

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, October 18, 2013 - 9:30 a.m.

DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Patricia Becker - Chair, Bob Blitzke, Lauren Blough, Sybil Better, Mary Boyd, Mary De Wolf, Harold Green, Scott Kolar, Aleta Murray, Tim Otis, Frank Power, Don Reeder
DCS: Barry Orton
Handouts: 2013-14 Planning Budget from the Treasurer

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Patricia Becker called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.
- II. **MINUTES** – The minutes of the September 20, 2013 Board Meeting were approved.
- III. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Tim Otis
 - A. Tim Otis presented the Planning Budget for 2013-14. See handout. It is an estimate of revenues and expenditures based on past budgets and taking into account new initiatives. It anticipates revenues of \$60,000.00 from membership dues (1000 members x \$60.00) and additional income from the Special Events field trips, Annual Luncheon, *Agora* sales, interest and a miscellaneous place holder for a total estimate of \$95,025.00. Expenditures, including \$7,000.00 for production of this year’s Volume 3 *Agora*, copying at DCS, Previews, Special Luncheons, and the costs associated with Special Events field trips, have been added to the operating budget expenses that include the donations that are given to host locations and the 40% that is donated to DCS. There is a Central Services Overhead charge in the amount of \$4,000.00 that Tim is discussing with DCS. Also noted is the \$600.00 for PLATO Fund promotion that will be paid initially by PLATO in the course of the year but reimbursed by the Fund. Anticipated expenditures total \$99,822.00, a \$4,800.00 shortfall. Aleta Murray asked if the administrative assistance provided by PLATO volunteers and our management of the new PLATO website will lower the amount paid to DCS. They will not affect the DCS share primarily because Barry Orton provided an estimated value of the services provided to PLATO that was in excess of the 40% donation. A donation is given to DCS so that the funds are unrestricted and no set fees are associated with the services they provide. Don Reeder asked if the Central Services Overhead fee is also a “donation.” Tim noted that: a) the overhead fee is assessed on all contractees; b) the MOA does not mention this fee; c) the charge did not appear in PLATO records until 2011; and d) 3% of the current costs were assessed for the previous year. Tim is discussing the issues with Wendy Kerr and Barry Orton. **MOTION:** Don Reeder made a motion that the Board adopt the 2013-14 Planning Budget presented by the Treasurer, Tim Otis, with a correction noted by Mary Boyd to the column heading for the first quarter. It should read “July-Sept 13” instead of “Aug-Sept13.” Aleta Murray seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

- B. Further discussion concerned additional details. Mary Boyd asked whether we would reach the expected 1000 members and the \$60,000.00 projected revenue. The current count is 827 and the membership fee was raised to \$60 this year so the anticipated revenue of \$60,000.00 seems likely. Harold Green asked what the insurance covered. It covers malfeasance on the part of the President and Treasurer; to add other Board members would cost \$100.00 per person. Bob Blitzke asked about bonding insurance but that isn't a concern at this point. He also noted that after the initial planning for the field trips when the UW loans PLATO the funds to cover tickets etc., there may be changes that result in more costs by the time the event occurs. Tim said reconciliation is done on a quarterly basis so the trips are not taken in to account separately from planning through completion.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Patricia Becker & Frank Power

- A. Patricia Becker suggested that we should schedule another retreat. We usually don't meet in December. It was decided that the retreat will be scheduled for Friday, December 13th from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Patricia will investigate locations.
- B. Frank Power proposed a holiday gathering in December. It was agreed that December 6th at 6:00 p.m. would be a good time for most. Frank will see if Biaggi's is available. Note: Biaggi's did not have space for the group at 6:00 p.m. on December 6th. The reservation was made for lunch on that date. The Curriculum Committee will have to re-schedule their meeting as several on the Board are also members of the committee.

V. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM UPDATE – Aleta Murray

Aleta Murray reported that six volunteers have been trained to help with PLATO clerical tasks. They are scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays with Aleta and Lauren providing backup. Wendy said that activity is slowing down with the bulk of PLATO members registered. The volunteers will call DCS to make sure they're needed on their assigned day and the project schedule will be re-assessed in November. December is expected to be busy so Wendy will need the help then.

VI. DCS REPORT – Barry Orton

- A. Barry Orton reported that no progress has been made in getting an office for PLATO volunteers at DCS. Barry suggested that Fred Ross speak directly to the Dean.
- B. There are 827 registered PLATO members (new and renewals) as of October 18th for the 2014 membership year.
- C. Barry said the Central Services Overhead charges have been assessed since 2009 and, if they did not appear in PLATO's records, maybe DCS was paying the fee. It's possible that Osher/OLLI funds were used to cover the cost.

VII. BOARD POLICIES REPORT– Patricia Becker

- A. It was the opinion of the Bylaws Task Force that the section labeled “Resolutions” was composed of committee policies that did not belong in the Bylaws and should be developed as Policies and Procedures by the PLATO Committees. What should be included in the Bylaws is the PLATO Board’s responsibility in relation to the adoption of policies and procedures. **MOTION:** Patricia Becker made a motion that Article X. Section 11 of the Bylaws be amended to read: “The Board shall be responsible for control and management of the affairs and interests of the organization. Any changes in committee policies and procedures that affect the PLATO mission or have financial implications must be submitted to the Board for approval.” Aleta Murray seconded it. During discussion Don Reeder suggested that the phrase “must be submitted to the Board for approval” be revised to read “must be approved by the Board.” Discussion of the terms “financial implications” followed and it was decided that “significant” should be inserted between “have” and “financial” so that it reads: “The Board shall be responsible for control and management of the affairs and interests of the organization. Any changes in committee policies and procedures that affect the PLATO mission or have significant financial implications must be approved by the Board.” The revisions were accepted and the motion passed unanimously.
- B. The question was raised: does PLATO need a policy that would govern PLATO’s use of the copier at DCS? Tim Otis pointed out that he is trying to get the cost-per-copy that DCS is charging PLATO. Committee Chairs should email Patricia Becker to let her know if they make significant use of the DCS copier. Some send agendas and attachments via email and expect committee members to do the printing. Others make copies at DCS in addition to sending the email. Limited use by committees should be covered by PLATO. It was also noted that members with no email or those requesting print copies are adding to the reproduction and mailing expenses, to say nothing of the labor involved.
- C. The major share of the day-to-day copying is done by coordinators who are providing participants with course materials. As the number of sessions and participants increase, both the cost and the monopolization of the copier have become issues. While it was suggested that course coordinators could expect to come to DCS to make copies of syllabuses, it was also suggested that course coordinators should take the responsibility for making copies of reading materials outside of DCS and the participants should reimburse the coordinators for these expenses. The Curriculum Committee sent a quick survey (via email) requesting feedback on the provision of course materials. Not all of the replies have been received, but it appears that some make all of their copies at DCS, some make copies elsewhere and send the bill to PLATO, some cover the costs themselves and others get full or partial reimbursement from the participants. Estimated costs ranged from \$0.00 to \$500.00. Tied to the reproduction of materials is the issue of copyright. Is the copying covered by the fair

use doctrine? The Curriculum Committee will compile the results of the quick survey and share the information.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Lauren Blough

1. Lauren Blough reported that Harold Green and Helen Aarli retired from the Curriculum Committee and their years of service were much appreciated. Patricia Becker said Harold's position on the Board is as a representative of the Curriculum Committee and asked if he would stay until a Co-chair for the Committee could be found to take his place. Harold agreed and the Board members approved the arrangement. John Koch is a new member.
2. The request for updated Course Descriptions for the 2014 Winter and Spring sessions were sent to the Coordinators. They are due on November 1st. There are 5 courses scheduled for the Winter Interim: "Introduction to Pin-Loom Weaving" (new), "Movement Communication and Meaning" (new), "Fictional Detectives," "Explorations in Root Music," and "England from the High Middle Ages to the Present." Dennis Dresang's course will not be offered for the 2014 Spring Semester nor will Patricia Herrling and Abbie Loomis' class on "The Sacred Feminine." Walt Goodman's "Bugs Beetles and Bipeds" returns for the spring. Attendance rosters have been requested from the Coordinators and the statistics will be compiled when they're received.
3. Four members were not present at the October 4th meeting. Continued discussion of the Policy on Course Selection and Rejection as well as the Strategic Plan was held for the next meeting when most members are expected to be present.

B. Communication – Scott Kolar

1. Scott Kolar reported that the PLATO Survey has been sent to members via email with a link to access the Survey Monkey site. Those responses will be compiled electronically. There were 84 print copies mailed to members without email. The answers will have to be entered manually into the survey form on the DCS PC. The Communication Committee could possibly do this.
2. The website training meeting turned into an extra design session with Makin' Hey. The attendees were given access to the site. They were asked to review the developers' revisions when they're available and to make suggested content changes. The plans include a page for each course with Google maps, instructors' names, places for posting pdf documents and links to videos and other course material. Scott envisions one PLATO page on the DCS site after the PLATO website goes online. Barry Orton thought the DCS website might continue to have a few PLATO pages to post the FAQs, PLATO structure and

other things that don't change, in addition to handling registrations. Scott noted that Wendy Kerr is the primary PLATO contact now but in the future the source will be changed to PLATO@platomadison.org. The rollout date for the website is December 1, 2013 so it will be available before the dates for the new Course Schedule and the Spring Preview. Tim Otis commented that the site is very impressive.

3. The PLATO Directory is ready for distribution.

C. Membership – Mary DeWolf

1. The Membership Committee is fully staffed at 7 members. They represented PLATO at the October 8th Catholic Charities event which attracted a large audience with Zorba Paster as speaker. Mary said their presence was appreciated as PLATO was the only group focused on active seniors. Staff at the Colonial Club in Sun Prairie requested the remaining copies of the PLATO Course Schedules at the end of the visit. The November 18th Alzheimer's Resource Fair is an evening event.
2. Membership will host the New Members Gathering scheduled for Wednesday, November 6th from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the Westmoreland Room, preceding the 3:30 Jerry Apps presentation at Oakwood West – University Ridge. The updated PLATO Power Point will be used. Tim Otis and Greg Bell will handle the Q & A session. A dedicated email will be sent to new members inviting them to the event.
3. Membership will send reminders to PLATO members who haven't renewed. Lauren will send Mary the list of those attending courses but whose membership has lapsed when the attendance rosters have been recorded.
4. Norma Standing and James Yarbrough have been added to the Speakers Bureau. The Committee is seeking new venues for the PLATO presentation. American Family Insurance stated that they have a full complement of speakers for now but said to check with them again in 2014.
5. Mary will write an article for the Persimmon to encourage people to sign in when they attend courses at the Madison Senior Center. It helps the Center to more accurately portray the various users of the facility when they seek funding and submit reports.

D. Special Events – Mary Boyd and Bob Blitzke

1. Mary Boyd reported that the Affordable Care Act lecture had to be postponed because the speaker was on furlough during the government shutdown. About 60 people had registered. It will be re-scheduled. The October 22nd Medi-gap Helpline lecture has the smallest response with about 15 people signed up. 60

registered for the November 12th “Ways We Study the Brain and Our Senses” talk and 50 have registered to hear Jerry Apps presentation on November 6th.

2. Bob Blitzke reported on the Special Events field trips. 100 people went to *Ragtime* which was so popular that extra tickets were purchased twice. There was some criticism about the seating in the theater where season ticket holders get the prime seats and big groups are assigned the side rows. At the Goodman Theater the PLATO group was placed in the balcony which caused some problems for seniors. The traffic in Chicago slowed progress. There are four more trips scheduled for 2013: October 30th *Thomas Sully* with 23 signed up, November 13th *Art and Appetite* in Chicago with 22 registered, December 11th *Noises Off* in Milwaukee currently at 22, and December 18th the radio version of *It's a Wonderful Life* with a limit of 25.

D. Fund Development – Tim Otis

A letter with Patricia’s signature soliciting donations for the PLATO Fund will be sent in November. The goal is to increase funding to cover two more scholarships per year. The Committee members will do the mailing. Tim will report on the Fund’s end of October status at the next Board meeting. There hasn’t been any progress made with the application for 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 but re-convened to discuss future publishing plans for the Agora. The consensus was that there will be no Agora published in 2014, but that the PLATO Board will consider planning for future production at the Board Retreat. The Agora Editorial Board will be informed of the decision by February 1, 2014. Don Reeder suggested that we look at alternative formats and distribution, and that we consider ancillary funding. He suggested levels of sponsorship for PLATO Members who might consider a "sustaining membership" that could contribute to special projects like this. Patricia Becker asked Board members to compile their ideas for the Retreat.

X. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

NOTE: Next meeting Friday, November 15, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough