

BC ELN All Partner Meeting Summary

Sustainability: Surviving and Thriving through Difficult Times

December 13, 2024

9:30am to 2:30pm PT

Wilson School of Design, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

In Attendance:

Tania Gottschalk, Thompson Rivers University (Chair)

Ignacio Albarracin, College of New Caledonia

Gohar Ashoughian, Simon Fraser University

Billy Augustine, Coquitlam College

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

Lynette Gallant, North Island College

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

Darcy Gullacher, Trinity Western University

April Haddad, Justice Institute of British Columbia

Erin Howard, Camosun College

Faith Jones, Columbia College

Brenda Mathenia, University Canada West

Todd Mundle, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Christina Neigel, Capilano University

Susan Parker, University of British Columbia

Suzanne Rackover, Langara College

Trish Rosseel, Douglas College

Wendy Sokolon, Yukon University

Dawna Turcotte, Northern Lights College

Mari Paz Vera, Vancouver Community College (Alternate)

Hillary Webb, Emily Carr University of Art + Design (Alternate)

Lindsay Wilson, Okanagan College (Alternate)

Tracey Woodburn, Coast Mountain College

Guests (Virtual):

Dr. Dale Askey, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian, University of Alberta

Emily Keery, Trinity Western University, WriteAway Advisory Committee Chair

BC ELN Office:

Kyle Beres, Korinne Hamakawa-Woo, Sasha Han, Leah Hopton, Sunni Nishimura, Reba Ouimet, Cristen Polley, Myfanwy (Vaughn) Postgate, Sameena Sheriff, Casey Wagner, Brandon Weigel

Regrets:

David Alexander, Vancouver Island University
Camille Callison, University of the Fraser Valley
Dorothy Gebert, Columbia Bible College
Roan Janyk, Okanagan College
Vanessa Kam, Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Shirley Lew, Vancouver Community College
Shaun Longstreet, College of the Rockies
Iwona Mander, Vancouver Premier College
Roberta Mason, Royal Roads University
Alison Nussbaumer, British Columbia Institute of Technology
Steve Roe, Alexander College

1. Welcome and Overview

T. Gottschalk, Chair of the BC ELN Steering Committee, welcomed attendees and acknowledged that they were meeting on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt, Kwikwetlem, and Kwantlen First Nations. T. Gottschalk also thanked KPU for the use of the space.

T. Gottschalk introduced the theme of the day, Sustainability: Surviving and Thriving through Difficult Times, and together with S. Nishimura, led the group in a warm-up activity.

2. Guest Speaker: Dr. Dale Askey

D. Askey presented on his experience with budget cuts at the University of Alberta Libraries starting in 2019, which resulted in the loss of staff positions and the closure of two libraries. He shared strategies for managing these challenges, which included:

- Embracing collaboration at a national level as a more cost-effective alternative to institutional services
- Building a robust preservation program to prioritize preservation over the dissemination of digital collections
- Being clear and direct when communicating with staff, users, and partners about the changes and challenges that are happening
- Prioritizing strategic commitments, which are critical to meeting the institution's mission and to supporting staff engagement and morale
- Raising funds for the library via donors and ending negative or deficit philanthropy efforts

D. Askey answered questions from attendees, T. Gottschalk and members thanked D. Askey for joining, and then he left the meeting. In small groups, attendees were encouraged to discuss their reactions and insights from the presentation. L. Hopton facilitated a short all partner discussion afterwards.

3. Ministry Report

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

- The Ministry is working on two initiatives together with the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT): to improve transfer pathways for international students and to help students complete credentials by connecting EducationPlannerBC to BCCAT.
- The Digital Learning Strategy hosted their second Digital Learning forum in November 2024 at SFU Vancouver to discuss the sector-wide adoption of new technologies.
- The Ministry's AI Policy Working Group is underway, with two aims: to support PSIs in adopting comprehensive guidelines based on examples from within the sector and to explore opportunities for shared services and collaboration; T. Rosseel is a member of the working group.
- The First Nations Technology Council is researching challenges inhibiting access to remote learning opportunities (e.g. digital skills, access to technology, access to high-bandwidth network connections).
- BCcampus is in initial planning stages for an initiative to develop a professional development hub to collaboratively support training and learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and educators in the province.
- BCNET will be hosting a Town Hall for the sector in January 2025 as part of a joint procurement process for a new curriculum and calendar management system.

B. Ferrel answered questions from attendees and noted a possible Call for Proposals from the Shared Educational Resources and Technology (SERT) committee in the new year that may be of interest.

4. Strategic Framework Update

L. Hopton presented an update on activities to meet BC ELN's strategic priorities:

- Developing responsive, inclusive, and sustainable services
 - AskAway and WriteAway are undertaking sustainability work in consultation with participating institutions, Arca has successfully migrated the first site to new infrastructure, and Illume continues to implement software enhancements to improve the service for member libraries.
- Empower and engage our community
 - The BC ELN Office surveyed membership to understand their engagement needs and to inform potential partnerships and next steps.
- Pursue meaningful, reciprocal partnerships

- BC ELN staff continue to educate future library professionals about consortia through hiring opportunities and presentations to students and faculty at the UBC iSchool.
- With funding from Ministry, BC ELN has recently hired an Indigenous-led organization to lead the Removing Barriers initiative.

5. AskAway and WriteAway Sustainability Updates

T. Rosseel, Chair of the AskAway Advisory Committee, presented an update on the AskAway Commitment Models Review Working Group, which is reviewing existing service models and recommending potential changes to ensure the service's sustainability. T. Rosseel provided an overview of the group's representative membership, progress to date, and next steps including a meeting on February 5, 2025, when the group will present its recommendations to the AskAway Advisory Committee.

E. Keery presented an update on work to ensure WriteAway's long-term sustainability, including a survey of participating institutions to understand current needs and areas for improvement and growth. BC ELN members who do not participate in WriteAway will also be surveyed about their interest in the service and any barriers to joining. In the new year, the Advisory Committee will meet regularly between January and May to focus on identified areas for improvement and bring recommendations to the BC ELN Steering Committee in July.

6. Birds of a Feather Session

L. Hopton facilitated a "Birds of a Feather" session. Each table was assigned a discussion topic, and attendees were invited to join whichever table discussion they preferred. Two separate rounds were held during the session and attendees could capture voluntary community notes, to be shared after the meeting. Discussions were free-form and intended to promote cross-institutional conversations in which post-secondary library leaders, the Ministry representative, and BC ELN staff could come together to network and share ideas. Topics included artificial intelligence, the impacts of international student caps, decolonizing the library, and assessing library collections.

7. Wrap Up

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