

## DRAFT PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, September 20, 2013 - 9:30 a.m.  
DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Patricia Becker - Chair, Greg Bell, Bob Blitzke, Lauren Blough, Mary Boyd, Mary De Wolf, Harold Green, Scott Kolar, Aleta Murray, Tim Otis, Frank Power, Don Reeder  
DCS: Barry Orton, Wendy Kerr Guest: Patricia Herrling  
Handouts: "Fall Preview Evaluation Summary," "2014 PLATO Luncheon Recommendation," "Membership Committee Report for the Board Meeting Sept. 20, 2013," "Special Events Field Trips Report 2012-13" and "Special Events Field Trips Report 2013-14"

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Patricia Becker called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. and introduced guest Patricia Herrling, Editor of the *Persimmon*.

**II. MINUTES** – The minutes of the August 16, 2013 Board Meeting were approved.

**III. POWER POINT PRESENTATION** – Patricia Herrling

Patricia Herrling showed the Board the Power Point presentation developed by the former Communication & Membership Committee and current Communication Committee for use by any member who is visiting community groups to promote PLATO. Patricia was congratulated for the attractive and effective tool. There were a few suggestions for minor tweaks:

- A. Add shots of *The Agora* covers to the slide that mentions the journal.
- B. Switch the terms PLATO and UW partner.
- C. Create a separate slide for the PLATO Foundation.
- D. Shorten the statement about courses to "...courses led by PLATO members" and eliminate the "experience in the topic" phrase.
- E. Add a few more photos of classes so potential coordinators won't be intimidated by the current slide showing the astronomy course with PC and projection equipment.

**IV. FALL PREVIEW** – Frank Power

Frank was congratulated on another successful Preview. He reported that there were about 185 attendees at the event on September 18<sup>th</sup>. 67 evaluations were returned: 19 were from those who have been members for 1 year and 6 who have been members for 2 years. 31 were from "veterans" and 11 from Coordinators. 79% found the remarks from PLATO Leaders meaningful and 88% of the respondents said the Coordinators' descriptions were helpful to them in choosing courses. 67% said the second session where they could meet the Coordinators was "decisive." There were some complaints about some speakers' ineffective use of the microphone and some respondents were disappointed in the full classes. 64% rated the refreshments very good or good. One requested fresh fruit. Out of the 50 who answered the question about their overall evaluation of the event, 52% rated it

very useful and 19% rated it good. There were appreciative comments about the brevity, humor and passion evident in the presentations by the Coordinators. Not all of the Coordinators went upstairs. There was a request that PLATO event postings should all include the day of the week and the location's street address. The Membership Committee worked very hard to keep up with the activity at the Preview. There were about 20 membership forms collected and about half were from new members. Some of the people who wanted to sign up or to renew were disappointed that they could not use their credit cards. Scott said we should bring a laptop to next year's event and let people register online with their credit cards.

## V. **TREASURER'S REPORT** – Tim Otis

- A. Tim Otis is the new Treasurer. He plans to meet with Wendy Kerr and Barry Orton to get a better idea of the PLATO-UW/DCS interactions. Tim also cautioned that events, materials, printing, and postage costs have risen and we need to plan carefully to avoid budget overruns. Committee Chairs should let their members know that bills, formerly addressed to Mike Lovejoy, should be sent to Tim Otis. Receipts should include details of the expenditure.
  
- B. At the August meeting Mary Boyd mentioned the idea of partnering with the UW Alumni Association to bring back the free Global Hotspots quarterly lectures that were discontinued due to cuts in funding. Tim met with Sarah Schutt (WAA) and Adrienne Gross to find out what the partnership would mean for PLATO. The Hotspots events would continue at the Pyle Center; a change in venue is not an option. PLATO was asked to contribute \$310.00 to cover the cost of the audio visual support for each of 4 sessions or a total of \$1,240.00 per year, which is approximately ¼ of the \$5,000.00 it takes to present the lectures. A fifth lecture would be offered at no cost to PLATO. PLATO's contribution would have to come from the \$27,000.00 in reserve funds. WAA staff would do all of the administrative work and publicity for the events which would include acknowledging PLATO as the co-presenter. PLATO could also distribute promotional material at the sessions. Tim noted that PLATO's operating expenses have increased, the new website is an additional budget item, the cost of publishing *The Agora* is under discussion and Special Events is offering 4 PLATO lectures so far this fall. On the other hand, this is an opportunity for PLATO to partner with other organizations and to be recognized as a co-presenter of this very popular series. One way to determine how many PLATO members attend would be to just ask for a show of hands. **MOTION:** Tim Otis made a motion that PLATO make a one year commitment to a partnership with the UW Alumni Association for the purpose of supporting the Global Hotspots lecture series at a cost of \$310.00 for A/V at each of 4 sessions (for a total of \$1,240.00), with the provision that an evaluation will be done at the end of the year to determine how many PLATO members attended the events. Mary Boyd seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Patricia Becker**

- A. Patricia Becker brought a copy of *The Agora* that was recently mailed to members and commented on the good quality of the production.
- B. Patricia mentioned the PLATO volunteer project and said that Dean Russell estimated that it would be two to three months before a new space might be available. At this point the volunteers are only doing data entry. Special Events Committee members have also said they would be willing to do website updates in the future. With more people and a better work space Tim suggested that we might be able to expand to Monday through Friday coverage for a few hours each day but not under the current conditions. Mary DeWolf said there are three people from the Membership Committee who are willing to do clerical work only. She was asked not to request their help for this project now. Eventually there will have to be a coordinator to manage the operation but for now we'll concentrate on the 3-days-a-week coverage. Bob Blitzke asked whether the data entry could be done at home. Since the event and membership registrations involve the handling of checks, the answer was no.
- C. Mailing and copying costs were also discussed. To send print copies of event notices and other materials to those members without email costs a minimum of \$35.00 per mailing just for the postage. Wendy noted that some Coordinators come in one or more times a week to make large amounts of copies for their classes. DCS staff needs to use the copier, too. Wendy suggested that PLATO people make their copies at Kinko's and send the bill to the Treasurer for reimbursement. This doesn't seem to be the solution and reflects a change in practice and the DCS/PLATO relationship that needs further discussion. Part of the problem is the interruption when people ask Wendy for help with paper loading and clearing jams. Some Coordinators are reimbursed for copies made by the course participants. Don Reeder suggested that in the future class materials can be posted online for the participants to read and print them. Tim said that's what he does for his courses.

## **VII. DCS REPORT – Barry Orton**

- A. Barry Orton reported that no progress has been made in getting an office for PLATO volunteers at DCS.
- B. Wendy Kerr reported that there are 758 registered PLATO members (new and renewals) as of September 20th for the 2014 membership year. This doesn't count the 20 or so people who signed up at the Fall Preview. 123 new members have registered since January 2013.
- C. Three new volunteers are being trained to replace Tim Otis, Aleta Murray and Lauren Blough who were involved in the pilot project to provide clerical support for Wendy. For now the volunteers will be scheduled for 3 days a week. Aleta and Lauren will provide backup when needed. Wendy mentioned the possibility of PLATO hiring

student help but PLATO is not considering that alternative at this time. Nor are there plans to have event and membership registrations handled by the UW Pyle Center operation.

### VIII. ANNUAL LUNCHEON – Mary Boyd

Mary Boyd distributed a list of potential sites for the 2014 Annual Luncheon. The Sheraton's service and food were not good this past May so a Special Events subcommittee investigated some new sites: Nakoma Country Club, UW Fluno Center, Crowne Plaza and the Arboretum. The Arboretum was too small to accommodate the PLATO event. The Crowne Plaza charges \$600.00 for the room in addition to the food and A/V costs. The lower dining hall of the Fluno Center is very expensive and the parking isn't convenient, especially for people with limited mobility. Nakoma Country Club would offer at least 3 lunch choices with a range of prices that could bring the cost down. Parking spaces are limited but the overflow is handled by valets (which could slow down the arrivals). Board members who have attended events at Nakoma Country Club said it is a very nice facility. **MOTION:** Tim Otis made a motion to have Mary Boyd make a reservation without a deposit for the 2014 Annual Luncheon at the Nakoma Country Club to place a hold on the space. Don Reeder seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

### IX. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

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

1. Lauren Blough reported on the Coordinators Luncheon held at Olbrich Gardens on September 11<sup>th</sup>. 50 of the 53 who signed up came. Olbrich provided a lovely setting but the acoustics were bad. There are other rooms at the facility that do not have stone floors and glass walls. A Curriculum Committee member sat at each table and recorded the discussion on the topics devised by the committee. The seven page compilation of all the responses was sent to the committee. When the compilation is de-duplicated the final document will be distributed to the Board and to the Coordinators. The food provided by Bunky's was well received. There was only one complaint.
2. Harold said the Policy on Course Selection and Rejection as well as the Strategic Plan has been put on hold but the Curriculum Committee expects to have them completed within 90 days.

#### B. Communication – Greg Bell

1. Greg Bell noted that Scott Kolar has been hard at work on the new PLATO website, Patricia Herrling is the Editor of the *Persimmon* and Mary DeWolf is the Chair of the Membership Committee. Articles for the January *Persimmon* are due on Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. Committees should send Patricia Herrling the names of the Committee members who have resigned so that they can be included in the next issue for recognition.

2. The member survey has been revised with help from the subcommittee including Tim Otis, Stephanie Sorensen and Nina Sparks. A dedicated email from Wendy with a link to the Survey Monkey form will invite members to respond.
3. Greg asked for volunteers to help attach the membership cards to the PLATO Directories once the membership is tabulated in early to mid-October. The directory is printed at a cost of \$4,000.00 and Patricia Becker suggested that more consideration should be given to posting it online
4. Scott Kolar reported that the vendor Makin' Hey is makin' progress with the site development. The next step is to train PLATO members. We would begin with train-the-trainers sessions and then focus on a smaller group who would get more intensive training. Sydell Power and Gail Gordon volunteered. It is expected that issues with keeping online information up-to-date and providing links to course material for participants will be addressed with the new website. The site can be accessed from any PC and the plan is to have the Coordinators post information and update their (password-ed) pages. A rollout campaign for members is in the works. The domain name is currently registered in Scott's name. An individual has to be the registrant. There is a small annual cost for the registration so it was decided that the Treasurer's name will replace Scott's.

C. Membership – Mary DeWolf

1. The PLATO Power Point presentation was used during visits to the Colonial Club in Sun Prairie, Lake Edge Lutheran Church in Monona, The Jefferson, and Attic Angels. It was very successful in generating interest except at The Jefferson where the residents would not be capable of getting to the host locations. At Attic Angels one resident expressed interest in coordinating a class. Curriculum will follow up.
2. Mary noted that she has created an account to advertise events with *77 Square*. They will appear under the “Seniors” heading. Mary can share the password with other Committees who want to post PLATO events in *77 Square*.
3. New promotional brochures will be developed to include the new website URL. The plan is to distribute them in the senior/55+ community newsletters. Note: the designation “LIR” should be added to any PLATO advertising copy.
4. The committee is planning to staff booths at the Catholic Charities and Alzheimer seminars. Tim Otis, Patricia Becker, and Greg Bell staffed the PLATO table at the Institute on Aging Colloquium. It was a very successful event.
5. The committee will also send reminders to the PLATO members who have not renewed their 2014 memberships.

D. Special Events – Bob Blitzke

Bob distributed 2 reports for Special Events Field Trips, one for 2012-13 and one for 2013-14. Although a net revenue or profit is indicated, Tim noted that associated costs such as copying, mailings and volunteer time are not included in the calculations. In any case the trips are very successful in attracting participants. 100 people signed up for Ragtime, there's a full bus for Pullman Porter Blues and people registered for the mid-October and November events as soon as they were made available. Bob was disappointed that the three proposed programs for December were reduced to two, but December is busy with end-of-year processing, holidays and staff vacations.

D. Fund Development – Tim Otis

A letter soliciting donations for the PLATO Fund will be sent in November. The committee's guidelines for determining the annual charitable giving amount are being presented for Board approval. 60 % of the year's contributions would go towards scholarships and the remaining 40% would go towards building the Foundation's endowment base. **MOTION:** Tim Otis made a motion to accept as a guideline that "a minimum of 60% of the donations each year will be used to fund scholarships for disadvantaged adult students in that year." Frank Power seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

Discussion of the Board Policies Report was postponed for the next meeting.

**XI. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

**NOTE:** Next meeting Friday, October 18, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Blough