

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 20, 2012 - 9:30 a.m.

DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Tim Otis, Chair, Marv Beatty, Patricia Becker, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Frank Power, Wendy Kerr.

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

II. MINUTES – The corrected minutes of the December 2, 2011 meeting were approved. “Milwaukee Art Museum” was changed for the Cleopatra exhibit to Milwaukee Public Museum on page 2, V. C. 1. On Page 3, VII. A. the reference to “Section VII. H.” was corrected to Section VI. D.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT – Mike Lovejoy

- A. Mike Lovejoy noted that approximately 90% of the membership dues have been collected and about 45% of the anticipated expenses have been paid. \$3,000.00 was paid for the fiscal 2011 scholarships and an additional \$3,000.00 went to cover the scholarships for fiscal 2012. PLATO had not been billed for 2011, so to keep up-to-date Mike will make a practice of drafting a check when the scholarships are awarded.
- B. The State Department of Financial Institutions sent notice that PLATO owed them \$30.00 or \$10.00 for each of three years. The \$30.00 has been paid now and Mike L. will devise a Treasurer’s financial calendar to track due dates for regularly scheduled bills.
- C. The tax accountant sent forms for completion to the 21 N. Park address but we don’t know to whom they were directed. They haven’t reached DCS or PLATO yet. Although PLATO doesn’t have to pay taxes the forms have to be filed by March 15, 2012. After discussion it was decided that the official address for PLATO should be: UW-Madison Continuing Studies-PLATO, 21 N. Park St. 7th floor. Madison, WI 53715.
- D. Although not part of the Treasurer’s report this topic seems most appropriate for inclusion in this section of the minutes. Mike Lovejoy asked when checks are written for locations that host PLATO courses. Wendy Kerr said most sites receive \$10-per-class donations. She does an annual count of the fall and spring semester courses and sends the tally to the Treasurer in late February or early March.

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 – Frank Power

1. Frank Power met with Mary Boyd (Special Events) and Pat Guttenberg (Madison Senior Center) to discuss details of the February 15, 2012 Spring Preview. An article was included in the January-February 2012 *Persimmon* and Wendy Kerr has included notice of the event in the PLATO weekly announcements. The details also appear in the “Spring 2012 Course Schedule” that has been distributed. The presentations by coordinators will be limited to 2 minutes each for first-time and 1 minute for returning course leaders. Frank will email the coordinators to inform them of the change in procedure and he will use a timer to enforce the limits. So many people left at the break during the Fall Preview that it was suggested that it would be a good idea to send Wendy a blurb for an email to let people know that this preview will be greatly streamlined. Two minute slots are reserved for Tim Otis, President and Vaunceil Kruse, *The Agora* Editor-in-Chief. Frank shared the news that the PLATO Chorus will sing their one minute course details. Special Events will offer the refreshments during the break after the presentations which are expected to take around one hour. Attendees will be encouraged to go upstairs after the break to get further information and to pick up handouts and books for specific courses. Ten tables will be set up and clearly marked to differentiate sessions.

Mary Boyd requested help with setup as the Senior Center custodian doesn't have enough time to do everything between lunch and the Preview. To minimize cleanup, brochures will not be placed on chairs but will be available for pickup at the entrance. In his introduction Frank Power will also request that attendees dispose of their trash. Coffee stains on the carpet at a previous event cost PLATO \$120.00

2. It was mentioned that a student was disappointed in a coordinator's statement that PLATO has a policy that does not allow political discussions in class. This may have been an overly strict interpretation of the Discussion Group reminder “Keep to the topic under discussion” or perhaps a way for the coordinator to avoid hot topics. But the reminders also include “Everyone has the right to his opinion” and “Don't shy away from hot topics.” Ultimately the message to coordinators is “Let's learn together, but always in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.”
3. At the January 6th Curriculum Committee meeting it was decided that liaisons would request that coordinators send in a copy of their attendance sheets after the third week of class and at the end of the course. The Curriculum Committee is working on compiling the statistics collected during the fall semester.

B. Communication and Membership CAM (formerly Outreach) – Tim Otis

1. The January-February issue of the *Persimmon* has been distributed. The next meeting of the committee is on February 6th when 3 new members are

expected to attend. Restructuring identified 2 separate roles: one person will handle overall committee administration while another will serve as editor of the *Persimmon*. It is hoped that the search for the editor will be completed by spring 2012. Scott Kolar continues to manage the website.

2. Members also discussed re-initiating the process of marketing PLATO and making it more visible to help with the recruitment and retention of PLATO members. Greg Bell is heading this initiative.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Mary Boyd noted that two lectures were scheduled for January. Dennis Dresang's talk at Oakwood West this afternoon was cancelled due to the weather forecast. Pending Dennis' confirmation it will be rescheduled for next Friday, January 27th. 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.
2. Mary has the contracts that have to be signed for the trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum to see the Cleopatra exhibit on Saturday, March 31, 2012. She will get them to Wendy for signing.
3. 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.
4. Also under investigation is a trip to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque. The coordinator of the PLATO course "Refighting the Civil War" contacted Special Events to request their assistance in planning a trip to Vicksburg in the spring for the 150th anniversary celebration. Mary is looking for travel agents who might organize this excursion as it will involve overnight stays.
5. The annual Spring Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, May 17th at the Sheraton.

D. University Relations – Marv Beatty

Marv Beatty reported that relations between PLATO and the University continue to go well.

VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. Pat Becker reported that 6 people have said they will attend the New Member Orientation from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Oakwood West on January 31st prior to the Joe Elder lecture.
2. A handout consolidating information on PLATO membership benefits and committee participation is being prepared for course coordinators. They

would give them to course participants who show potential for and an interest in PLATO leadership.

B. The Agora - Lauren Blough

Wendy noted that 52 submissions for the 2012 issue have been received. *The Agora* board reviewed timelines and procedures at their January 3rd meeting. Subeditors have contacted their reviewers and have plans to check with Wendy after the February 1st deadline to schedule time to make reading/viewing copies for their groups. Wendy Kerr sent email reminders soliciting submissions and Vaunceil Kruse's article appeared in the *Persimmon*.

C. PLATO Charitable Fund Development – Marv Beatty

Marv Beatty reported that the fund development is continuing with the 2-pronged approach. 1) There are 3 documents stipulating the relationship between Continuing Studies and PLATO sitting on the DCS Associate Dean's desk which are eventually destined for the UW Foundation. Hopefully these will be signed by the meeting scheduled for early February. 2) Fred Ross is working on the gargantuan task of completing the application for switching from 501(c) (7) to 501(c) (3) status. Once the fund is established Marv noted that a discussion about campaign implementation will be needed. The issues, including how to set up record keeping, will come back to the PLATO Board for resolution. In addition PLATO's Mission Statement will be reviewed for adherence to requirements of 501 (c) (3) status.

D. 25th Anniversary Celebration – Mary Boyd

The proposal to combine the celebration with the Fall Preview was presented to the Curriculum Committee by Greg Bell at the December 2nd meeting, but the committee preferred to reorganize the Spring Preview to see how the streamlined version would be received. Mary Boyd noted that the 25th Anniversary celebration is planned for the fall and committee members are investigating sites such as Monona Terrace and the Pyle Center. Mike Lovejoy suggested the Fluno Center which has underground parking. The Celebration Committee's next meeting is on February 9, 2012.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Continued discussion of revising course preview events was set aside for a future meeting.

B. Strategic Plan – Tim Otis

The review's purpose is to recommend change, modification and improvement of the Strategic Plan. Continued discussion began where we left off in December with Issue 4, anticipating and managing continued growth. Wendy Kerr reported that in the last 12 months PLATO's membership totaled 875 including 127 new members.

Approximately 40 have renewed since December's count leaving 185 people who have not rejoined.

1. Issue 4 Goal A is concerned with the fiscal impact of growth. PLATO is running out of sites large enough to accommodate member events where the space is free. Locations like the Sheraton include the room for free when events like the Spring Luncheon include catering a meal. Goal A will remain unchanged.

Proposal: The Treasurer will monitor spending and inform the Board if the budget is strained by event costs.

2. Issue 4 Goal B is concerned with the administrative impact of growth. Much has been accomplished. The Memorandum of Agreement was negotiated, Wendy Kerr updated the MOA Appendix, and underwriting was addressed. Marv Beatty suggested that implementation of the Charitable Fund could serve as the springboard for future review of this goal when administrative responsibilities for tasks like printing and record keeping are to be decided. Further discussion centered on using Wendy's time efficiently. We need to determine when PLATO members can help offset the additional work associated with *The Agora* production, with mailings, and acting as the RSVP recipients for events. Collecting RSVPs is useful for the organizer to gauge response as well as for the presenter who may prepare handouts. Mary Boyd will bring up the topic of assistance at the next Special Events Committee meeting. Perhaps the PLATO/DCS share of membership dues could be reapportioned to provide enough funds to allow DCS to hire student help when needed. What about raising membership dues?

Proposal: Monitor administrative tasks to determine when the current rate of PLATO expenses needs to be adjusted to meet increased demand on time and funding.

3. Issue 5 Goals A, B and C are concerned with the enhancement and expansion of programming. Goal A has been largely addressed with the increase from 28 to over 40 courses, introduction of January and February interim sessions, and many more bus trips, but the extension into outlying areas of Dane County has yet to be realized. Amy Overby from the Madison Community Foundation contacted Tim Otis again. (From October 21, 2011 minutes: The foundation prepared a grant requesting funds to assist libraries with the presentation of humanities programs for the community. If funded the MCF would set up an endowment to provide libraries with the money for speakers. Amy suggested that PLATO members could be resources for the presentations... Mary Boyd noted that this presents a good opportunity to address one of PLATO's strategic goals which is to provide programs for Dane County communities.) Tim Otis attended the Fitchburg Senior Center opening reception but noted that the space isn't suitable for PLATO courses.

Proposal: Tim Otis and Mary Boyd will schedule a meeting with Amy Overby of the Madison Community Foundation to discuss the possibility of expanding programming into other Dane County communities. Secondly, the Board will keep on the alert for good, stable locations for PLATO events and course sites.

4. Issue 5 Goal B is concerned with recruiting and mentoring new, talented coordinators. The Curriculum Committee has been able to attract many new courses of interest to members both during the regular semester terms and interim sessions. Committee members act as liaisons to coordinators and mentors for new instructors. The fall luncheon is held to recognize the valuable contribution of the coordinators and brings them together with the committee for a review of procedures and the exchange of new ideas.

Proposal: Continue to strengthen liaison/coordinator relationship.

5. Issue 5 Goal C is concerned with publicizing PLATO's core value of participatory learning and teaching. Mary Boyd said the core value should be emphasized at all PLATO events; it can't be repeated too many times in speech and print. Tim Otis will include it in his brief address at the February Spring Preview.

Proposal: Continue to emphasize the participatory nature of PLATO to all members at every opportunity.

6. Issue 6 Goals A and B are concerned with PLATO's relationship with UW-Madison Continuing Studies. Work on Goal A has resulted in the negotiation of the Memorandum of Agreement and scheduled periodic operational reviews between PLATO and DCS.

Proposal: Continue to review and develop agreements that promote long term planning.

7. Issue 6 Goal B is concerned with promoting a strong working relationship with UW-Madison as a partner in senior learning. It was agreed that this area needs work with emphasis on enhancing the contacts with UW resources for guest lectures, etc. Wendy said there's a UW Speakers Directory posted online. The second action "Seek out ways to be involved in UW planning, advisory and oversight committees involving senior learning" never got underway; it was associated with OLLI. The Communications and Membership Committee is investigating the possibility of participating in the UW Institute on Aging's annual colloquium. The last action, publicizing relevant UW learning opportunities for PLATO members, is an active pursuit with Wendy's email announcements and the PLATO/Senior Learning website including events such as Global Hot Spots and Wednesday Nite @ the Lab.

Proposal: Continue to seek ways to augment UW senior learning resources and get involved with UW senior learning planning, advisory and oversight committees.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Tim Otis asked for 1 to 2 volunteers to complete the subcommittee (Tim, Marv Beatty and Fred Ross) that will review and make recommendations for changes to the PLATO By-Laws. Mike Lovejoy volunteered.
- B. Frank Power suggested that a thank you from the Board should be sent to Judy Sadowsky for the wonderful holiday party. Tim will send.

IX. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Review and revision of PLATO By-Laws.
- B. Discuss the role of the Board in providing leadership and policy development for the PLATO organization. What are the Board's roles and responsibilities in this unique organization?

Marv Beatty noted Fred Ross' continued dedication to PLATO that extends beyond the roles he's had such as President, Agora founder, and now in with the development of the charitable fund. All agreed that Fred deserves our great appreciation. He's probably worn out a pen or two in service to PLATO!

- C. Mary Boyd reminded the Board of their role in the program for the Spring Luncheon. Are we going to have a speaker? Include this on the February Board agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

NOTE: Next meeting Friday, February 17, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough