

DRAFT PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 16, 2013 - 9:30 a.m.
DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Patricia Becker - Chair, Sybil Better, Bob Blitzke, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Mary De Wolf, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Tim Otis, Frank Power, Don Reeder
DCS: Barry Orton. Guest: Edna Canfield

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Patricia Becker called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and introduced the incoming Chair of the Membership Committee, Mary DeWolf, and guest Edna Canfield, Editor of *The Agora* literary journal.
- II. **MINUTES** – The minutes of the June 21, 2013 Board Meeting were approved.
- III. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Mike Lovejoy
 - A. On August 8th Mike Lovejoy emailed two documents: “Summary Financial Report Fiscal Year 2012- 2013” and the spreadsheet “2012-13 Operating Budget Final Report Details.” It appears that the budget was overspent by \$2,187.99 but Mike explained that there are deferred revenues from this year’s bus trips which will result in little or no deficit when the travel details are reconciled. Special Events travel cost \$23,000.00 more than last year but it was offset by revenues of \$22,000.00 with additional revenue not counted because it came in after July 1st and the beginning of the new fiscal year. There was a \$4,000.00 increase in membership revenues. PLATO promotion costs were up for the year. The scholarship expenditures were taken from the PLATO Fund not the 2012-13 Operating Budget. **MOTION:** Mary Boyd made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report and Frank Power seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.
 - B. Mary Boyd asked if any Board members see the invoices for the special events before the checks are written. She and Bob Blitzke keep track of expenses but they never see the bills received by DCS.
 - C. Mike Lovejoy is resigning as Treasurer. Patricia Becker nominated Tim Otis as Treasurer to assume the duties immediately. **MOTION:** Scott Kolar made a motion to appoint Tim Otis Treasurer and Mike Lovejoy seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. Mike will be in New York City from August 25th through September 21st. The checkbook was passed to Tim Otis.
- IV. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – Patricia Becker
 - A. Patricia Becker distributed the “Conflict of Interest” form and asked the Board members present to sign and return it. Wendy Kerr will keep the forms on file.

- B. PLATO has been invited to two events: The Madison Public Library's Opening Reception for the renovated Central building on September 21st, and Madison Senior Center's Health Resource Fair on September 12th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Senior Center requested that PLATO advertise their fair. Although we don't usually do this, the consensus was that Patricia should ask Wendy to add it to the Weekly Announcements because Madison Senior Center hosts so many PLATO courses and events. Tim Otis said that this is a notice that could be posted on the future website.
- C. Those present agreed to Patricia's proposal that future Board meetings be scheduled from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. as they frequently extend beyond 11:15 a.m.

V. FINANCIAL PLANNING (Future of *The Agora*) – Edna Canfield

Edna Canfield was invited to the Board meeting to address some concerns about the cost of producing *The Agora*. Patricia Becker framed the discussion by noting two views: a) *The Agora* is a vital part of the participatory aspect of PLATO and b) the journal provides an added benefit but it is not necessarily an integral part of the organization. Edna stated that the journal supports the PLATO mission and offers an outlet for the participants in two courses - Reminiscence Writing and Seniors as Poets. While encouraging the development of members' creative abilities, it also serves as a promotional tool for both PLATO and the UW Senior Learning programs. The professional quality of the production has been remarked upon by many recipients including those at area senior centers and libraries where it has been displayed. Approximately 90% of the cost is for printing and mailing; UW does not charge for the production work done by DCS personnel. Invoicing is done once a year so it could not be split across two budget years. Edna suggested that *The Agora* might be produced biennially if an annual volume is too costly. With enough promotion the two year cycle might encourage submissions from more new writers and artists. Volume 3 is at the printer. If Volume 4 were planned for two years from now it would be published in 2015. The possibility of applying for grant money was raised. Mary Boyd suggested the Humanities Council might fund it. Tim Otis said PLATO might have more access to grants once the 501(c)(3) status is approved. Other suggestions were: charge submitters, charge members for a copy of the journal, seek selective advertising, publish online and charge for print copies, use some funds from the UW Foundation account to subsidize costs. Scott Kolar envisioned the possibility of making space on the website available for creative work but it wasn't clear who would manage the postings. It was pointed out that the publication is well done but PLATO does not subsidize any other member activity. Edna was thanked for coming to the meeting and she thanked the Board for the time. Further discussion was deferred to the next Board meeting.

VI. DCS REPORT – Barry Orton

- A. Barry Orton said the PLATO-UW/DCS Memorandum of Agreement has been approved, signed and returned so the document is official now.
- B. The cubicle assigned to PLATO volunteers is not adequate for meetings and storage so a request has been made to the Dean for the return to an office with a door.

- C. Barry was able to persuade UW Communications to allow PLATO to use the UW logo (the official University seal) on the new website.
- D. Tim Otis checked with Wendy and the current membership count for 2013-14 is 657.
- E. Barry said printing of the annual PLATO Directory is being discussed.

VII. REPORT ON BYLAWS UPDATE – Mary Boyd

- A. Copies of the original and revised versions of the Bylaws were emailed on August 14th. A summary of “Proposed Substantive Changes in PLATO Bylaws,” prepared by Sybil Better, was distributed at the meeting. Mary Boyd reviewed the changes noting that the review committee thought the “Resolutions” section was nebulous. Some of the entries in that section were incorporated into the Bylaws while the remaining items would be more appropriately placed in a Policies and Procedures Manual. The review committee suggested that the Standing Committees develop and document their procedures for the manual. Tim Otis said the minutes should be reviewed for policies that have been passed by the Board. The Secretary should keep track of decisions that require revisions in policies and the Bylaws. Updates to documents could be done annually using this list.
- B. Article IX. Section 3. Tim Otis referred to the statement that Minutes for the Annual Luncheon/Meeting are to be prepared and filed by the Secretary but there are none on file. This is an important record of the election results so they will be done in the future. Don Reeder suggested that a short formal business meeting be held before the other presentations at the Luncheon.
- C. Article IX. Section 3. It was noted that the “UW/DCS representative on the Board of Directors” refers to Barry Orton and not to Wendy Kerr as the review committee supposed. Change the entry to “The UW/DCS shall keep...” Find all instances of the “UW/DCS representative...” and replace with “UW/DCS.”
- D. Article XII. Originally “Resolution 2009 – 2 Charitable Giving,” this was incorporated into the Bylaws with a revision to the last sentence. Tim Otis said the last sentence dealing with the amount of charitable contributions represents a recommendation passed by the Fund Development Committee but not presented to the Board yet. He proposed that Article XII should be removed from the Bylaws. Don Reeder thought that the statement regarding the charitable giving expenditures being drawn from the PLATO Fund rather than the Operating Budget should be retained in the Bylaws. Article XII will be retained but the last sentence will be removed.
- E. **MOTION:** Sybil Better made a motion to accept the Bylaws as revised and Frank Power seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Lauren Blough

1. Lauren Blough reported in Harold Green's absence. Curriculum is working on four projects. Strategic Planning and Guidelines for Course Selection/Rejection are taking more time than originally allotted. The Board has requested an evaluation of our future needs for advanced technology. We will consult with Wendy who has an inventory of PLATO equipment. The Host Locations Survey under development will list equipment available for use by PLATO Coordinators. We don't anticipate major expenditures during this fiscal year. As regards the Guidelines for Course Selection/Rejection, Committee members have different approaches to the development of the criteria, thus this requires more discussion.
2. Frank Power is planning the Fall Preview which is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18th. Welcome presentations by Patricia Becker and Pat Guttenberg will be limited to 15 minutes. Frank said the Fall Preview will be course-centric so all of the Coordinators will have 1 or 2 minutes to describe their courses. Tim Otis asked for a few minutes for a PLATO Fund message. If anyone wants to add something to the packets for attendees, send it to Frank.
3. Lauren mailed the invitations for the Coordinators Luncheon to be held on Wednesday, September 11th at Olbrich Gardens. She is recording the replies for a final count for the caterer.

B. Communication and Membership Committees – Scott Kolar and Mary DeWolf

1. Greg Bell emailed a report. Scott Kolar and Mary DeWolf reported that Patricia Herrling will come to the next meeting to show the Board the PLATO Power Point she developed for use by the Speakers Bureau or any member making a public presentation. See Mary DeWolf for information. The *Persimmon* was published on August 1st. Greg Bell will remain the Chair of the Communication Committee. Mary DeWolf is the new Chair of the Membership Committee. One person has volunteered for Membership; Communication is well staffed. Lewis Bosworth has offered assistance with editing tasks. Mary said they visited Oakwood East and their PLATO presentation was videotaped for repeated use at the senior residence. A trip to the Colonial Club in Sun Prairie is planned. Membership will staff PLATO booths at the September Institute on Aging and at the Alzheimer's Resource Fair at Monona Terrace in November.
2. Scott Kolar reported that the Task Force has selected a vendor for the development of the PLATO website. The contract was signed with Makin' Hey and a down payment of \$1,500.00 is due. The site is expected to be up and running by the Spring Preview next February. The Task Force is working with the Committees on the content. An Event Calendar was selected that added

\$600.00 to the cost with the maximum charge expected to be about \$4,600.00. Thanks were extended to Scott Kolar and the Task Force members Mike DiIorio, Don Reeder, Tim Otis, Patricia Becker and Greg Bell for their efforts in getting this project underway.

3. A subcommittee has devised a member survey that is being revised and should be ready in September.

C. Special Events – Bob Blitzke

1. Bob reported that the Special Events Committee has 22 members. They are divided into teams to handle bus trips, hospitality and clerical tasks.
2. The Committee will refer to the bus trips as field trips in the future. Bob said they plan to work with Coordinators on matching excursions with course-related topics or destinations where possible. There were a few instances where they ran a few short of 30 people per bus so Bob said he looked into including other non-PLATO groups, e.g. the Arboretum and the Madison Opera, but they regarded PLATO as a competitor. There are many new people registering. The long excursions to Milwaukee and Chicago are difficult for some members who don't like to get up so early so there are plans to offer some shorter Milwaukee trips that would include lunch or dinner followed immediately by the play. On Sunday December 8th an alternate pickup location is needed for the Waverly Consort trip to Milwaukee. Covenant Presbyterian Church needs their parking for services. Someone suggested the UW Credit Union on University Ave.
3. Registrations are moving briskly: 52 went on the Jungle Books trip and 55 went to Chicago for the Impressionism exhibit. The trip to the Paine Art Center and Gardens in Oshkosh has 43 signed up, Black Point Estate in Lake Geneva 43, and Pullman Porter Blues 52. 95 registered for Ragtime and the deadline has been extended. The Galena and Mississippi River Tour planned for November was cancelled due to competing Audubon and Arboretum tours.
4. The UW Global Hot Spots lectures have been cancelled due to a lack of funds. PLATO members have requested more lectures so Mary Boyd and Bob contacted Sarah Schutt for information. They suggested that PLATO might partner with UW to support the popular speaking engagements. There is a precedent with the PLATO contribution to a SAIL lecture series, but more information is needed regarding the financial commitment. Bob will come back to the Board with a proposal including costs. Patricia Becker proposed that the New Member Gathering precede one of the lectures. Aleta Murray is contacting Jerry Apps. Perhaps the New Member meeting could be scheduled for that date.

D. Fund Development – Tim Otis

A letter soliciting donations for the PLATO Fund will be sent in November and a brief presentation will be made at the Fall Preview. Materials will be available at the Preview but a lower profile will be taken in response to some comments made about too many fund raising efforts. Guidelines for determining the annual charitable giving amount will be brought to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of whether to formalize a financial advisory structure was postponed for the next meeting.

X. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

NOTE: Next meeting Friday, September 20, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough