

PLATO Annual All Member Meeting and Luncheon  
Wednesday, May 18, 2016  
Nakoma Golf Club, Madison Wisconsin

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 am by Board President Frank Power.

Welcome, overview of 2015-16, and 2016-17 annual election results

Power welcomed the more than 188 members and guests in attendance. He discussed highlights of the 2015-16 membership year, including expansion of offerings, increased leadership recruitment and development, and creation of the Diversity Committee. He recognized and thanked all Board and Committee members along with PLATO's many volunteers.

Power announced the results of the Annual Election of Officers and Directors, conducted online and by US Mail from April 20 through May 6, 2016:

- 177 ballots were submitted (online and paper)
- 176 voted Yes/Accept the Slate and 1 voted No/Reject the Slate of 2016-17 officers and at-large members consisting of:  
Scott Kolar, President; Janet Cabot, Vice President; Sybil Better, Secretary; Tim Otis, Treasurer;  
Ed Cothroll, Director-at-Large (3 year term); Kevin Gould, Director-at-Large (3 year term)
- The new officers and at-large members will begin their Board service on July 1, 2016.

Treasurer Tim Otis gave a brief summary of PLATO activities and finances for the past year and indicated additional detail was on the provided handout, "PLATO By The Numbers: Annual Report on Activities & Finances 2015-16" (copy attached).

Recognitions

Past-President Mary Boyd spoke about the importance of volunteerism to the success of PLATO. Honored for their outstanding commitment and contributions to PLATO were Distinguished Service Award recipients Helen Aarli and Lauren Blough; outgoing Board members Mary Boyd, Aleta Murray, and Don Reeder; and all 2015-16 Course Coordinators.

Fund Development Committee Chair Tim Otis presented an overview of the PLATO Education Fund Scholarship Program and recognized scholarship recipients: Maryan Mohamud, Spring 2016 Scholarship (in attendance); and 2016-17 school year recipients Jennifer Bradley (in attendance); Liza Gabrielse (in attendance); Linda Orié; and the Odyssey Program.

Adjournment

Power adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 12:05 pm.

*Program Note: After the business meeting keynote speaker Charles Franklin, Director of the Marquette University Law School Poll spoke on "Elections 2016: Whither Wisconsin?" followed by lunch.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Louise Fowler, Office Operations

*Approved by the PLATO Board on August 19, 2016*

## PLATO BY THE NUMBERS: ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES & FINANCES

2015-16

PLATO is a member organization. As such, member dues are collected and spent on a wide variety of activities that support the organization and its mission. Revenue is also generated from grants, donations to support specific activities, fees charged for some special event activities, and the annual luncheon. Donations to the PLATO Education Fund are not used to support PLATO operations.

Currently PLATO has about 1,100 members and our dues are \$60/year. During this current year PLATO dues and other revenues will generate approximately \$72,000 to support its activities. This does not include revenues and expenses for Special Event Trips, which are financially self-supporting. (They are projected to have a surplus this year.)

The following represents how member dues are used to support PLATO services. The amounts and % are estimates based on projections for this entire year (July, 2015-June, 2016).

**UW/DCS Support Services:** PLATO and the UW Division of Continuing Studies (DCS) have a long standing relationship, extending back more than 28 years. UW has always provided administrative support for PLATO. In recent years this relationship has evolved and, as PLATO has grown in size and variety of initiatives, become more complex. Forty percent of PLATO dues are allocated to UW/DCS to underwrite the costs of our office operations staff person, additional DCS services, and space utilization. Approximately 40% (\$25,200) of PLATO dues go to pay for these services.

**Courses:** At the core of PLATO are the courses offered by PLATO volunteers for the benefit of our members. Currently PLATO offers almost 100 courses during the fall, winter, spring and summer semesters. To support these initiatives member dues are spent to pay rent to 14 different facilities, printing and copying course materials to inform our members,, hosting Preview Events for the fall and spring semesters, and purchasing equipment for the courses. Members do not pay anything extra to attend courses, although they may be expected to pay for the cost of books or materials for a given course. Approximately 17% (\$10,500) of member dues provide the needed support. This does not include a \$2,000 grant obtained to support video recording for one of the courses.

**Special Events:** Special Events (SE) have become an important part of the educational/social activities offered by PLATO. These include, trips to museums and concerts, locally based field trips, lectures, and support for PLATO sponsored previews and lunches. This year there will be approximately 16 trips and 20 lectures and local events. Member dues are used to support committee operations, honorariums, & Global Hotspots Lectures.. Approximately 5% (\$3,250) of PLATO dues go to pay for these services. Individual payments by members totally underwrite the cost of trips. The cost of trips is totally supported by participant fees, not by member dues.

**Communications:** Communicating with members is a very important part of PLATO. Some of this is done through weekly emails and other general announcements administered by DCS. PLATO assumes direct responsibility for The

Persimmon and the PLATO website. Having our own website allows us to provide more information in a way that is readily available to our members in a timely manner. Information technology and Persimmon printing and postage account for most of the costs for this committee. This year approximately 6% (\$4,000) will be spent to support these services.

**Membership:** Bringing new members to PLATO and making efforts to retain members is very important for PLATO to continue to be a viable organization. These efforts include, speaking to various organizations, advertizing PLATO to the general community, having a booth at community events, recruiting members to participate in committees and other leadership roles, producing a brochure, and publishing a member directory. Approximately 2.5% (\$1,500) of member dues will be spent for these services.

**Fund Development:** In 2011 the Plato Board voted to set up a charitable fund to support returning adult students at UW who had significant financial needs.. The PLATO Education Fund was established at the UW Foundation in 2012. The Fund, which is now worth about \$133,000, was initially funded \$75,000, as a base, from general PLATO reserves. Over the past four years PLATO members have donated more than \$50,000 to the fund, all of which has been distributed as scholarships. Donations to and proceeds from the Fund earnings are used to fund scholarships. This year the Odyssey Project was added as a Fund recipient. **No member dues are used to support the costs of fund development.**

**Agora:** The Agora is a Literary/Arts Journal highlighting contributions by PLATO members. It was first published in 2011 and Volume IV was published last fall. This past year the cost of the Agora was funded from a combination of member dues, donations, and sponsorships from community organizations. Approximately 3% (\$2,000) of member dues supported the costs of this initiative this year. Going forward The PLATO Board has approved allocating \$2,000, annually, of member dues to support this effort.

**Administration:** The PLATO administrative costs include a variety of activities that are needed to maintain the Organization. These include accounting and bookkeeping costs, financial reporting, insurance, general administrative expenses, credit card fees, annual meeting costs, and general postage and copying costs. Approximately 17%(\$10,800) of member dues support this service during this current year. PLATO began the year projecting a surplus of 9% (\$6,130) of anticipated member dues over projected expenses. Our overall surplus is expected to be even greater because of prudent spending by committees and better than expected revenues from other sources.

**PLATO provides a host of educational and social opportunities for its 1100 members at a very minimal cost. This is due to amount of skills, time, and effort provided by course coordinators, and members willing to participate on committees and on the Board of Directors. We urge you to get involved, beyond taking courses, going on trips, or attending lectures. Leading a course or getting involved in a committee will further enrich you and make PLATO a better organization.**

If you have questions about the information presented here please contact me.

Tim Otis, Treasurer: tierneyotis@gmail.com