

## PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, May 18, 2012 - 9:30 a.m.

DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**II. MINUTES** – The minutes of the April 20, 2012 meeting were approved.

**III. TREASURER’S REPORT** – Mike Lovejoy

- A. Mike Lovejoy will provide a template for preparing the 2012-2013 budget. Due to the fact that a significant amount of our annual expenditures occur in the in the last 3 months of our fiscal year (and thus don’t get reported until mid July) the template document will include July through February, 2012 actual costs and the last 4 months of the preceding year. This is the closest approximation that can be provided to show 12 months total expenditures.” This template, plus a LOT of notes and instructions, will be provided to the Board and Committee Chairs at our June meeting. Mike will then collect responses and prepare a proposed budget for action by the Board at the August meeting. It was noted that the Communications and Membership Committee and the Fund Development effort will require additional funds for the various promotional campaigns they have planned. Expenses for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will also be included in the budget.
- B. Mike paid the bill for the scholarships that PLATO funds. He will find out how the UW views re-endorsing the MOA rather than re-negotiating at each renewal period.

**IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – Tim Otis

- A. Tim Otis said that the proposal for an intern from the UW School of Human Ecology has been completed and a response is expected by late summer or early fall. Initially one person would be employed. They would be supervised by Barry Orton’s DCS staff and would provide assistance with Fund Development and Communication and Membership activities. A small honorarium may be considered.
- B. A booth in the Health and Resource Fair area has been reserved for PLATO at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> UW Institute on Aging’s annual Fall Colloquium. There is no cost for the booth which should serve as a good advertising vehicle for PLATO services for local seniors.

## V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Curriculum and Facilities – Harold Green and Lauren Blough

1. Harold Green reported that the committee members are building on the foundation left by Judy King and the work done during the past year. The effort so far has been to consolidate the work begun previously and to enhance efficiency of operations wherever possible.
2. A review of the class venues is focusing on determining what the capacity of each facility is and what the overall class capacity may be. Along with this effort the committee is determining the cost and conditions of each facility. A line of communication is being established for the facility managers to contact the committee should any issues arise which the coordinators cannot address. Although this is an ongoing process, the current work is expected to be completed in 2 or 3 weeks.
3. The procedure manual begun last year is being completed as is a calendar of activities for the coming year which will be published within a few days of its review by the committee. Frank Power has accepted responsibility for conducting the Fall and Spring Previews. The coordinators' luncheon will most likely be held at Babe's again this year.
4. Approximately the same number of classes, about 40, will be offered in the fall. By the next board meeting a complete schedule should be available.
5. Lauren Blough reported that the committee collected Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 attendance statistics. The data only provides a snapshot of the total activity but the results are impressive. In the fall information was provided by 73% of the coordinators for 29 of the 40 classes. Based on the records received, 785 people (representing 545 individuals) attended those 29 classes. 107 attended 2 classes, 38 attended 3, 16 attended 4, 1 attended 5 and 1 person attended 6 classes. There was more data to work with for the Spring Semester. Class rosters were received for 33 of the 38 courses, or 87%. 984 people were recorded on those attendance lists, 663 of whom were individuals. 161 attended 2 classes, 39 attended 3, 21 attended 4, 3 attended 5 and 1 person attended 8 classes.

### B. Communication and Membership CAM (formerly Outreach) – Tim Otis for Greg Bell

1. In Greg Bell's absence an emailed report was distributed. A new PLATO "Emblem Logo" has been designed and will be ready soon. It incorporates "Participatory Learning and Teaching Organization" and the website URL in a circle around the PLATO name. Thanks go to Joann Schrage and Wendy Kerr for their help.

2. Three new PLATO promotional tools are being printed: 2” and 4” round stickers with the new logo printed on the larger one, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary bookmark distributed at the Spring Luncheon, and a generic PLATO bookmark for wider distribution.
3. *Persimmon* articles have been assigned for the June issue. The deadline for emailing the text to Patricia Herrling [pjherrli@wisc.edu](mailto:pjherrli@wisc.edu) is May 24<sup>th</sup>.
4. There are plans for the inclusion of course stories as a regular rotation in the *Persimmon*. Note: There is a reference in Greg’s email to coordinators attending a monthly meeting which may mean the Curriculum Committee meeting. The idea would be to gather the details of the courses for these *Persimmon* stories.
5. Greg Bell contacted Marty Jenich who agreed to photograph special events, meetings, and ceremonies as a record of PLATO history. Pat Becker contacted Don Sylvester as a second resource but she hasn’t received a reply yet.
6. The CAM Committee is seeking additional people for the PLATO Speakers Bureau. Richard Steeves, coordinator of the “Better Energies” course, has agreed to be a spokesperson for his class. Coordinators for other courses are encouraged to do the same as it is a great advertising tool.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Registration for the May 30<sup>th</sup> bus trip to the Great Lakes Naval Station in Waukegan IL is closed. The 40 person limit has been reached. This event required an early cutoff for registration as the naval station has enhanced security procedures.
2. Three of the five Chazen tours have been completed. Mary Boyd noted that she benefited by the repeat tours as the different docents added new information. The last 2 tours are scheduled for the week of May 21<sup>st</sup>.
3. A bus trip to the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque IA is scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup>. An added attraction will be an historical tour of Dubuque. The next excursion will be to Old World Wisconsin in September. The committee members are scouting out little towns outside Madison for future adventures. There was also mention of another dinner/lecture combination featuring Indian culture.
4. Bob Blitzke, a new committee member, is the co-chair of a sub-committee investigating trips to theaters.

5. Special Events will connect with the Curriculum Committee to determine if there's an interest in coordinating trips with PLATO courses. Judy Sadowsky suggested a trip to the Lincoln sites in Illinois.
6. The Board extended appreciation and thanks to the Special Events Committee for the masterful planning of the Spring Luncheon for approximately 160 people. The bill for the event at the Sheraton reflects a charge of \$13.00 per person. PLATO members paid \$12.00 each.

D. University Relations

University Relations has been dissolved as of the review of the PLATO Bylaws and Resolutions at the April 20, 2012 Board meeting.

## VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. Patricia Becker reported the Fall Committee Member Recognition Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, the place to be determined - either Babe's or the Great Dane. All committee members (approximately 40) and the Board will be invited. The estimated cost is around \$400. Mary Boyd made a motion to approve the expenditure, increased to \$500 by friendly amendment, and Marv Beatty seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.
2. The Leadership Committee clarified their mission in regards to new membership responsibilities. Potential members will be recruited by Communication and Management while current members will be the responsibility of Leadership Development which will continue to coordinate the Fall Orientation for members.

B. PLATO Charitable Fund Development – Marv Beatty

1. A self-addressed envelope (for use in mailing to the UW Lockbox) containing the PLATO Fund promotional literature was placed at each seat at the Spring Luncheon. It was noted that the mail-in form doesn't say that donations are tax deductible. The Fund Development Committee members are meeting Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> to stuff envelopes to be mailed to prospective contributors. That mailing includes a cover letter that states donations are tax deductible.
2. Judith Strand, Assistant Dean and Director of the Adult Career and Special Student Services, advised that PLATO can participate more fully in the process of awarding the scholarships by helping to determine the qualifications and the amounts of money to be given. The Fund Development Committee members will meet with ACSSS and a report of the discussion will be brought to the PLATO Board for comments. Ms. Strand also noted the great need for financial

support and the difficulty of selecting such a small number of the 132 applicants to receive the awards. In 2012 there were 32 scholarships, 2 of which were funded by PLATO. Frank and Sydell Power attended the ceremony and were very impressed by the award recipients. Judith Strand said that while the money is much appreciated, the students are also grateful for the caring assistance they receive from backers.

3. The Board commends Fred Ross on his inspiring address and extends their thanks for the stimulating launch of the PLATO Fund at the Spring Luncheon. Two articles are planned for the *Persimmon* – one on the scholarships and one on Fund Development efforts. Board members are encouraged to spread the word amongst PLATO members.

C. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Judy Sadowsky

1. The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration is scheduled for Friday, October 12, 2012 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Pyle Center in the Alumni Lounge. Early PLATO members will be invited and Judy will send a letter of invitation to the Past Presidents. Marv Beatty will do a presentation on PLATO's history for which he needs a projector and Scott Kolar's help. The PLATO Chorus plans to sing at the event but has requested a formal invitation. Judy will send one to Nancy Wynn.
2. The draft program is arranged as follows: 5:00 to 5:15 p.m. - initial social gathering; 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. - Introduction of Harland Samson and Nancy Abraham, former UW Deans and PLATO co-founders, Certificates for Pioneers, Marv Beatty presents PLATO's History, Introduction of PLATO Past Presidents, Greg Bell presents the new PLATO emblem and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary bookmark, Fred Ross wraps up; 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. - time for visiting and socializing.

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Spring Luncheon May 17, 2012

Mary Boyd provided the Board with a 4 page recapitulation of the feedback from the luncheon attendees. From Mary's summary: 164 registrations were received. 94 people provided feedback. Almost all of the comments on the site, service and accessibility were positive. There were some negative responses regarding the pork, but the dessert was universally liked. The business meeting was praised for being efficient and well organized. The address by the keynote speaker, Nino Amato, elicited a variety of responses ranging from the speaker was "so correct in his message," "timely," "motivating" and "best luncheon speaker we ever had" to "way out of line, partisan and simplistic," "self-promoting," and "the message was (1) biased and (2) disorganized." Although the large majority of responses praised his speech, some felt it was "a political attack on some politicians and office holders," or

not on the expected topic of “Aging.” One specifically said they would have preferred to have heard about the “WI Coalition on aging.” The awards for Fred Blancke and Jim Christensen were appreciated and Fred Ross’ launch of the PLATO Fund was commended as a “fine job.” Suggestions for the future ran the gamut of “keep the Starbucks” to provide “information about PLATO as a local or national organization.”

B. Final Review of Bylaws Changes

The updates and revisions to the Bylaws were adopted at the April 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The final copy will go to Wendy Kerr for review and then they will be distributed in 1 to 2 weeks. The methods discussed were: send out electronically, post on the PLATO website, and include in the PLATO Directory.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policy on Course Attendance

The Curriculum Committee requested a policy statement from the Board concerning class attendance and payment of membership fees. Although it doesn’t seem to be recorded, there is an understanding that people can attend 2 PLATO classes for “free” but if they intend to continue the course they must join PLATO by paying the fee. Implementation is the problem. Coordinators don’t want to be responsible for enforcement, but Tim Otis also mentioned the problem with following up once someone has asked the class participant to join. Is the coordinator required to check after x number of weeks to see if Wendy has received payment? The problem extends to Special Events, too, where members have been allowed to invite one non-member guest to accompany them on bus trips. When class attendance was analyzed, the names that did not appear in member lists were sent to Wendy Kerr for checking against her up-to-date records. Wendy sent reminder emails to those who hadn’t renewed their membership. Having a policy available for all members seems to be a good idea, but maybe with the current method of class registration, identifying nonmembers and sending renewal reminders is the best we can do. It was suggested that we could consider providing the classes a community service.

B. Policy on Waiving PLATO Membership Fees

The Curriculum Committee also asked for clarification on waivers for nonmembers who cannot afford the \$50 annual fee. The problem with this policy is determining the recipients of the waivers. The applicants would have to self-identify and a general policy of accepting their request would have to suffice. Tim will bring a proposal to the June Board meeting. We could consider publishing a statement in the August *Persimmon*.

C. Proposal to Provide Support for Members with Mobility Issues

Tim Otis posed the question: Should a program be formalized within PLATO to provide transportation to PLATO events for members who have mobility issues? Mary Boyd said the issue has been raised within the Special Events Committee, too. Barry Orton, DCS, advised that if the event is an official PLATO program and PLATO organizes the rides then the organization is liable in case of an accident. It was noted that Madison Metro runs a bus on demand but advance planning is required and it's not free. Asking a friend for a lift to a class or event is ok so maybe the "HH" (for Helping Hands) could be printed in the PLATO Directory next to the names of those willing to provide assistance. Frank Power suggested that the information on city transportation services be included in the *Persimmon*. Barry will check with UW legal counsel for additional details regarding liability.

D. Other Issues

1. Mobility is also an issue for Special Events when bus trips are organized. Mary said they are considering using ratings based on how demanding the activity is. For example, does it require standing for long periods as at a museum exhibit? Barry noted that an alternative would be to capture lectures, for example, on video to make them accessible for people with mobility issues. This brought up the topic of the increasing need for Internet access and audio visual equipment at course host locations. Tim Otis requested that the Curriculum Committee be on the lookout for new venues with these services. Technological training for coordinators and members is another issue. Mary Boyd suggested that PLATO investigate the possibility of partnering with the UW to purchase equipment for the disabled and for training, especially when the 501(c) (3) status is approved.
2. A meeting for Committee Chairs and DCS will be scheduled. There is so much going on that it would be beneficial to review what each of the committees is doing and to reiterate how important it is to submit requests that involve Wendy and other DCS staff with enough lead time. As Judy Sadowsky put it "This is one of the dangers of getting too ambitious."

**IX. FUTURE BUSINESS**

- A. 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 11:07 a.m.

**NOTE:** Next meeting Friday, June 15, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Blough