

DRAFT PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 16, 2012 - 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, Harold Green, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Frank Power, Judy Sadowsky, Wendy Kerr, Barry Orton.

I. CALL TO ORDER – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

II. MINUTES – The minutes of the February 17, 2012 meeting were approved.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT – Mike Lovejoy

- A. Copies of the “PLATO Financial Position as of March 16, 2012” representing expenses and revenue for the last 4 months were distributed at the meeting. Mike Lovejoy reported that the MGE stock was sold on Tuesday, March 13th for a net gain of \$71,693.92. The check from MGE was deposited in the PLATO checking account. After adding \$8,306.08 from the money market account to the MGE proceeds, a check for the combined total of \$80,000.00 was sent to the UW Foundation to establish the PLATO Fund. The liquidation of the MGE stock resulted in capital gains but virtually all of the gain will be tax-free as it was deposited as a donation to the UW Foundation.
- B. PLATO’s assets total approximately \$114,000.00 and operating reserves amount to \$34,000.00 which allow for promotion of the PLATO Fund. Judy Sadowsky noted that the costs for the fund and membership promotion materials should be included in the next budget. Wendy Kerr sends the donations to locations that provide classroom space in March. Other upcoming expenses include the 2012 Spring Banquet, *The Agora* production costs, and scholarship awards. PLATO might overspend by a few thousand dollars this year but the amount can be covered.

IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Tim Otis

- A. Tim Otis reported that he and Barry Orton met with staff from the School of Human Ecology to discuss the possibility of employing interns starting in the fall to help with the tasks associated with the PLATO Fund. The next step is to provide the School with a description of how the operation would work. Two general tracks have been identified: administrative assistance and help with fund development.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Curriculum and Facilities – Harold Green

1. Harold noted that the Curriculum Committee is in the process of revising the Liaison Responsibilities. Liaisons have contacted the course coordinators requesting the first report of class attendance statistics for spring 2012. They will be collected 1) after the third week and 2) at the end of the semester. Lauren Blough reported that the committee had collected 26 of the 40 fall 2011 class rosters. From the partial data provided it could be determined that 713 people attended one or more sessions of the 26 courses and that there were 521 individuals among the total of 713 attending. More analysis will show how many people took 2, 3, 4 or more classes. It is hoped that at least a few more of the outstanding rosters can be retrieved, but even with 65% of the total, the figures show that a significant number of the members are taking advantage of PLATO's educational opportunities. A check of the membership reveals that there are non-members included in the counts and attempts have been made to encourage them to join or renew with PLATO. Capitol Lakes, Oakwood West and Coventry residents do not have to be members to attend classes. Judy Sadowsky suggested that it would be useful to gather information about how many people were unable to get into classes. The Curriculum Committee has also identified the search for additional classroom space as one of their pressing tasks.
2. Wendy Kerr received 2 calls recently from Mary Hanson at Capitol Lakes. She complained about miscommunication regarding room reservations. She wasn't expecting some classes while other classes that she had scheduled weren't being held this spring. Whatever the reasons for the confusion, Wendy suggested that the most practical solution is for the Curriculum Committee to confirm all location reservations in writing. The lines of communication should also be confirmed so that representatives like Mary Hanson at the classroom locations know whom to call on the Curriculum Committee.

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

1. The committee met on March 15th. They hope to have someone to take over as editor of the *Persimmon* in the next few months. Greg Bell is taking the leadership role for developing brand identification for PLATO and marketing it in the community. The focus is on objectives stated in the Strategic Plan. Greg and the committee members have begun to contact the various media outlets to promote PLATO events and campaign for increased membership. The committee will need assistance from a graphic artist in the production of materials.
2. It was suggested that a PLATO Speakers Bureau be set up to maintain a list of people who would serve as PLATO representatives to address community organizations. Tim Otis, Mike Lovejoy and Harold Green volunteered. Wendy Kerr just recently visited a senior home and took brochures and membership forms. She is willing to continue doing this.

3. Scott Kolar said the committee is investigating ways to expand communication capabilities beyond the website. They are also interested in working with the Curriculum Committee to explore different uses of technology for PLATO courses.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. The Special Events Committee's next meeting is scheduled for March 19th. Mary was told that someone from Oakwood West walked out of the Forward Company's recent dramatic reading. She will call Stephanie Burris at Oakwood for more information. There also have been some complaints about people having a hard time hearing in the auditorium. Oakwood has headphones available so Special Events staff will make announcements at future presentations.
2. The bus trips to the Milwaukee Art Museum for the Impressionist exhibit made an unexpected profit of \$517.00.
3. The trip to a Brewers game will have to be postponed as the person who was coordinating the event is unable to handle it at this time.
4. The tours of the new Chazen Art Museum are scheduled for 2 dates in May - 5/2 and 5/10 - followed by lunch at the University Club (limited to 24 for each date; one docent will be assigned to each group of 12). The \$15.00 charge includes lunch. There will be a new exhibit on art glass starting at the end of April.
5. Joe Elder's January talk on Islam, Judaism and Christianity in the Middle East attracted 160 people. On April 24th his film "Being Muslim in India" will be shown followed by a discussion at Oakwood West from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

D. University Relations

Relations between PLATO and the University continue to go well.

VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. Pat Becker reported that the committee reviewed goals at the last meeting. Several have been met. Recognizing the effort expended by the members as well as the leaders of PLATO committees was considered an important initiative. Two suggestions were made: invite committee members to stand up at the May Luncheon and organize a fall recognition event.

2. The goal of training PLATO leaders is to a certain extent handled by the Curriculum Committee and does not need to be duplicated by this committee. There was a suggestion at the meeting that the PLATO Board establish an Executive Committee, a topic that could be considered in the future if necessary.

B. The Agora - Lauren Blough

Nothing new to report.

C. PLATO Charitable Fund Development – Tim Otis

1. “Notes PLATO Financial Advisory Committee Meeting” dated March 6, 2012 outlining the plans for launching the fund-raising initiative for the PLATO Fund; and, the January 25, 2012 letter from Jeffrey Russell, Dean, Continuing Studies to Tim Otis regarding the “monetized estimate of the unreimbursed annual support that UW provides PLATO” providing information needed for the PLATO application for 501 (c) (3) status, were distributed at the Board meeting.
2. Mike Lovejoy noted that there are plans to start the Fund development with an announcement at the Spring Luncheon, then continuing the effort with the PLATO weekly announcements and separate email messages dedicated to its promotion. More details will be shared at the April Board meeting as additional methods of communication are confirmed. The campaign will be directed to PLATO members first and will expand to the community at large when 501 (c) (3) status is affirmed. The Fund Development Committee has plans to set up a separate system for processing fund donations that includes updating the website.

D. Nominating Committee – Judy Sadowsky

The committee presented the following slate of candidates.

Nominated for second terms: President – Tim Otis, President-elect – Pat Becker and Past President – Judy Sadowsky (both would serve for another year), Treasurer – Mike Lovejoy, Secretary – Lauren Blough. Scott Kolar and Frank Power were elected last year to fill out one year terms and have been nominated this year for 3 year terms. Harold Green’s and Arden Trine’s terms extend to 2013 and Greg Bell’s extends to 2014. Mary Boyd moved to accept the slate and Harold Green seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. Bylaws Task Force – Tim Otis

As the task force is working on the update consideration is being given to the possibility of discontinuing University Relations as a Standing Committee and

nesting its responsibilities within the Board. Fund Development could become the 4th Standing Committee. They will present their proposals to the Board in April.

F. 25th Anniversary Celebration – Judy Sadowsky

1. The 25th Anniversary celebration is scheduled for Friday, October 12, 2012 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Pyle Center in the Alumni Lounge which can accommodate 200 people. The charge for the room is \$300. There will be hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. After discussion it was decided that there would be no charge for spouses/partners attending with PLATO members. Mary Boyd will increase the original estimate of 150. It is hoped that Zorba Paster will be the keynote speaker. Judy Sadowsky has contacted him and is waiting for a response. A guest considered for special recognition at the event is Harland Samson, former UW Dean and PLATO co-founder. It was also suggested that Marv Beatty might give a short speech on PLATO's history. Perhaps Fred Ross would serve as the MC. Invitations will be sent to PLATO Past Presidents, current DCS Dean, Jeff Russell, former Deans Marv Van Kekerix and James Campbell, and to Sarah Schutt.
2. Greg Bell plans to do a newspaper interview that will focus on membership recruiting. He'll also mention the 25th Anniversary celebration but will not extend an invitation to the public at large. To advertise the event it was proposed that save-the-date bookmarks be distributed at the Spring Luncheon in May. At Greg Bell's request, Wendy Kerr opened a "job" for graphic assistance and a designer, Joann Schrage, was assigned. Greg can contact Joann at 262-0074 or jschrage@wisc.edu.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Spring Luncheon May 17, 2012

Tim Otis reported that Nino Amato will be the Guest Speaker at the Spring Luncheon. Tim will submit a short biography to Wendy and will let Mary Boyd know what equipment Mr. Amato will require. Mary will select the menu to complete the announcement for distribution. The mailing will include the luncheon registration form, the Nominating Committee's slate of Board candidates, and a Special Events announcement for upcoming lectures and trips. Mary proposed a \$1.00 increase in cost if, and only if, the price of the food for the luncheon is higher this year. Members would be charged \$12.00 and guests \$16.00. Greg Bell seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Mike Lovejoy noted that \$1,400.00 was budgeted for 2011 and the luncheon cost was \$1,150.00. Judy Sadowsky said Paul Hartwig suggested that Fred Blancke be honored for his many years of service. Jim Christensen will also receive special recognition. We'll keep Norm Risjord in mind for next year. Maybe a scholarship recipient who has benefited by PLATO's help in the past could be present as a testament to the value of the proposed charitable aims of the PLATO Fund. It was decided that the agenda is too full to add Amy Overby

from the Madison Community Foundation but it was suggested that she write an article for the next issue (June) of the *Persimmon*. Her plans to present humanities programs for seniors in Dane County public libraries could include PLATO as a co-sponsor and members as resources for the presentations. Promotion of the project could also be featured in PLATO email announcements and on the website.

B. Mission Statement

The “Proposed Change in PLATO Mission Statement March 2012” was presented by the Fund Development task force to reflect that PLATO’s mission includes support of its charitable arm. Marv Beatty noted that this is something that PLATO has been doing for ten years and the revision would bring the statement up-to-date and make the charitable purpose consonant with the educational mission. One alternate proposal was to make the statement more concise and broad by eliminating the reference to scholarship support so that it would read “...and promoting opportunities for intellectual and cultural enrichment for its members and other charitable purposes as the Board of Directors may determine.” Another suggestion was to eliminate the upper case P in participatory and to place “member-directed” before “participatory.” Mary Boyd moved to accept the proposal with the “member-directed and participatory” revision. Marv Beatty seconded and the motion passed 7 to 3 (M. Lovejoy left before the vote) in favor of the revised proposal. The revised PLATO Mission Statement reads:

PLATO is a member-directed and participatory learning-in-retirement organization committed to developing, offering, and promoting opportunities for intellectual and cultural enrichment for its members, and to providing scholarship support for adult students with significant financial needs enrolled in post-secondary education courses, or such other charitable purposes as the Board of Directors may determine.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Review of recommended changes to Bylaws at April meeting.
- B. 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 11:16 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough