

DRAFT PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 19, 2013 - 9:30 a.m.

DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Tim Otis, Chair, Patricia Becker, Sybil Better, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Harold Green, Judy Sadowsky, Arden Trine, Wendy Kerr.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Tim Otis called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

II. MINUTES – The amended minutes of the March 15, 2013 meeting were approved with the noted addition of “and Sybil Better seconded it” to Section VI. B. on page 5.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT – Tim Otis

A. In Mike Lovejoy’s absence Tim Otis noted that expenditures for 2012-13 do not reflect the whole fiscal year. Mike Lovejoy’s spreadsheet (attachment to email dated April 16, 2013) includes expenditures up to March 9, 2013. The 2012-13 final reconciliation with DCS will be done in July. Mike updated the spreadsheet with the suggestions from Committees and Board members. The \$1,200.00 entry for “Retreat/awards/recog.” that appears under “2013-14 Forecast” should be in the “2012-13 Forecast” column.

B. The 2013-14 Forecast is based on 900 members (current count is 924), \$60.00 dues and a 40% DCS share. The \$1,848.00 surplus does not include expenses for new initiatives such as the development of a PLATO website. However, the \$6,200.00 projection for one-time website costs, which are more likely to be in the range of \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00, could be taken from the \$30,000.00 in the PLATO reserves not included on the spreadsheet. The 2013-14 data are accepted as the most up-to-date information available. Voting on the 2013-14 Budget will take place in June with revised figures.

IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Tim Otis

A. Tim reported on the initial reaction to the membership dues increase. The majority had no objection and even noted that “it was about time.” A few were concerned and thought it was indicative of a change in PLATO that they were not comfortable with. Tim replied to all responders and invited them to the May 22nd Member Forum that will take place before the Annual Spring Luncheon. Wendy will send a reminder to encourage members to take the opportunity for discussion at the open forum at 10:30 a.m. as well as a reminder to those interested in attending the luncheon. Some Board members also heard a variety of responses ranging from concern about the changes in the organization and “dependence on DCS” to was the forum necessary. There were some complaints about the funding of scholarships but that support no longer comes out of membership dues. It was noted that it would be beneficial to repeat the details included in the announcements made in the January/February *Persimmon* and in the Tim Otis’ President’s letter emailed on April 4, 2013. Some thought a budget summary might be helpful in illustrating the dues increase associated with PLATO’s growth and additional activities compared to the dues other similar organizations charge their members.

B. The pilot to provide administrative support for DCS is awaiting the installation of phone service. When that has been accomplished Wendy Kerr will train the initial volunteers Tim Otis, Aleta

Murray and Lauren Blough. This is an attempt to determine if the program is viable. If it does provide assistance for Wendy then there will be a call for additional volunteers.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Harold Green

1. Harold reported that the Curriculum Committee's strategic planning process is going well and is expected to be completed by June. Lauren Blough noted that there will be 6 courses offered during the Summer Interim: Continuing Philosophy, International Film, Short Stories and Essays, Poetry Writing for Seniors, Science of Happiness and You Can Draw.
2. Attendance rosters for the Spring 2013 Semester were received from all Coordinators. Lauren distributed the analysis of the statistics. Considering all of the factors that affect the figures, the results are only useful as a snapshot and an approximation of the percentage of PLATO members who attend classes. It was decided that Wendy should send a renewal reminder to those attendees who were identified as nonmembers.

B. Communications and Membership – Tim Otis

1. In the absence of Greg Bell and Scott Kolar, Tim reported on the website development investigation. Scott attended meetings of the Curriculum and the Special Events Committees to gather their members' input regarding expectations for an independent PLATO website. In his April 16th email Scott posted a prioritized list of the mentioned requirements and features. Tim met with Barry Orton and they agreed that development on the DCS senior learning site is not adequate for PLATO's present and future needs as our projects are not a priority for the assigned UW staff who provide the maintenance. On April 18th Tim met with Makin' Hey <http://makin-hey.com/> one of the development groups that has been identified as a possible service provider. Makin' Hey has worked with UW and non-profit organizations. Their representatives noted that many of the required features PLATO has named are available in off-the-shelf program packages, the site would be easy to maintain, and that we would be able to isolate access to specific pages for those responsible for editing. They also suggested that the cost of development may be much less expensive than we anticipated. Makin' Hey will send a quote. Scott, Greg and Tim will meet with the other identified providers for demos and to get bids.
2. Scott has registered the domain name PLATOMadison.org. DCS/UW would still handle membership and event registration and fees collection. Links would remain at the DCS site to provide a transparent connection. There was agreement with Sybil Better's suggestion that implementation should be done in phases.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Mary Boyd noted that two recent trips (Chicago Picasso Exhibit on March 20th and Milwaukee Art in Bloom on April 12th) made use of online registration. There were a few problems with registrants who were not recorded in the final trip list. The UW IT contact thinks a system reconciliation process will prevent this in the future. There were no problems with the April 17th *Jeeves in Bloom* bus trip to Milwaukee.

2. The Committee is planning summer and fall trips to Chicago for a Broadway play and an environmental excursion on the Mississippi with a stop in Galena. Committee members are investigating a mansion opened as a new historical site in Lake Geneva. The Committee will meet over the summer to manage the increased number of activities.
3. In an April 15th email Bob Blitzke announced the 8 theatre trips scheduled for the 2013-14 season. He also noted that the bus trips are attracting people new to PLATO. For the 2012-13 season there were “375 total registrations and a theatre customer base of 275 individuals. There were 66 first-time registrants for the Picasso trip and 19 for *Jeeves in Bloom*.”

D. Financial Resources – Tim Otis

Mike and Norma Briggs and Bruce Dewey have joined the Financial Resources Committee. The awards celebration event at 4:30 p.m. in Union South is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24th to recognize winners of PLATO (and other) scholarships. A fund campaign is planned for the fall. The last promotion by letter brought in approximately \$2,700.00 including one donation of \$1,500.00 in March for a total of about \$20,000.00 in the last year.

VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. The Leadership Committee has not met since the last Board meeting. They plan to help with the May 17th Board Retreat and the May 22nd Member Forum.
2. The Annual Luncheon follows the forum and it was noted that only the members attending the luncheon can cast votes for the election of PLATO Board officers. It was decided that a discussion of how to enfranchise the remainder that do not attend the luncheon would be a good topic for the Board Retreat.

B. The Agora – Lauren Blough

The Agora review subgroups have met to make selections for publication in Volume 3. The Editorial Board will meet on May 1st to discuss the layout and the next steps for getting this issue into print by September 2013. Patricia Becker said that some long-time members told her they never received a copy of Volume 2. It was mailed last fall so Lauren said that we would mail another copy if the names were sent to her.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Formal Board Approval for Raising Dues for 2013-14 – Tim Otis

In addition to the approval of the revised PLATO/DCS Memorandum of Agreement in March, it was decided to formally record a separate vote on the dues increase. **MOTION:** Harold Green moved to increase the annual PLATO membership dues from \$50.00 to \$60.00 and to change the split in distribution between DCS and PLATO from 70% and 30% to 60% (PLATO) and 40% (DCS) for the coming 2013-14 fiscal year. Patricia Becker seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Annual Luncheon and Member Forum – Tim Otis

The open forum for all members is scheduled for 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Reflection D Room at the Sheraton on May 22nd. Wendy will send a follow up reminder via email. The goal of the event is to answer questions raised by those who attend. Tim suggested that the Board President, President-Elect and Treasurer should be there as well as Committee Chairs. Other Board members are also welcome. One suggestion was to provide a summary of the 2013-14 Budget projection. Another was to present a short report of PLATO accomplishments at the luncheon as those people are probably the active members who would most appreciate it. Usually the President's Report distributed at the end of the fiscal year in the *Persimmon* serves as the annual report and the events at the luncheon focus on the invited speaker and the presentation of awards.

C. The Board Retreat – Tim Otis

The Board Retreat will take place in the meeting room at the McFarland Public Library, 5920 Milwaukee St., McFarland WI.

Directions: <http://www.mcfarland.wi.us/Default.aspx?tabid=361>

Meeting Room: <http://www.mcfarland.wi.us/Library/LibraryPhotoGallery.aspx>

The meeting room has AV capabilities and there is free parking. Lunch will be ordered from a nearby restaurant. Menu choices will be requested soon.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS – Tim Otis

- A. Possible Topics for the Board Retreat were distributed with the April 19th Agenda in Tim's April 12th email. Everyone agreed that the topics were comprehensive and timely. It was also noted that we probably would have to assign time limits to cover all of them in one meeting and that that would jeopardize a thorough treatment of important issues. Judy Sadowsky suggested that this be the first of more meetings, possibly another in the summer. Patricia Becker suggested that the discussion of the website might be scheduled for a meeting other than the retreat. Mary Boyd asked if we should discuss financial management for the future to eliminate or minimize the need to raise dues in the next 3 years.
- B. The need for a Treasurer to replace Mike Lovejoy was noted as a critical topic. It brings up the necessity for determining if a bookkeeping service should be hired to handle PLATO's increasingly complex finances.

IX. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Discussion of the Board's role in providing leadership and policy development for the PLATO organization was delayed for a future meeting. What are the Board's roles and responsibilities in this unique organization?

Meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

NOTE: Next meeting Friday, May 17, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough