

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, December 2, 2011 - 9:30 a.m.
DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Tim Otis, Marv Beatty, Patricia Becker, Greg Bell, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Harold Green, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Frank Power, Judy Sadowsky, Arden Trine, Wendy Kerr.

I. CALL TO ORDER – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

II. MINUTES – The minutes of the October 21, 2011 meeting were approved.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT – Mike Lovejoy

- A. Mike Lovejoy distributed the “PLATO Finances July 2011 – October 2011” report. He noted that in the next 8 months or so we will be drawing down the amount in checking as bills become due. Some additional revenue from membership fees can be expected. The DCS share of the July - October member dues is reflected as an expense in the report as are the DCS direct costs owed by PLATO for the February - June 2011 period. This year’s costs for *The Agora* will run in the range of \$6,000 - 7,000. Last year PLATO paid the remaining \$1,561.47 after the initial \$5,000 for *The Agora* production was covered by OLLI funds.
- B. The book value of MG&E stock is carried on the report rather than the market value. Mike Lovejoy explained that book value is what PLATO paid for the stock plus dividends and subsequent purchases (reinvested dividends). There was a question re the “credit card fee.” Wendy Kerr replied that DCS incurs charges for credit card use and the applicable amount is passed on to PLATO. It was also noted that DCS costs will carry over into the first 4 months of next year. See “FY 2010-11 carryover costs.” Mary Boyd is able to track net costs of the bus trips and Spring banquet from this report which will be helpful for Special Events Committee planning.
- C. Pat Becker made a motion to accept the PLATO Finances report as presented and Marv Beatty seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Tim Otis

Tim Otis deferred to the committees as his topics will be covered later in the agenda.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Harold Green

- 1. The Spring Preview is scheduled for February 15, 2012 not February 22nd. An article on the event will appear in the upcoming *Persimmon*. Wendy Kerr noted that she has completed a draft of the “Spring 2012 Course Schedule” that she will present to the Curriculum Committee at this afternoon’s meeting.

2. Curriculum Committee members have contacted those people who indicated on their PLATO membership forms an interest in serving on the committee. The potential new members were invited to the December 2nd meeting.

B. Outreach – Tim Otis

1. The current issue of the *Persimmon* is almost completed. The Outreach committee continues its search for leadership. Reorganization of roles has been discussed. One person could handle overall committee administration while another could serve as editor of the *Persimmon*. Scott Kolar continues to manage the website.
2. Outreach members also discussed their role in the recruitment and retention of PLATO members. The name “Outreach” is sometimes confusing and the committee is considering a new title such as “Membership” or “Communication.” Their next meeting is on Monday, December 5th. A few Board members suggested that “Communication” was a better fit for the committee, and that if there were a push for PLATO membership in the future that assignment could be undertaken by a separate task force.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Mary Boyd reported that there were 2 busloads of happy people returning from the Milwaukee Art Museum after their trips on November 18th and 19th to see the Impressionist exhibit. 70 paid but 5 people did not go. There were no refunds as Mary had already made the reservations for 70. Another trip to the Milwaukee Art Museum to see the Cleopatra exhibit is planned for Saturday, March 31, 2012.
2. On November 11th Eugene Farley, MD and emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Department of Family Medicine, presented a lecture on the Affordable Care Act at Oakwood West.
3. Islam, Judaism and Christianity in the Middle East will be the topic of Joe Elder’s talk at Oakwood West on January 31, 2012 at 3:30 p.m.
4. Planning is underway for a lecture and scene performance by the Forward Theater company, and a docent led tour of the new Chazen Art Museum followed by lunch at the University Club.
5. The annual Spring Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, May 17th at the Sheraton.

D. University Relations – Marv Beatty

Marv Beatty reported the committee met to review the Appendix to the Attachment to the Memorandum of Agreement. The next task is to outline purchasing responsibilities

and to delete of all of the OLLI references. An article by Jeff Russell, Continuing Studies Dean, will appear in the next *Persimmon*.

VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. The committee decided that the November 1st Orientation meeting for people interested in getting involved in PLATO committees and leadership roles was not very effective. The turnout was minimal. Perhaps the best way to encourage involvement is with one on one contact. Course coordinators might be good resources for identifying potential leaders. Board members were asked to encourage people to participate especially if they know of someone who would do well on the Outreach Committee. Harold Green will get back to Pat Becker and Tim Otis with the names of a few people.
2. The New Member Orientation is scheduled for January 31st but that conflicts with the Joe Elder lecture at Oakwood West. It may be possible to move the Orientation to Oakwood and combine the two events. Pat and Tim will investigate and call Stephanie Burris at Oakwood.

B. The Agora - Lauren Blough

The guidelines for Volume 2 have been distributed and posted online. Wendy Kerr sent an email soliciting submissions and Vaunceil Kruse has submitted an article for the *Persimmon*.

C. PLATO Charitable Fund Development – Marv Beatty

Marv Beatty reported that the fund development is going forward on two fronts. 1) DCS Dean Russell is happy with the draft of the Memorandum of Agreement between PLATO and DCS so the next contact will be with the UW Foundation. 2) The December 2nd meeting with the accountant to discuss switching from 501(c) (7) to 501(c) (3) status went well. It was proposed that the status change be completed in 2012. 501 (c) (3)...(c) (7) statuses all designate nonprofit organizations but (c) (3) would expand the charitable arm of PLATO and offer more options in terms of fund raising and applying for grants. It may be necessary to augment PLATO's Mission Statement to comply with requirements for the switch to 501 (c) (3) status. There will be more discussion at the January Board meeting.

D. 25th Anniversary Celebration – Greg Bell

The 5 committee members - Marv Beatty, Greg Bell, Mary Boyd, Judy Sadowsky and Nancy Stolla – are proposing that the celebration be combined with the Fall Preview. The idea would be to create a festive atmosphere. There would be 2 separate events in one place and Monona Terrace is under consideration as the location. Judy Sadowsky

said they hope to get Zorba Paster, M.D. and Nino Amato for the event, one as Master of Ceremonies and one as a speaker. In the meantime Greg Bell will attend today's Curriculum Committee meeting to introduce the shared event idea. If they agree then the size of the audience can be gauged and plans can move forward. The Celebration Committee's next meeting is on February 9, 2012.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Continued discussion of revising the Fall Preview was handled in Section VII. H. above.
- B. Tim Otis reported that PLATO met with DCS on Wednesday, November 30th to review operations which resulted in clarification of issues and procedures related to DCS and PLATO committees.
- C. Wendy Kerr reported that there are currently 807 PLATO members for fiscal year 2012. That includes 112 new members. However, there are 238 people who have not renewed despite a reminder in the August *Persimmon* and repeated emails sent by Wendy. She suggested that a brief survey be sent to these people to get an idea of why they haven't renewed. Past survey results indicated that people were not dissatisfied with PLATO. Their reasons ranged from "too busy" to "moved away," but there is concern this year because the number of non-renewals is higher than usual.
- D. Some of the people who have not renewed their PLATO membership are still attending courses. This is apparent from the class lists submitted via the Curriculum Committee. There were some suggestions on how to address this problem as noted below. For many of the ideas there is no efficient way to coordinate membership and course registration and admission.
 - 1. Attach a late fee to the cost of the \$50 annual membership for those who don't renew by the deadline but still attend courses.
 - 2. Add a surcharge for nonmembers to the cost of bus trips arranged by the PLATO Special Events Committee. Mary Boyd will add this proposal to the agenda for next Special Events meeting and report back to the Board.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Strategic Plan – Tim Otis
PLATO's Strategic Plan was developed in April 2010. It's time to review major themes to see if the organization is on track with goals and objectives. While many goals have been achieved or are consistently maintained as ongoing projects, leadership development remains a challenge. Discussion focused on Issue 2, Goals A through C and Issue 3.
 - Mary Boyd noted that there is a set time of commitment for officers like the Board President, but that the lack of same for the Committee Chairs may be a

deterrent to attracting new chairs. Judy Sadowsky said that she was on the Curriculum Committee for 7 years and during that time there were co-chairs to help with the tasks. It was hoped that the committees would generate new leaders internally. Marv Beatty cited PLATO Bylaws Article XI, Section 3 that states: “The Chair (and Co-chair, if appropriate) of Standing Committees shall be appointed annually by the PLATO President, *after consultation with Committee members, and* with concurrence of the Board Directors...The term for Committee Chairs and members shall be one administrative year, although there is no limit to the number of successive terms they may serve.”

Proposal: The Board will formalize the process of appointing Committee Chairs so that it becomes a standard procedure. Perhaps a Nominating Committee could be appointed.

- Issue 3 addresses internal and external communication. After receiving a complaint from a member who hadn't heard of a bus trip, Mary Boyd discovered that there are 101 PLATO members who do not have an email address on record. To better publicize their offerings, Special Events has compiled a list of trips and lectures that will occur in the next several months and mailed a print copy to those without email addresses. The extra cost is minimal but the time involved is a concern. Arden Trine suggested a regular posting of future events in the *Persimmon* with a number to call for updated details as the time approaches. The discussion evolved into the question of how can we make better use of technology and still serve those members who lack access.

Proposal: Continue the discussion of investigating how PLATO can assist members and course coordinators in the better use of technology.

- B. Frank Power suggested that the Board get together for a holiday party in recognition of their hard work done throughout the year. Judy Sadowsky offered her house in Oregon (WI) for the location. Plans were made for 5 p.m., Friday, January 6, 2012. Please respond when Judy sends invitations so that she'll have an idea of how many people to expect. Bring a beverage to share and maybe a dessert.

IX. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Continue overall review of Strategic Plan.
- B. Review and revise PLATO By-Laws.

Meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

NOTE: Next meeting Friday, January 20, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough