

Arca Advisory Committee

Monday, June 15, 2026
10:00 AM (Pacific Time)
Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Michel Castagné, Capilano University, *Member-at-Large*
Renee Chalut, Vancouver Public Library, *Member-at-Large non-BC ELN*
Paige Hohmann, UBC Okanagan
D. Vanessa Kam, Emily Carr University of Art+Design, *Chair*
Tanya Nguyen, Athabasca University, *Member-at-Large non-BC ELN*
Suzanne Rackover, Langara College
Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers University, *Member-at-Large*
Tracey Woodburn, Coast Mountain College

Administrative Centre:

Sasha Han (Recorder)
Brandon Weigel

Guests:

Keleigh Annau, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Sunni Nishimura, BC ELN
Adam Salah, Simon Fraser University

Territorial Acknowledgement

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted as tabled.

2. BC ELN Administrative Transition

S. Nishimura shared an update on BC ELN's administrative model.

BC ELN has been administratively hosted at Simon Fraser University (SFU) since 2004. The Provincial Government has provided direction to transition BC ELN, along with BCcampus, EducationPlannerBC, and the BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT), to a single new public sector organization. The target implementation date is April 2027, pending necessary processes and approvals.

This transition is in its early stages, and no disruptions to services are anticipated. S. Nishimura emphasized that service continuity is a foundational priority of the transition, and noted that the transition is expected to help manage risk and provide

a stronger foundation for innovation and collaboration among the sector organizations. BC ELN's Steering Committee and service area governance committees, including the Arca Advisory Committee, will be kept informed as the transition progresses.

In response to a comment expressing concern about BC ELN's governance post-transition, S. Nishimura reiterated that maintaining continuity, including minimal disruption to existing governance structures, is a central principle. Governance committee structure is expected to stay the same following the transition.

D. V. Kam noted that BC ELN being member-driven is a key strength, and emphasized the importance of preserving this through the transition.

3. SFU AI Project: Ministry presentation and vote

D. V. Kam introduced a proposal to collaborate with SFU and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills on a proof-of-concept project exploring the creation of a provincial AI research assistant and its compatibility with a multi-tenant repository system like Arca. The committee had previously raised questions regarding privacy and copyright, which informed the development of a Project Charter circulated in advance of the meeting. K. Annau and A. Salah were invited to present the proposal and respond to questions.

K. Annau provided context for the initiative within the [BC Post-Secondary Digital Learning Strategy](#) and associated [AI policy work](#). The proposed project would access a limited set of collections/repository items selected by volunteer sites, and use SFU's AI Sandbox environment to process those items' metadata. The provided data would provide the project with a means to explore the feasibility of enhanced search and discovery tools across different repositories, including natural language querying. A. Salah described the technical environment and demonstrated a prototype developed for Summit, SFU's institutional repository, emphasizing that the sandbox is not a production system, is isolated from external networks, and would not involve training AI models on data from Arca.

In discussion, members raised a number of concerns and questions. Several members noted the absence of detailed information regarding legal, ethical, and governance considerations, particularly in relation to existing deposit agreements and institutional responsibilities. It was also noted that, as an advisory body, the committee would require greater clarity on its role and the implications of endorsing the project.

A question was also raised regarding whether the project should be considered research and, if so, how it aligns with existing research practices, such as literature review and ethics board approval. In response, A. Salah indicated that the initiative is intended to be strictly implementation-focused exploration rather than academic research, and that considerations related to ethics, policy, and risk would be

identified through the proof-of-concept process and informed by participating institutions.

Following the question period, K. Annau and A. Salah left the meeting.

Discussion continued. Some committee members expressed interest in exploring the project's potential benefits, noting the importance of engaging proactively with emerging technologies. Others emphasized the need for additional information, broader consultation with the Arca community, and a clearer understanding of risks and responsibilities before proceeding.

MOTION: To approve the project proposal as presented, and provide SFU with API access to volunteered collections from volunteer sites.

Moved: T. Gottschalk

Seconded: S. Rackover

The motion was defeated, with 4 votes in favour and 4 opposed. Members indicated that additional clarification and consultation would be required before reconsidering the proposal. Further discussion will take place over the Advisory Committee mailing list.

4. Terms of Reference Updates: Discussion

D. V. Kam introduced proposed amendments to the Arca Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, noting that while the document was last updated in 2023 to better reflect the composition of Arca's participants, several areas requiring revision have since been identified.

A revised version of the document was circulated in the agenda package. D. V. Kam highlighted key changes in this version:

- The Indigenous Representative position has been revised from a standing committee role to an invited participant engaged as needed for topics requiring an Indigenous perspective, reflecting both challenges in filling the role and the need to avoid placing undue burden on individuals while maintaining access to appropriate expertise.
- Language relating to the Chair position has been updated to replace references to "institution type groups" with "representative positions," to clarify that Chair terms are counted separately from representative terms, and to allow for self-nomination.
- The expected number of meetings per year has been adjusted from "3" to "2 to 3" to better reflect current practice.
- The approach to alternates has been revised, with responsibility for identifying alternates assigned to the Chair in recognition of the committee's current structure and the absence of defined constituency groups.

A question was raised regarding the utility of alternates given the importance of continuity in committee discussions. B. Weigel responded that, while also common practice in other BC ELN committees, alternates are particularly important in this context to support quorum. D. V. Kam emphasized the importance of regular members briefing their alternates in preparation for meeting discussions.

MOTION: To approve the amendments to the Terms of Reference as presented.

Moved: S. Rackover

Seconded: R. Chalut

Motion carried.

5. Committee Membership Update

D. V. Kam shared an update on the upcoming Advisory Committee membership turnover, noting that her second term as Chair is coming to an end. In response to the call for nominations sent via email, T. Gottschalk volunteered to serve as the Advisory Committee's next Chair.

T. Gottschalk was acclaimed as Chair and will assume the position on October 1. D. V. Kam will continue to serve as Chair until that time.

6. New Platform Launch

B. Weigel provided updates on the formal launch of Arca in Islandora 2.

The final migrated partner repository will launch on the new platform on June 18, at which point the migration to modern Islandora will be complete across all member sites. The final major component of the Arca migration, the aggregator site, is now ready for launch, with only minor visual adjustments remaining.

B. Weigel provided a brief walkthrough of the new aggregator site, noting the Arca Office's efforts in customizing its interface. BC ELN Project Librarian Kyla McCallum developed a branding profile and supported theming work. Committee members responded positively to the demonstration, commending the speed of the search functionality and overall presentation of the site.

B. Weigel shared that an announcement would be circulated to the BC ELN community shortly, highlighting new platform capabilities, the Ministry funding that minimized costs to participating institutions, and the collaborative work of Arca partner sites in establishing shared standards.

D. V. Kam invited feedback from the committee on additional launch activities or communications outlets. Members suggested promoting the launch through the CARL and BCLA listservs, a news release, and social media, noting the value of a coordinated communications approach.

7. Digital Preservation Coalition

R. Chalut introduced the [Digital Preservation Coalition](#) as an international membership organization supporting digital asset hosting and digital preservation through advocacy, training, and collaborative community initiatives. The presentation highlighted the Coalition's growing global membership (including Canadian members like COPPUL and Library and Archives Canada), and noted potential benefits and costs associated with its participation.

8. Admin Centre Update

B. Weigel provided a brief Admin Centre Update on the status of the service agreement with discoverygarden, noting that the proposal approved by the committee via email in May was approved and that the agreement came into effect on June 1.

Discoverygarden had been focused on addressing several structural issues in advance of the transition to the new agreement, including performance concerns affecting larger sites. These issues are now largely resolved. Additional monitoring tools have been implemented and work is ongoing to stabilize memory usage across the system, with improved performance anticipated moving forward.

In response to a question from P. Hohmann regarding service level agreements (SLA), B. Weigel confirmed that a general SLA with discoverygarden is in place, supplemented by an appendix that outlines specific tasks and areas of coverage. Work falling outside the scope of maintenance, such as new development, would require additional expenditure.

9. New business

There was no new business.

10. Next meeting

D. V. Kam thanked committee members for their participation.

The next meeting will take place in the Fall. The Arca Admin Centre will send out a poll at the end of the summer to confirm a date.