. Lane, and S. Smith.

2. Administrative Centre Staffing and Hiring

D. McGee Thompson noted that BC ELN has a new Executive Director, Sunni Nishimura. D. McGee Thompson reminded the Committee of staffing changes at the WriteAway Administrative Centre this fall, noting that C. Polley is currently serving as Interim Coordinator. A. Rosen and Tanya Burnstad are providing Admin Centre support and provide tutoring hours together with a team of auxiliary tutors.

D. McGee Thompson provided an update on hiring a new part-time, permanent WriteAway Writing Services Coordinator, expected to start January 2024. The posting was shared with WriteAway Directors, Coordinators, and Tutors, as well as the Canadian Writing Centres Association. Applications closed on November 19 and interviews are to be held in December. The Admin Centre will provide ongoing support to members during the transition to a new Coordinator.

S. Smith asked about the process for recruiting and hiring auxiliary tutors at BC ELN, noting former University of the Fraser Valley tutors have inquired about continuing to work for WriteAway. K. Karlsbjerg also expressed that Vancouver Community College tutors are interested in additional tutoring hours. C. Polley agreed to communicate in January with Institutional Coordinators regarding the hiring of auxiliary tutors.

3. Membership

D. McGee Thompson shared that Northern Lakes College (Alberta) and UBC are no longer participating in the WriteAway service. D. McGee Thompson announced that Okanagan College will be joining WriteAway, starting January 2024, with the support of Ministry bridge funding. WriteAway will continue to reach out to BC ELN institutions that do not currently participate in the service.

K. Tomiak inquired about the financial impact of the membership changes. C. Polley confirmed that the WriteAway budget is healthy, and that any impact on the budget should be minimal. An expenditure plan will be presented to the Committee at their next meeting.

4. Service Update

D. McGee Thompson invited C. Polley to provide the WriteAway Service Update.

C. Polley reminded the committee that WriteAway is in Year 2 of two-year bridge funding from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. This funding has allowed the service to hire Administrative Centre support and auxiliary tutors to provide additional staffing during weekends and peak submission periods to meet student demand. With this funding, WriteAway has also supported Yukon University and Okanagan College in joining the service.

C. Polley provided a Fall 2023 service update, noting that the service experienced backlogs and increased turnaround times in October due to statutory holidays and labour action at SFU, BC ELN's host institution. C. Polley noted that the Admin Centre, together with auxiliary tutors, and tutors and coordinators at participating institutions, have been working hard to keep turnaround times down, using the protocol for managing backlogs. Additionally, to support tutors and keep the service running smoothly, the Admin Centre has sent out reminders and tips through the tutor mailing list.

K. Karlsbjerg suggested that communication about response time expectations should be sent early in the term and suggested revisiting the expectation of 45-minute response times in a later meeting.

C. Polley provided further details about labour action at SFU, which occurred in early to mid-October and impacted WriteAway. BC ELN service advisory committees, including the WriteAway Advisory Committee, would be responsible for developing service continuity plans to prepare for future disruptions. C. Polley shared an example of AskAway's Continuity Plan, which addresses both labour action and major disruptions (e.g., natural disaster, pandemic). The committee agreed that it would be worthwhile to discuss the development of a continuity plan for WriteAway at a future meeting.

E. Daigle asked about the impact of job action on the service. C. Polley shared that the impact included a loss of tutoring hours and an increased number of submissions. E. Daigle inquired whether future job action could affect the Admin Centre's ability to place a call out for additional hours. C. Polley responded in the affirmative, stating that BC ELN is taking this into consideration during continuity planning for Admin Centres.

ACTION: Add WriteAway service continuity planning to an Advisory Committee agenda for future discussion.

5. Tenth Anniversary Celebration

D. McGee Thompson provided an update about WriteAway's 10th Anniversary Celebration, noting that party packs were sent to all participating institutions. D. McGee Thompson invited committee members to share details from their institution's events. Overall feedback from the Committee was that the celebration was a success. S. Smith and E. Keery agreed and shared that the party pack was helpful and appreciated. K. Tomiak shared that the KPU celebration will happen in December.

S. Smith suggested that future celebrations might include thank you cards for tutors from the BC ELN office. K. Tomiak suggested a certificate of recognition for tutors, for example after one year, or when leaving the service.

K. Tomiak asked about the impact of Generative AI on the service. This topic will be added to the Institutional Coordinators meeting agenda for future discussion.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled in spring 2024 to approve the Expenditure Plan. An exact date is to be determined.