

BC ELN All Partner Meeting Summary

Future-Ready Libraries: Transformation through Partnerships

December 5, 2025

9:00 am to 2:45 pm Pacific

The Atrium, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Vancouver

In Attendance:

Christina Neigel, Capilano University (Chair)

Melani Adams, Yukon University

Ignacio Albarracin, College of New
Caledonia

Gohar Ashoughian, Simon Fraser University

Jonathan Bengtson, University of Victoria

Sue Bengtson, Royal Roads University
(Alternate)

Rita Cavaliere, Nicola Valley Institute of
Technology

Gregg Currie, Selkirk College

Ali de Haan, Acsenda School of
Management

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

Trina Fyfe, University of Northern British
Columbia

Mar González Palacios, Simon Fraser
University (Host Site Officer)

Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers
University

Darcy Gullacher, Trinity Western University

April Haddad, Justice Institute of British
Columbia

Erin Howard, Camosun College

Roen Janyk, Okanagan College

Faith Jones, Columbia College

D. Vanessa Kam, Emily Carr University of
Art + Design

Ryan Kyle, LaSalle College Vancouver

Lauren Lacey, Adler University

Shirley Lew, Vancouver Community College

Brenda Mathenia, University Canada West

Jody Mendenhall, College of the Rockies
(Alternate)

Todd Mundle, Kwantlen Polytechnic
University

Alison Nussbaumer, British Columbia
Institute of Technology

Susan Parker, University of British
Columbia

Suzanne Rackover, Langara College

Trish Rosseel, Douglas College

Alexander Swistak, Alexander College
(Alternate)

Robin Travis, Coquitlam College (Alternate)

Dawna Turcotte, Northern Lights College

Guests:

Andrea Freeman, Facilitator

Brian Lamb, Interim Director, TRU Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Julia Lane, Simon Fraser University, WriteAway Advisory Committee Chair

Nicoletta Romano, University Canada West, AskAway Recommendations Implementation Team
Chair

BC ELN Office:

Kyle Beres, Amber Gallant, Korinne Hamakawa-Woo, Sasha Han, Kyla McCallum, Austin Miner, Sunni Nishimura, Reba Ouimet, Jiaqi Pei, Cristen Polley, Myfanwy (Vaughn) Postgate, Brandon Weigel

Regrets:

David Alexander, Vancouver Island University (Due to weather)
Bibiana Chai, Coquitlam College
Lynette Gallant, North Island College
Kenley Neufeld, University of the Fraser Valley

Dorothy Gebert, Columbia Bible College
Shaun Longstreet, College of the Rockies
Roberta Mason, Royal Roads University
Steve Roe, Alexander College
Tracey Woodburn, Coast Mountain College

1. Welcome and Mixer

C. Neigel, Chair of the BC ELN Steering Committee, welcomed attendees and acknowledged that the meeting was held on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations of xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh).

C. Neigel shared the theme of the meeting, *Future-Ready Libraries: Transformation through Partnerships*, and introduced A. Freeman as the facilitator for the day. A. Freeman then led the group in a warm-up activity.

2. Dispatches from the GenAI Front Lines

B. Lamb, Director of the TRU Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and co-founder of OpenETC, presented on some of the innovations and challenges presented by Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the British Columbia post-secondary sector adapts to its rapidly changing environment. In his talk titled “Dispatches from the GenAI Front Lines,” B. Lamb shared examples of how TRU is responding to AI with resources, guidelines, and collaborative initiatives, and he shared varied perspectives from students, faculty, and IT. In closing, he outlined some of the current concerns with AI, including misinformation and AI slop, before taking several questions from attendees.

3. Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS) Update

B. Ferrel provided an update on activities at the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, which is now led by Minister Jessie Sunner:

- The BC Provincial Government is implementing a new, more centralized IT model through a new agency, Connected Services BC, within the Ministry of Citizen Services.
- The forthcoming independent review by Don Avison will assess the post-secondary sector’s organizational and operational efficiency, and will identify recommendations to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the sector; institutions that would

like to provide input were encouraged to coordinate feedback through their executive leadership.

- Significant new funding has been allocated to trades training for the first time since 2003.
- As part of the B.C. Digital Learning Strategy, the Ethical Educational Technology Working Group (EETWG) released the [Ethical Educational Technology Toolkit](#), and the AI Policy Working Group is developing a reference resource with voluntary guidelines and principles for AI use in the sector. See: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/digital-learning-strategy>
- The Ministry is also exploring sector level applications of AI, including enhancements to the Transfer Credit System and opportunities for collaboration with Arca.

In response to questions about the sector review, B. Ferrel acknowledged the challenges posed by the accelerated review process and offered to communicate feedback from institutions where possible. B. Ferrel also emphasized the importance of shared services from sector organizations like BC ELN at this time, which are crucial in reducing expenses for member institutions.

4. WriteAway Sustainability Update + Q&A

J. Lane, Chair of the WriteAway Advisory Committee, presented an update on WriteAway sustainability initiatives:

- The WriteAway Sustainability Working Group presented four recommendations to the WriteAway Advisory Committee, which were approved in May 2025.
 - Recommendations included updating the service model, restructuring the service's financial model, forming a working group to evaluate and select technical infrastructure, and improving the service's accessibility and responsiveness.
- The WriteAway Service Model Working Group formed and completed early deliverables, including creating surveys for students and faculty and conducting a focus group.
- The WriteAway Advisory Committee has since endorsed eight recommendations presented by the Service Model Working Group, which will be brought to the BC ELN Steering Committee for consideration in early 2026.

There were no questions.

5. AskAway Sustainability Update + Q&A

T. Rosseel, Chair of the AskAway Advisory Committee, shared general service updates:

- Two-year bridge funding from the Ministry has helped to maintain service capacity, particularly as sustainability work gets underway.
- The Emerging Technologies Working Group (active since January 2025) is meeting regularly, consulting with participating libraries, and will bring forward recommendations in 2026.
- AskAway is developing and updating resources to support service providers in navigating varying institutional AI policies and practices.
- While the service saw a significant and sustained increase in usage from 2020 to 2024, with 2023 being the busiest year on record, traffic in 2025 decreased by 35% compared to the previous five-year average.
- Maintaining and strengthening service levels remains a priority for the service and the Advisory Committee.

N. Romano then presented an update on recent work by the AskAway Recommendations Implementation Team:

- The team was tasked with implementing the recommendations proposed by the AskAway Commitment Models Review Working Group and endorsed by the AskAway Advisory Committee and BC ELN Steering Committee, with the goal of improving the service's long-term financial sustainability.
- Changes being considered include removing volunteer hours, introducing a single consolidated fee with annual increases, designating commitments for evening/weekend hours based on tier, and increasing the Extenuating Circumstances fund.
- Consultations included a forum with libraries on November 3, 2025, and a discussion with the AskAway Advisory Committee on November 24, 2025.
- The team's next step will be to present two refined models for decision and recommendations for endorsement to the AskAway Advisory Committee and BC ELN Steering Committee in early 2026.
- If approved, the new commitment models would be implemented throughout 2027/2028.

In response to a question about whether parties involved in the AskAway and WriteAway sustainability processes had connected with each other, S. Nishimura confirmed that the BC ELN Office is working to support a coordinated approach, and is ready to support broader community discussions if there is a desire from partner libraries.

6. BC ELN and Learning Support Services Discussion

A. Freeman facilitated a World Café discussion on Learning Support services. Each table was given a series of prompts related to a particular topic (e.g., the role of AI in Learning Support services, challenges and risks, and collaboration and governance). Save for one volunteer moderator at each table, members were asked to rotate to

another topic every ten minutes. After attendees had completed several rotations, the moderator for each table reported back to the room any insights, questions, or recommendations that arose in their table's discussions.

Themes that surfaced in the table discussions included the need for transparency with AI, the importance of "humanness" in services, and the value of resource sharing in a challenging financial climate.

7. Shared Library Services Platform Update & Discussion

S. Nishimura provided an update on the Shared Library Services Platform initiative. A proposal for this initiative was brought forward by UBC, UVic, and SFU at the July 17, 2025 Steering Committee meeting. This led to an endorsed recommendation to conduct a feasibility study, with the next step being the formation of a Leadership & Advisory Group to guide the work. Progress was made over the fall on developing draft Terms of Reference, with a callout for nominations issued the week of the All Partner Meeting. The group will begin meeting in January 2026 to advance the initiative.

A. Freeman then facilitated a discussion on the Shared Library Services Platform. Attendees organized themselves into eight mixed-constituency groups to consider a series of guiding questions, including the essential principles and values in an ideal shared service; what a thriving shared LSP might look and feel like; the conditions necessary for libraries to feel confident and supported in participating; and the key message they wished the Leadership Committee to keep in mind as the initiative progresses. Notes taken at each table during the session were saved and will be shared with the Leadership Committee as they move the Shared LSP initiative forward.

Following the discussion activity, attendees were asked to meet with their constituency groups and elect a representative to sit on the Shared LSP Leadership & Advisory Group. The list of representatives will be brought to the next Steering Committee meeting for confirmation and next steps.

8. Next Steps & Closing

C. Neigel made closing remarks, thanked All Partners and BC ELN staff, and encouraged attendees to fill out a short survey to provide feedback.