

## PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, November 15, 2013 - 9:30 a.m.  
DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Patricia Becker - Chair, Greg Bell, Sybil Better, Bob Blitzke, Lauren Blough, Lewis Bosworth, Mary Boyd, Mary De Wolf, Harold Green, Aleta Murray, Tim Otis, Frank Power, Don Reeder  
DCS: Not Present  
Handouts: "PLATO Copying Policy – Proposal 11/15/2013"

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Patricia Becker called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and introduced Lewis Bosworth, the new Curriculum Committee representative. Lewis is the new Curriculum Committee Co-chair replacing Harold Green, who resigned.

**II. MINUTES** – The minutes of the October 18, 2013 Board Meeting were approved.

**III. TREASURER’S REPORT** – Tim Otis

Tim Otis noted that a few more bills have been received since his review of the financial report for the first quarter at the October Board meeting. The amount being spent on the website is over-budget and Tim brought that to the attention of the Committee working on development. The discussion with DCS continues regarding questions about some disputable charges. Tim said the situation should be resolved in the next month or two.

**IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – Patricia Becker

A. Patricia Becker outlined the issue regarding the use of the copy machine at DCS that is detailed in the handout. Essentially, PLATO’s growth in courses and coordinators is causing concerns about the volume of copying and the interruptions directed to DCS staff. Patricia Becker presented the proposed PLATO Copying Policy:

1. Committees:
  - a. Use of the DCS copy machine for committee work is legitimate.
  - b. To the extent possible, committee materials should be distributed to committee members by email.
2. Courses:
  - a. Coordinator use of the DCS machine for class organization, e.g. syllabi, class lists, is legitimate.
  - b. Coordinators should communicate with and distribute handouts to class members as much as possible by email.
  - c. Class members should be asked – and expect – to contribute to the costs of class materials.
  - d. Copyright law must be respected.

3. Use of copy machine:
  - a. Number of copies and copier should be recorded on sheet at the copy machine.
  - b. Committee members and course coordinators should consolidate copying as much as possible to reduce the number of visits to the DCS copy machine.
  - c. To the extent reasonable, for each committee and course there should be a designated ‘copier’ who will be familiar with the machine, where paper is stored, etc.

**MOTION:** Patricia Becker made a motion to accept the “PLATO Copying Policy” as outlined above and Mary Boyd seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. The Committee Chairs will pass this information to their members and the Curriculum Committee will pass it on to the Coordinators. Publication possibilities are the website and the *Persimmon*. In reply to a question from Bob Blitzke, this policy will not change the practice of mailing print copies to members without email accounts.

Discussion followed on the issue of copyright compliance (Section 2.d. above). Lauren Blough suggested that guidelines could be produced for the Coordinators but that the Curriculum Committee members shouldn’t be expected to be the arbiters regarding questions of compliance. Lewis Bosworth stated that the onus is on the user and Harold Green indicated that PLATO should be covered by the statement of policy. Don Reeder suggested that an FAQ could be designed as a guide and Sybil Better noted that university websites are good resources for information.

- B. Following the above adoption, it was noted that there has to be a place to archive and organize these policies for easy access. The Bylaws Review Committee suggested at the August Board meeting that the Standing Committees develop and document their procedures for a Policies Manual that would include the “Resolutions” section of the Bylaws. These rules on copying form an operational policy that has two components: 1) one that applies to committees and 2) one that applies to coordinators.
- C. The Board Retreat is scheduled for Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Fitchburg Library. Patricia will investigate lunch sources and will circulate the selections to gather attendees’ choices. There will be some changes in DCS staff assignments that could affect the PLATO-DCS relationship. Since Barry Orton is out of town and could not make today’s meeting, that discussion will be delayed until the retreat when we should have more information.
- D. The Holiday Lunch will take place at Biaggi’s on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m.
- E. Membership has reached 860.

**V. DCS REPORT** – No report as Barry Orton is out of town.

## **VI. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Lewis Bosworth

1. Lewis reported that the Spring Luncheon at the Nakoma Country Club on May 21<sup>st</sup> was announced at the November meeting. The location of the next Coordinators Luncheon is being discussed and Mary Boyd suggested the Arboretum as a possible site.
2. Most Coordinators were slow to respond to the requests for Course Descriptions for the 2014 Spring Semester. They were due on November 1<sup>st</sup> and only 9 of 38 were received by October 30<sup>th</sup>. There was a brief discussion on how to handle this issue going forward – perhaps print “no course information available at time of printing” for those who do not meet the deadline and who do not respond to repeated reminders. Over time the website should provide course coordinators with the ability to update their information in a timely manner. In relation to Course Proposals, it was decided that the form will be revised to make sure that there are fields to collect all of the pertinent information from the person submitting the proposal.
3. The Curriculum Committee’s adopted “Course Selection/Rejection Policy” was distributed as an addendum to the Board Agenda in Patricia Becker’s November 11<sup>th</sup> email. It stated: “The Curriculum Committee anticipates approving proposals for new and ongoing courses submitted by potential and current course coordinators. The committee reserves the right to reject any course. The decision will be based on a review of the course's content, the interests or experience of the individual coordinating the course, and his/her willingness to abide by PLATO policies in leading the course.” **MOTION:** Lewis Bosworth made a motion that the above policy which was adopted by the Curriculum Committee on November 1, 2013 be approved by the Board. Lauren Blough seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.
4. One Coordinator said two of his participants left without attending a class because they could not find parking at the Overture Lot next to the Madison Senior Center. There seem to be fewer spaces available since the library re-opened. Lauren said it was suggested that there might be availability in the Metropolitan Place Lot across the street, but the Curriculum Committee would welcome other suggestions.

B. Communication – Greg Bell

1. Scott Kolar was out of town and Greg Bell reported that Patricia Herrling, Gail Gordon and Scott Kolar met with Makin’ Hey for the first round of training. Patricia Herrling will train Mike DiIorio, Tim Otis and Greg Bell on editing. Then the next group, including Don Reeder, Jeff Ekola and John Koch, will be trained in Wordpress. Much of the DCS website content has been copied to the PLATO pages. The course content will need updating. In Phase 3 the course pages will be available for the coordinators to add notes, links etc. The launch,

advertized in a flyer that accompanied the Directory, is planned for December 1<sup>st</sup> but the site will be live the week before to allow for tweaks. A colorful poster is in the works. Promotional material will be posted in senior centers, libraries, Woodman's and other community locations. There are other plans for replacing the outdated brochure with an 8 x 11 handout that would direct readers to the website. The printed handout would be distributed at meetings with potential members. There were some questions about costs for printing the materials. Lewis Bosworth expressed concern about the move to reliance on online distribution of PLATO information. He said we can't require members to have or use PCs to access the digital sources. Mary DeWolf noted that Membership Committee's experience with people they meet at membership drives indicates that most are avid users of PCs and that they don't want to be bothered with paper forms and stamps. Libraries and senior complexes have PCs available to the public or for residents. Tim Otis pointed out that the discussion was mixing two approaches: 1) recruiting and the mechanisms for attracting new members and 2) accommodating existing members who do not have email access by sending print copies of information. We have no plans to ignore the second group.

2. The PLATO Survey is done. Greg said there were 250 responses including 75 on paper. He thinks the data will provide a good benchmark idea about courses. He hopes to have the compiled report by the retreat.
3. Patricia Herrling updated the PLATO Power Point presentation. All of the thumb drives will have to be collected to get the new version installed.

C. Membership – Mary DeWolf

1. The Membership Committee hosted an orientation for new members on November 6<sup>th</sup> at Oakwood West. It was a great success with 27 new PLATO members attending.
2. Discussion of the PLATO Directory was the first order of business at the Membership meeting. The committee's consensus was that the information should be available for online access only. There are software modules that would secure the data by requiring a password (available only to members) and only allow the user to key in one name at a time. They could not retrieve lists of names. As noted in the President's Report above in IV. B., members are concerned about their privacy and about the potential use of the Directory as a source for marketers or identity thieves. In addition, it costs \$6,000.00 to print and mail the Directory.
3. The Membership Committee will send reminders to PLATO members who haven't renewed for 2014. Mary has a list of 226 names. Lauren will give Mary her list of those who haven't joined or renewed but are attending PLATO classes once she has checked it against the database at DCS. Tim Otis will send

Mary the letters used in the past to remind people that they haven't renewed. One of the letters also applies to those who are attending classes but who haven't joined PLATO.

4. Norma Standing, James Yarbrough and Mary DeWolf will represent PLATO at the November 21<sup>st</sup> Alzheimer's Conference at Monona Terrace. Two promotional visits are planned for February and one to American Family in March. James Yarbrough will make a list of active senior centers for their next meeting in February.
5. Kay Ahern has an idea for a new coordinator. Mary said Membership will contact the senior residences to suggest that they find coordinators within their population. Don Reeder noted that the emphasis might shift the balance so that those sites might fill their classes with residents and not have room for PLATO members. Aleta Murray asked if we pay the senior center host locations. The answer is that some (e.g. Capitol Lakes, Oakwood and Coventry) make the space available for free. In exchange their residents can attend classes without being members of PLATO. Other sites (e.g. Madison Senior Center) are paid \$10.00 per course per session or a total of \$100.00 for one course that meets for 10 weeks. There is one exception – Upper Iowa University – that charges a higher fee.

D. Special Events – Mary Boyd, Aleta Murray and Bob Blitzke

1. Mary Boyd reported that there were 150 people at the November 6<sup>th</sup> Jerry Apps event. 80 registered for and 90 attended Linn Roth's talk on "Ways We Study the Brain and Our Senses" on November 12<sup>th</sup>. There are 90+ registered for the Affordable Care Act lecture on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. There are usually only about 10 or 15 Oakwood residents who attend. On November 8<sup>th</sup> the first co-sponsored Global Hotspots lecture by Professor David Canon attracted 150 people and it was estimated that half were PLATO members. The Committee is working on 5 or 6 ideas for the spring. Aleta said they have scheduled Luke Fuszard who will talk about Wisconsin elections and voting. He was highly recommended by Booth Fowler.
2. Bob Blitzke reported that 25 people attended the Thomas Sully exhibit at the Milwaukee Art Museum on October 30<sup>th</sup> and the bus returned at 5:00 p.m. making this one of the shorter trips. On November 13<sup>th</sup> 42 went to *Art and Appetite* in Chicago. The upcoming events scheduled for 2013 are: December 11<sup>th</sup> *Noises Off* in Milwaukee with registrations closed at 46, and on December 18<sup>th</sup> the radio version of *It's a Wonderful Life* with 11 signed up. There are 9 registered for the January 29<sup>th</sup> "End the Rainbow" field trip and it was just advertised. Tim Otis said he knew very few people on the bus trip he took. It seems to indicate that PLATO is serving two different segments of the membership: those who take field trips and those who attend courses.

3. One of the points of discussion at the next Special Events Committee meeting will be how many events the members can comfortably handle per year. Bob said their responsibility for the Fall and Spring Previews and the Annual Luncheon are primarily for hospitality. The Curriculum Committee organizes the Previews and the Board sets the agenda for the Annual Luncheon.

E. Fund Development – Tim Otis

The annual fund raising letter soliciting contributions to the PLATO Fund has been sent. Tim said the Committee had an envelope stuffing “party” to prepare 900+ letters for mailing. Other options for donors such as estate planning might be feasible in the future. The UW has not reported the fund balance as of October but for the first quarter in July the amount was \$102,164.00.

## **VII. BOARD RETREAT AGENDA**

Patricia Becker listed three main areas for investigation at the December 13<sup>th</sup> Board Retreat:

- A. Clarifying PLATO’s relationship with DCS.
- B. Long-range planning issues – Committees were asked to submit one or two issues that they regard as the most important for inclusion in a planning for growth strategy by December 6<sup>th</sup>.
- C. Determining Agora funding for the future.

Tim Otis also suggested that consideration has to be given to how much is PLATO going digital. Don Reeder said we’re at a watershed in communications and the reactions to the website will be instructive. How well is it working? Should we establish alternatives? Frank Power said the power of an organization is in its social interaction and he is concerned with PLATO’s emphasis on digital communication and the educational aspect of development at the expense of the social.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

**NOTE:** Next meeting is the Board Retreat Friday, December 13, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Fitchburg Public Library 5530 Lacy Road, Fitchburg.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Blough