

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, October 21, 2011 - 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, Judy King, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Frank Power, Judy Sadowsky, Arden Trine, Barry Orton, Wendy Kerr.

- I. CALL TO ORDER – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.
- II. MINUTES – The minutes of the Special board meeting of September 15, 2011 and the monthly September 16, 2011 meeting were approved.
- III. TREASURER’S REPORT – Mike Lovejoy
 - A. A question was raised as to why PLATO is paying state sales tax on purchases. Mike Lovejoy checked with the WI Department of Revenue and their response, dated September 30, 2011, states that according to statutes 77.54 (9a) and 77.55 (1) a “...non-profit organization must operate within the rulings of a 501(c)(3) organization to qualify for exemption from WI sales and use taxes.” (Copy of letter attached.) Judy Sadowsky asked for an estimate of PLATO’s direct purchases and how much tax was paid. Mike Lovejoy will check and report back. PLATO currently has 501 (c)(7) status but is working on applying for 501 (c)(3). See September 15, 2011 special meeting minutes.
 - B. Mike Lovejoy consulted with PLATO’s insurers on the question of whether the liability coverage should be extended to additional PLATO board members and events coordinators. The underwriter’s response was no. Given its relationship with DCS, PLATO does not need any additional coverage beyond the fiscal officers – Tim Otis and Mike Lovejoy who write the checks. The umbrella coverage should be sufficient. It would cost approximately \$100 per year for each additional person. The situation might be different for trip organizers if the relationship with DCS didn’t exist and PLATO was acting independently. The buses (for Special Events trips) are selected from a list approved by the university and the signed contracts are sent to the UW.
 - C. Mike Lovejoy referred to provisions in a memo dated August 16, 2010 and amended October 14, 2010 titled “Summary Financial Arrangement Going Forward.” The timing of the DCS reports is problematic and Sarah Schutt and Ved Prakash who used to produce them are gone. Mike Lovejoy proposed that he and Wendy Kerr revise the schedule. The PLATO board would get financial reports for the fiscal year end and in November to include activity through the end of October when the bulk of the transactions occur. Judy King made the motion that PLATO allow the DCS personnel and the PLATO Treasurer some flexibility in the handling of the reports

until the document is revised. Judy Sadowsky seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

- D. Wendy Kerr noted that revenue is up and membership, at ~ 770-785 members, is higher than it has ever been in mid-October. Wendy will get the events and bus trip statements to Mary Boyd. She asked Mary to remind her.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Tim Otis

- A. Amy Overby from the Madison Community Foundation contacted Tim Otis. 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. She said they have to raise 1/3 of the grant amount and are presently in the fund raising stage.
- B. 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. Marv Beatty said that he and Fred Ross met with Amy last summer. He said the PLATO course coordinators would be the key people in the Madison Community Foundation/PLATO partnership. It was suggested that the first step in determining PLATO interest in the project would be to present the idea at a special meeting to which the coordinators would be invited.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

A. Curriculum and Facilities – Judy King

1. The committee did not meet in October. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 4th.
2. The Curriculum Committee requested attendance reports from each course coordinator. Judy King will include a reminder to committee liaisons to contact the coordinators re the correspondence of their attendance lists to PLATO membership records. Wendy Kerr said the 2011-2012 PLATO Directory is at the printer now and should be distributed via bulk mail within a few weeks. If coordinators find that course attendees are not included in the 2010-2011 directory, they can send those names to Wendy and she will check her current records. She could also send an email to the non-members to remind them to renew or sign-up for PLATO. We'll wait until we receive class rosters and then decide if the non-member count is significant enough to enforce the rule of attendance for members-only (and residents of facilities that provide space for PLATO). Judy Sadowsky suggested that PLATO could consider providing educational enrichment a civic duty.

3. No requests for new classes have been received for the spring 2012 semester. Liaisons will contact coordinators to ask if they intend to continue the course in the spring and to ask for updates to the description for the spring schedule.

B. Outreach – Tim Otis

1. The Outreach committee still has no chair. Committee members have their assignments for the next *Persimmon*. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 31st when discussion will continue on the possibility of adopting a different management model. Ann Falconer will attend. One suggestion was to divide responsibilities among co-chairs. Perhaps one person could take responsibility for the *Persimmon* while another could handle overall committee administration. Wendy Kerr provided Ruth Diehl (for the Leadership Task Force) with a list of members who indicated that they are interested in joining committees. Outreach could use this list, too.
2. Tim Otis, Barry Orton and Wendy Kerr met to resolve an outstanding issue with the webpage. The PLATO Special Events information will continue to be incorporated in the senior learning events unless PLATO has a separate event to announce. When the redesign is complete the common events will be displayed on both pages and the information will be the same. Submissions for posting should go to Wendy. She will get them to Celeste. This is technically not our own website. Mary Boyd noted that people have some trouble finding the PLATO web page. A Google search for “PLATO” returns hits labeled PLATO under Senior Learning. Selecting PLATO will take the user directly to the PLATO page(s).
3. Arden Trine asked that a link be included on the Senior Learning page for LIR (Learning in Retirement). He said the 13 LIR organizations in Wisconsin have a national umbrella institution. Barry Orton said that a link could be embedded in the Senior Learning web site.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Mary thanked those who came early to help with setup for the Fall Preview.
2. The October 14th lecture by David Mollenhoff at Oakwood West was very successful. It attracted 101 people. The 3:30 p.m. timing seems to be convenient and does not interfere with afternoon courses. On November 11th from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Eugene Farley, MD and emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Department of Family Medicine, will lecture on the Affordable Care Act at Oakwood West.
3. Mary has organized a bus trip on Saturday, November 19th to the Milwaukee Art Museum for the Impressionist exhibit. 24 people signed up within 2 weeks of the announcement. Some asked Mary about other exhibits at the museum so

it's a popular venue. The Middle East will be the topic of Joe Elder's talk at Oakwood West on February 7, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. Dennis Dresang's presentation on the Wisconsin recall election will be scheduled for March, 2012. The exact date will be determined closer to the event.

4. Judy King complimented Mary Boyd and the Special Events Committee on their organization of an impressive series of lectures and bus trips. Judy also thanked those who helped with setup and cleanup for the Fall Preview. The Madison Senior Center only has one custodian and he leaves at 4 p.m. so assistance is needed to prepare (and "repair") the room(s) for 200+ attendees.

D. University Relations – Marv Beatty

Marv Beatty reported that relations between the UW and PLATO are going well.

E. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

1. Announcements have been posted for the November 1st Orientation meeting at the Madison Senior Center for people interested in getting involved in committees and PLATO leadership roles. Flyers were also distributed at the Fall Preview. Future meeting discussions will continue to focus on ways to help the Outreach Committee recruit new members and a chair(s). Wendy Kerr gave Ruth Diehl a list of people who indicated an interest in PLATO committees for use in recruitment. They should be invited to the November 1st meeting if Wendy has time to make a new email list. As noted above, this information could be used by the Outreach Committee.
2. The goals of the Leadership Task Force will be reviewed at the next meeting after the November 1st recruitment session.

F. The Agora - Wendy Kerr

Wendy reported that 516 copies of *The Agora* went to bulk mail this week. There are 200 left so the Agora board members were successful in direct distribution of approximately 300 copies. Wendy only has a few orders to fill. The remaining journals need to be moved out of DCS. Lauren will pass on this information to the Agora Board at the meeting on Tuesday, October 25th.

G. 25th Anniversary Celebration – Judy Sadowsky

A planning meeting will be held at DCS on November 3rd at 9:30m a.m. The committee will discuss timing, venues, and entertainment. The celebration might be a late afternoon or early evening event rather than a collaboration with the Spring Luncheon. A committee recommendation will be presented at the next board meeting. Pat Becker suggested that some thought be given to including the Spring New Member orientation with the celebration.

H. PLATO Charitable Fund Development – Marv Beatty

The Financial Advisory Committee will meet in the first week of November to discuss the establishment and organization of the PLATO Charitable Fund within the UW Foundation and to get fund raising underway.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. In preparation for updating the Strategic Action Plan and the By-Laws, Tim Otis reminded each of the standing committees to review their mission and responsibilities and to report at the next board meeting. In determining how the Strategic Plan has affected what they do, they should consider not just specific tasks but also the broader aspect of their mission and what they've accomplished.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion of various ways to effectively accommodate the large gathering of members (and potential new members) and the dissemination of an increasing amount of information at the Fall Preview yielded some new ideas. We don't really have the data that would answer the questions about who comes to the previews and why. Are they primarily old or new members? Do they want to hear about all of the classes or would they prefer to ask coordinators about specific sessions? The previews attract 200 or more people and are social as well as instructional meetings. It is assumed that the course summaries are the attraction but many people left before the Fall Preview concluded. Mary Boyd suggested the elimination of blurbs in the Schedule of Courses for those which have reached their limit and have closed registration. Oversubscribed classes are another problem.

One alternative possibility is to organize the event like a fair. Plenary talks could address general topics. Coordinators could be given separate tables or stations so that those interested in their courses could approach them for information and/or to register. Committees could staff booths to promote their activities and recruit new members. Information about benefits, such as the UW senior guest auditor and the free UW library card, could be distributed. Judy King suggested that the present model could be modified so that the presentations would be limited to 1 minute in the first segment, and then people could meet with coordinators in the second segment.

Judy King also noted that the Curriculum Committee recently investigated alternate sites and found them to be very expensive. Costs were in the range of \$2,000 or more and parking and kitchen facilities were not available at all places. Consideration has to be given to accessibility and proximity to bus routes. Tim suggested the High Point church on Old Sauk Road as a possibility.

- B. Is PLATO meeting the special needs of members and coordinators? Coordinators are instructed to contact Curriculum Committee liaisons to request special equipment. The details are included in the folder distributed at the Luncheon. The Curriculum Committee Chair is empowered to meet the needs but there have been few requests. Maintenance, management and storage can be problematic. Wendy has a list of PLATO equipment; some is more or less permanently checked out to coordinators. Stephanie Burris at Oakwood West and Mary Hanson at Capital Lakes provide able assistance for those 2 facilities. Madison Senior Center has some equipment but no technical staff. The use of assistive technology will become more commonplace so it would be beneficial to have coordinators take advantage of the training offered at facilities.

X. FUTURE BUSINESS

- A. Overall Review of Strategic Plan.
- B. Review and revise of PLATO By-Laws.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

NOTE: There will be no Board meeting in November. It has been rescheduled for Friday, December 2, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at DCS, 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough