

PLATO
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Friday, September 16, 2011 - 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, Judy King, Scott Kolar, Mike Lovejoy, Judy Sadowsky, Arden Trine, Barry Orton, Wendy Kerr.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – T. Otis called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.
- II. MINUTES** – The minutes of the August 19, 2011, meeting were approved.
- III. TREASURER’S REPORT** – M. Lovejoy
 - A. The year-end closing statement looks fine and electronic copies of the paper documents reviewed at the August meeting are on file.
 - B. There are some computer/data file transition issues. Mike will schedule some time with Ved Prakash to go over the Quicken files. Scott Kolar has experience with Quicken and offered his help. Mention was made of a possible migration to Quick Books in the future.
- IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – T. Otis

The September Special Board meeting on September 15 went well. The topic of discussion was “Financing PLATO into the Future.” See minutes for 09/15/2011. The Fall Preview which will be covered in the Curriculum Committee report is scheduled for September 21, 2011. Tim Otis will address other topics later in the agenda.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Curriculum and Facilities – Judy King
 - 1. There are 42 courses being offered for the fall semester. “Refighting the Civil War” was a late addition and was not included in the schedule. However, Wendy sent an email announcement that included the description of this new course as well as some revisions to meeting times for a few others. Evening sessions were not very popular and will not be offered this term.
 - 2. Judy asked for some help with setting up tables at the September 21 Preview.
 - 3. There will be one five-week course on mystery writers during the January 2012 intersession.
 - 4. Judy represented PLATO recently at a women’s group where she passed out PLATO brochures. She also attended the Madison Senior Center’s first annual National

Senior Center Month on September 15. She joined several organizations that were there to distribute information on services, programs and activities geared for older adults.

5. The Coordinators' Luncheon was held on September 14 at Babe's in appreciation of the wonderful classes that coordinators make available to members. After lunch the committee liaisons met with their groups to provide orientation and review of procedures. Two questions were posed for discussion at the end of the orientation.
 - a. We need a reasonably accurate attendance report from each course. What are your suggestions for taking attendance in large classes?
 - b. What can we do in our courses and/or our organization to improve and encourage socialization among members?

Responses will be reviewed at the next Curriculum Committee meeting.

6. There will be no meeting in October. New course recommendations should be submitted by November 1. Committee members will contact their assigned coordinators before the November 4 meeting to ask if the class will continue so that an accurate list of spring 2012 courses can be compiled.
7. There was some discussion regarding attendance statistics and registration processes. Greg Bell suggested that a more sophisticated computer program would provide a better management system and a variety of statistical reports. Barry Orton and Wendy Kerr noted that the DCS Dean is aware of the need but at this time the cost is prohibitive. Concern for preserving the informal nature of the courses was also expressed and coordinators are reluctant to take on officious roles in terms of restricting attendance.

B. Outreach – T. Otis

1. With Ann Falconer's resignation the committee has no chair. Discussion has focused on recruitment of new members and the possibility of adopting a different management model. One suggestion was to divide responsibilities among co-chairs. Scott Kolar oversees the website. Perhaps someone else could take responsibility for the *Persimmon* while another could handle overall committee administration.
2. Ongoing discussion will be needed to clarify the Outreach mission and related tasks.
3. Judy King will submit details of the September 21 Fall Preview to the Wisconsin State Journal in the absence of a person assigned to public relations.
4. Judy Sadowsky noted that membership is declining this year and that a decision has to be made in regards to future recruitment activities. Tim Otis said there are some policy issues to be discussed in relation to the Outreach Committee's assignments. Mary Boyd recalled manning a PLATO information booth at the Alliant Center with Wendy Kerr. She also pointed out that websites for area newspapers in communities like Stoughton and McFarland are good resources. Harold Green suggested that PLATO send a representative to talk to local service clubs. Volunteers will be needed to attend these events.

C. Special Events - M. Boyd

1. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 19 at the Sequoya Library. Mary met with Judy King and Pat Guttenberg (Madison Senior Center) to plan the logistics for the September 21 Fall Preview. The September 8 fruit and vegetable harvest, the third in the series of events at the westside UW Agricultural Research Station, was well attended.
2. On October 14 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. David Mollenhoff, author of *Frank Lloyd Wright's Monona Terrace*, will present a lecture on Madison city planning at Oakwood West. On November 11 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 Health Care Act at Oakwood West. The later time slot of 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. should be convenient for those attending PLATO classes until 3:00 p.m. Mary will send the details via email to Wendy for inclusion in the weekly announcements.
3. Mary is also approaching PLATO coordinators to obtain suggestions for ideas that might enrich their classes and result in a wider range of events for members. She is working with Helen Aarli ("Art Museums" coordinator) to plan a trip to the Milwaukee Art Museum for an Impressionist exhibit. There was discussion of scheduling the trip for early December (with an alternate date in case of bad weather) to avoid conflict with classes. The committee is also investigating a tour of the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery on campus.

D. University Relations – M. Beatty

Marv Beatty reported that relations between the UW and PLATO are very good.

E. Leadership Development – P. Becker

The committee met on August 31. Discussion focused on ways to help the Outreach Committee recruit new members and a chair(s), and on planning the November 1 Orientation meeting for people interested in getting involved in PLATO leadership roles. Pat Becker will send details of the meeting to Wendy for publication. Tim Otis will mention this meeting in his introductory remarks at the Fall Preview.

F. The Agora - L. Blough

An Agora meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 19 when the boxes of the journal will be moved to the Madison Senior Center where storage space is being provided. Copies of *The Agora* will be distributed after the presentations at the September 21 Fall Preview. Note: Lauren was wrong when she said that wasn't planned (she needs to review *Agora* meeting minutes before reporting to the Board!). Schedules have also been devised to distribute additional copies to members attending classes at the Madison Senior Center, Oakwood West, Capitol Lakes and the Wisconsin Community Bank for the first and second week of the semester. One master list will be used to make sure that

members get one copy. Information for ordering extras is included in the journal. Each 2010-11 member household will receive an *Agora* in the mail if they don't pick one up at class.

1. Mike Lovejoy stated that a realistic cost estimate for producing the next edition of *The Agora* is \$8,000 which is the amount to be used for budget purposes. Scott Kolar noted that there shouldn't be any problem getting the PDF version of *The Agora* posted on the PLATO website.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. The discussion of the proposal for "Financing PLATO into the Future" is recorded in the September 15, 2011 special Board meeting minutes. The proposal was approved at that meeting.
- B. Keep the liability insurance topic on the agenda. Mike Lovejoy will investigate. Should it be expanded to additional Board members?

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Conflict of Interest Statements were signed by Board members not present at the August meeting and returned to Tim Otis. Wendy Kerr will keep them on file.
- B. We need a Task Force to bring suggestions to the Board for celebrating PLATO's 25th anniversary. Judy King moved approval of the Task Force and Harold Green seconded. Motion approved. Judy Sadowsky will chair the group and report to the Board by January 2012 with an estimate of cost, how big an event to hold and how to publicize it. The Task Force will meet in November to get started. It hasn't been determined whether or not this would be held in conjunction with the Annual Luncheon or perhaps be an evening event with hors d'oeuvres, or other. It would be publicized widely and open to non-members. The standing committees could provide assistance where needed. Wendy Kerr mentioned the special booklet that was designed for the 10th anniversary. Perhaps Marv Beatty could update the "PLATO Past and Present" document that he researched and composed for the Strategic Action Plan.
- C. In preparation for updating the Strategic Action Plan and the Bylaws, Tim Otis requested each of the standing committees review their mission and responsibilities and report at the November 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.
- D. Tim Otis proposed setting up a regular operational review process that would involve select Board members and DCS staff. Every six months the group would discuss expectations and ways to improve efficiencies. To give some perspective, Barry Orton will report on operational costs indicating which services that DCS provides

are charged to PLATO and which are not. For example, PLATO does not pay for Barry's time, for Christina Finet's assistance with *The Agora*, and for Celeste's website work. Wendy Kerr has taken over the responsibilities of the retired Administrative Assistant to the DCS Dean. This affects her availability for PLATO. There are cyclical highs and lows in the Dean's Office and in PLATO activity. The new DCS Dean is getting acclimated. DCS might consider assigning some tasks to a work study/student worker to help Wendy. Greg Bell pointed out again that a better registration system would be an asset to managing the membership and class records. Barry Orton indicated that DCS does not operate in a vacuum and that any consideration of registration programs has to take into account other existing DCS operations. There was consensus from the Board on moving forward with the PLATO/DCS six month operations review.

- E. Wendy Kerr reported that she has received a total of 632 F'12 memberships, 59 of which are from new members.
 - 1. Last year there were 280 new members but we still have a few weeks before the October 1 deadline (for inclusion in the Directory). In response to a question about membership demographics, Wendy reported in an email that the average age of PLATO members is 69. Judy Sadowsky suggested offering 2 year memberships. This might be feasible if we had a flexible computer program.
 - 2. There was more discussion on how to attract members and which committee's responsibility it is to recruit them and provide orientation. Judy King and others mentioned targeted recruitment of retired public school teachers and UW faculty and staff through agencies such as the Retired Teachers' Association and MTI. An introductory letter could be sent to the retirement planning groups to get PLATO involved when people are leaving the work force.

VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Next Board meeting will be on Friday, October 21, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. DCS/PLATO Office, 21 N. Park St., Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Blough