

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 19, 2011 - 9:30 a.m.
DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Tim Otis, Chair, Marv Beatty, Patricia Becker, Greg Bell, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Ann Falconer, Harold Green, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Barry Orton, Frank Power, Ved Prakash, Wendy Kerr.
Guests: Vaunceil Kruse (Editor-in-Chief of *The Agora*) and Jeff Russell, new Dean of Continuing Studies

I. CALL TO ORDER – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

II. MINUTES – The minutes of the June 17, 2011, meeting were approved.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT – V. Prakash

A. Three documents were presented and discussed.

1. *MG&E Dividends* dating from February 15, 2003 through June 15, 2011 total \$8,603.93. The market value as of June 30, 2011 is \$62,137.87 indicating a 4 to 5% return (5% with appreciation) on the investment of \$43,600.
2. *PLATO Finances July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011* shows income of \$45,730.72 and expenditures of \$42,303.85 with a surplus of \$3,426.87.
 - a. The income does not include revenue with respect to summer travel.
 - b. Also note that 3 checks, totaling \$1,150.43, were not cashed as of 6/30/2011 and were not calculated in the expenses and checking account balances.
 - c. The 2011 opening balance of \$86,674.34 (reflecting MG&E shares at book value of \$52,203.93) will be reduced to \$85,523.91 when the three checks clear.
3. *Budgets 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and Proposed Budget 2011-2012*
 - a. V. Prakash noted a change in the accounting for the distribution of membership dues for 2011-2012 with the revenue line item representing 100% or the gross amount of \$45,000. The “Donation to DCS” in the amount of \$13,500 (30%) appears as a line item under “Non-Committee Expenses.” The donation distinction is important for PLATO’s nonprofit status and tax records, as well as the University’s receipt of discretionary funds.
 - b. The Membership dues amount is based on the 2010 tally of 900 members.
 - c. 2011-2012 expenses run \$62,050 with an expected income of \$57,100. The difference is attributed to the additional cost of producing *The Agora*, PLATO’s new journal, without OLLI funds in 2011-2012. See below VI. *The Agora*.
MOTION to approve the receipt of the three above-noted documents for the PLATO financial records. Moved by V. Prakash, seconded by M. Beatty.
Approved.

B. 2011-2012 Budget discussed, amended and approved.

1. The 2011-2012 Budget is a planning document that will have to be changed to cover the \$5,000 shortfall.

MOTION to approve 2011-2012 Budget as presented. Moved by V. Prakash, seconded by A. Falconer. Approved.

2. Mary Boyd suggested that quarterly budget reports be provided for committees like Special Events which has both revenues and expenditures to track. Mike Lovejoy, 2011-2012 Treasurer, should be able to generate that data within the present budget format.
3. Mary Boyd also suggested that a separate line item be established for “Lectures” in the Special Events Committee expenditures list to make it easier to keep track of that balance. PLATO covers the shortfall for the Spring Banquet but it has not cost \$4,000 to date.
4. The following amendment to the Budget proposed: Under Special Events Committee, Spring Banquet line item will be reduced from \$4,000 to \$3,000 and a new line item, Lectures, will be inserted with \$1,000 to cover 7 to 8 annual lectures.

MOTION to approve 2011-2012 Budget as amended. Moved by M. Lovejoy, seconded by P. Becker. Approved.

5. Greg Bell asked why PLATO is spending funds on scholarships instead of course development. T. Otis stated that it’s not an either/or situation. The PLATO Board considers the effect on the budget before making awards and the amounts vary accordingly. The most recent funding of two \$1,500 scholarships, as recommended by the ad hoc Scholarship Committee, went to 2 returning adult learners, selected by DCS from many applicants to their scholarship program.

IV. DCS DEAN JEFF RUSSELL INTRODUCTION

Jeff Russell, Vice Provost for Lifelong Learning and Dean of Continuing Studies, stopped by to introduce himself to the PLATO Board. He’s busy becoming familiar with DCS staff and looks forward to working with campus facilities and to extending outreach activities in support of the Wisconsin Idea. He believes the Odyssey project’s scholarships awarded to returning adult learners are an investment opportunity that addresses unmet needs. (In former years, PLATO has donated \$1000 to Odyssey.)

V. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

There are a lot of activities for the coming year including: funding development; updating the Strategic Plan; reviewing the By-Laws; setting up a planning committee in September to organize a PLATO 25th anniversary celebration in 2012; and devising a Presidents’ Luncheon to honor those who have stepped into the leadership role for PLATO.

VI. THE AGORA

- A. Vaunceil Kruse, Editor-in Chief, brought copies of the impressive new PLATO journal, *The Agora*, to distribute to the Board. The official unveiling is scheduled for the Fall Preview on September 21st.
 1. 1,000 copies were printed at a cost of \$6.31 each. One of the advantages of digital printing is that there is no additional setup fee for extra copies. Members of the Editorial Board are investigating ways to cut distribution costs by handing out copies at

the Fall Preview and at the Madison Senior Center when classes commence. The remaining copies will be mailed. Mailing costs run \$600 plus \$80 to stuff the envelopes. A master list will be used and each PLATO member household will receive one copy; all published contributors to the journal will get an issue. The Editorial Board has talked of making copies available in the community: at local bookstores, libraries, on campus, etc. It will be promoted on the PLATO website and eventually a pdf version will be posted there.

2. 2010-2011 costs exceeded the \$5,000 allocation. A small amount of income may be derived from selling the extra copies for \$10 each. The projection for a 2011-2012 production is \$8,000. The question is where does this fit in the PLATO Budget. The Board will consider an appropriation at the next meeting.
3. Ved Prakash extended a vote of thanks to all of the contributors, those whose works were published as well as those whose submissions did not make the first issue. Pat Becker noted that Fred Ross should get a special commendation for originating and bringing the idea of the journal to fruition. T. Otis offered to send a letter of thanks from the President to the contributors. Board members expressed their appreciation for a successful project and an impressive product to Vaunceil Kruse and the Editorial Board, and the DCS staff, especially Christina Finet and Wendy Kerr. Sarah Schutt is not aware of the dedication and it is hoped a presentation can be made to her.

VII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – H. Green

1. If Harold Green is unable to attend a Board meeting a substitute will be assigned from the Curriculum Committee.
2. Signing up in advance for courses at the Preview causes some congestion and one solution might be to limit pre-registration to making contact with the class coordinator via phone or email. There was a suggestion that the final report on classes be eliminated because it isn't particularly useful. Classroom availability is presenting a challenge as more courses are added and with the loss of the Madison Public Library space that will be closed for renovation. A new class on the Civil War will added in the fall. Wendy will advertise it via email as the paper list has been distributed.
3. A Coordinators' Luncheon has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 14th, at Babe's from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Liaisons will sit with their assigned Coordinators so they can get to know each other and so that the Liaisons can explain procedures and answer questions. There was a suggestion that PLATO membership forms be included in Coordinators packets. They could be used as "reminders" for those who attend classes but who are not yet PLATO members.
4. Some Coordinators have requested AV training. Some sites such as Capital Lakes provide very good assistance; other sites will have to be asked if it is available. At least one Coordinator was asked to provide equipment to help the hard of hearing.

B. Outreach – A. Falconer

1. Ann Falconer submitted her resignation from the Board and the Outreach Committee after 12-13 years of leadership roles in PLATO. She said she thrives on committee work but would like to pass the reins on and make time to attend more classes. She was

enthusiastically applauded and thanked. Tim Otis and Marv Beatty remembered being impressed with Ann's managerial abilities when they were new to PLATO Committees and with her dedicated leadership in the intervening years.

2. Ann will attend the August 29th Outreach Committee meeting to discuss interim plans and to start the January *Persimmon* planning. She has the names of some possible recruits from Tim Otis and Wendy Kerr will send the names of those members who expressed interest in the committee on their membership application.
3. Edna Canfield will staff the registration desk for Outreach at the Fall Preview.

C. Special Events - M. Boyd

1. Lectures by staff and tours of the west side UW Agricultural Research Station have proved to be very popular. While local activities have attracted substantial attendees, the response for bus trips has not been as successful. Special Events took over the responsibility and planned 3 trips. Two (to Japanese Gardens and Rotary Gardens and to the Packers Hall of Fame) attracted 30-35 people but the Taliesin tour had to be cancelled when only 20 people registered. Even the two trips with 30-35 people included non-members. Advertising may have been done too late; Taliesin may be too costly or too convenient for individuals to drive themselves; or there may not be enough interest in the activities preferred by the committee. Mary Boyd will send a letter to each of the PLATO Coordinators to say that the committee is open to planning events related to their courses that would enhance the learning experience to see if that generates some new ideas.
2. Mary Boyd and Judy King (Curriculum Committee Chair) will meet with Pat Guttenberg, Madison Senior Center Program Director, on September 2nd to work out the logistics for the September 21st Fall Preview.
3. There was no evaluation form for the Spring Luncheon. It was disappointing as the feedback is useful for the next year's planners.

D. University Relations – M. Beatty

The committee did not meet. Marv Beatty is recruiting new members. Wendy Kerr will supply names of the members who expressed interest on their PLATO membership applications.

E. Leadership Development – P. Becker

The committee did not meet. Tim Otis clarified that it was set up to be an ongoing committee of the Board. Greg Bell volunteered to serve as a new member.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Keep the liability insurance topic on the agenda. Should it be expanded?

- B. A special Board meeting was scheduled for **Thursday, September 15th from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at DCS, 21 N. Park in Room 7045.** Add Fred Ross to the participants list. The topic of discussion will be *Financing PLATO into the Future*. Refer to Marv Beatty's handout from the June 17th Board meeting. See the June 17th Board minutes for a summary. An electronic copy of the document will be attached to these minutes.

IX. NEW BUSINESS -

- A. The Conflict of Interest Statements were signed by all Board members and returned to Tim Otis. Wendy Kerr will keep them on file.
- B. The New Member Orientation should be planned for the fall to help new members get the most out of the organization. Too much time elapses between registration and January when the event was held for 2011. Wendy Kerr will supply Pat Becker with a list of new members. Deadline for inclusion in the PLATO Directory is October 1st.
- C. Tim Otis suggested that the discussion on marketing PLATO to current and new members should start with the Outreach Committee and come back to the Board.
- D. Wendy Kerr reported that 477 renewals have been processed and she has approximately 30 more to process. So far there are only 18 new members since April, but additional memberships arrive every day.

X. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Review of Strategic Plan.
- B. Review of PLATO's By-Laws.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Note there are two meetings in September:

1. "Financing PLATO into the Future" meeting will be on Thursday, September 15, 2011, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Division of Continuing Studies, 21 N. Park, Room 7045.
2. Board meeting will be on Friday, September 16, 2011, 9:30 a.m., DCS, 21 N. Park, Room 7041. Note: future Board meetings will be held in this room.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough