

DRAFT PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Friday, September 21, 2012 - 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, Frank Power, Judy Sadowsky, Arden Trine, Wendy Kerr, Barry Orton.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Tim Otis called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.
- II. **MINUTES** – The minutes of the August 17, 2012 meeting were approved.
- III. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Tim Otis for Mike Lovejoy
  - A. Operating budget overrun for FY 2011-12 will likely be close to \$10,000. We have sufficient assets to cover this but the Board will need to address this issue in FY 2012-13.
  - B. FY 2011-12 tax materials are at the CPA’s office. We do not anticipate any tax liability for the past year.
  - C. Our application for 501c3 (tax exempt) status still pending at the IRS. Delay caused by our failure to submit proper filing fee (fee raised by \$100 on 1/2012). IRS indicates they notified us but no letter can be found AND they stopped processing until the fee was correct. Notwithstanding, we have submitted the additional fee and processing now continues. Obviously approval will be delayed to late winter/early spring.
  - D. The PLATO FUND in the UW Foundation has received \$14,231.43 in donations as of 8/31/12. Contribution rate has been slowing down and Financial Resources Committee will be addressing this. Marv Beatty’s promotional address to the September 19<sup>th</sup> Fall Preview audience was commended.

At this time, according to the UW Foundation projections we (i.e. through DCS) will have \$3,440.00 in “Income available to spend” (or income generated by the Fund) as of our one year anniversary date. We will reach our one year anniversary on Feb 1, 2013. The Foundation wants annuitants to have one year completed before withdrawals are initiated. This figure does NOT assume any additional donations so the more we take in the more the “Income available to spend” figure increases.

We have a new contact re: activity in the PLATO Fund: Ann Lippincott 263-6304.

#### **IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Tim Otis**

- A. Tim Otis noted that DCS will be requesting additional monetary support from PLATO for the services provided. This will be a discussion topic for the next budget.
- B. There are two At-Large positions open on the Board since Harold Green and Greg Bell are representing the Curriculum and the Communications and Membership Committees respectively. One prospective recruit was obtained from the September 13<sup>th</sup> Committee Recognition Luncheon feedback. Tim Otis, Judy Sadowsky, Pat Becker and Lauren Blough agreed to serve as members of a task force to find additional candidates. Judy Sadowsky, as Past-President, will schedule a meeting to discuss recommendations for presentation to the Board. Depending on the remaining time for each appointment (Harold Green 2013, Greg Bell 2014) the recruits will serve until the next election or until their term expires.
- C. The plan for posting the Board minutes on a PLATO web page is a work-in-progress. Scott Kolar has been out of town caring for his father. When he returns discussion with DCS will resume.
- D. Tim Otis, Wendy Kerr from DCS and the Committee Chairs met on August 28<sup>th</sup> to review and develop procedures for PLATO/DCS operations. The focus was on how to use Wendy Kerr's time more effectively and how to communicate procedures to members. The main points under discussion were: identify areas that need better coordination; website development; registration/billing software; procedures for updating the website, Weekly Announcements etc.; and, what needs to happen next, who is involved and who is responsible.

#### **V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

- A. Curriculum and Facilities – Harold Green
  - 1. Harold Green asked Lauren Blough and Frank Power to report on the Coordinators' Luncheon and the Fall Preview. 41 Coordinators attended the September 12<sup>th</sup> Luncheon at Babe's. Lauren read some of the comments from the discussions that took place at each table where Liaisons and their respective Coordinators were grouped. Liaisons' notes included the following: ask coordinators to encourage a proficient participant to form a subsection when a class is full; provide coordinators with more detail about specific locations; include more information (such as expanded course descriptions) on PLATO website and allow coordinators to post readings and links (ala Learn@UW); group courses by area of interest at Preview and in publications to encourage potential participants to search further if a class is closed; do away with one-minute presentations at the Preview and organize the event in a fair-like setting; don't neglect the social atmosphere at the Preview. While there were a few initial objections to Babe's, the general consensus was that the food (i.e. the

veggie burger and fresh fruit) was much better this time. The bill totaled \$648.38.

2. Frank Power, Chair and Master of Ceremonies for the September 19<sup>th</sup> Fall Preview, distributed an Evaluation Summary representing responses from 89 people (with an estimated total attendance of 120-130). 17 were Coordinators, 49 were PLATO veterans and 23 were new members. 92% rated the seating arrangements for the first session satisfactory and 90% said the timing was about right. Reactions to the value of the first session in relation to their course selections were: 56% helpful, 18% interesting, 2% decisive and 6% not helpful. 18 or 19 of the respondents did not go upstairs for the second session. Of those that did go up to meet the Course Coordinators, 91% commented that the numbered/weekday table arrangement was helpful. 90% indicated that the opportunity to talk with the Coordinators was helpful (51) or decisive (6) in making their course selections. The 88% favorable overall (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> sessions) rating is the total of 63% very useful to excellent plus 25% useful.

Judy Sadowsky said earlier Previews attracted 300 of 650 members. Frank sees the newly registered (and extending for their first 2 years) as the ones to get the most value from the Previews. The question remains “Why don’t more new members attend?” Could they be too recently registered to receive the email messages from Wendy (how soon do they get added to email lists)? Does the *Persimmon* mailing with the course schedule satisfy most members? One suggestion was to include a question on the membership form to ask if the Previews are necessary. Frank will meet with Communications and Membership Committee to explore the issue.

Mary Boyd and the Special Events Committee received special thanks for the refreshments and for providing help at the registration table. Sydell Power was awarded special recognition for the setup and table signage that contributed to the efficient flow of people upstairs.

3. Harold said the Curriculum Committee will embark on a mini strategic planning project to investigate the opportunities and challenges presented by PLATO’s growth. One area to investigate is how new PLATO courses evolve and what factors stimulate member-driven courses. Tim Otis noted that a survey done about 4 years ago might provide helpful information.

B. Communications and Membership – Greg Bell

1. Greg Bell presented a proposal from CAM to stop printing and mailing 900+ directories to PLATO members. The alternative would be to print 200 and deliver those to coordinators, committees and Board members (with some extras to be sent on request). Greg noted that the 2011-12 Budget showed \$4,000.00 in printing and postage expenses. There was a discussion about emailing the Directory as a pdf document. The approximately 80 members without email

access would have to make an effort to get a print copy. It was suggested that Coordinators ask class participants at the first session if they use the Directory. It was noted that for some the paper copy is more convenient to consult while the electronic version is easy to update throughout the year. Greg suggested that this year could be a test if the document was sent electronically and the limited number were printed but Marv Beatty preferred producing both versions for the transition year. **Motion:** Pat Becker moved and Greg Bell seconded acceptance of the CAM proposal that the 2012-13 PLATO Directory will be distributed to members as an electronic pdf email attachment with a limited printing of 200 copies for distribution to PLATO coordinators, committees and the Board members, the remainder being reserved for special requests.

Discussion: Barry Orton asked if any consideration had been given to the prospect of the electronic list getting into the hands of spammers and/or being used for other promotional purposes (possibly even by PLATO members). Posting the information online is out of the question as the PLATO pages are accessible to anyone. There was a **friendly amendment** to the motion that resulted in the following change: The 2012-13 PLATO Directory will be printed in a limited run of 200 copies for distribution to PLATO coordinators, committees and the Board members, the remainder being reserved for special requests; no print or electronic copy will be distributed to the general membership. The motion failed with 3 voting in favor and 6 opposed. The current procedure of printing and mailing the 2012-13 Directory to all PLATO members stands.

2. Wendy Kerr reported that there are approximately 60 to 70 new members. Note: Wendy's follow up email (9/21/2012) stated that there are 756 registered including 76 new members for the calendar year (since January 1, 2012). She asked that we coordinate the stuffing of the next few mailings (e.g. Directories, membership cards etc.) to better manage the time-consuming tasks.
3. December 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for submission of articles for the mid-to-late January *Persimmon*. There is a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks lead time needed for layout and printing.
4. Greg is formulating a survey for the membership in 2013. A draft will be distributed to Committee Chairs for discussion and comment. What questions should be included? Greg distributed copies of the Russell's March, 2009 "PLATO-OLLI Survey Summary" which he is using as a basis for the new questionnaire.
5. The new PLATO banner was displayed at the Fall Preview and CAM was complemented on the production of the professional promotional materials.

C. Special Events - Mary Boyd

1. Mary Boyd noted that theater trip on October 4th “Sweet Bird of Youth” is full.
2. The Committee meets on Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> to continue planning for the fall and winter series of trips and lectures. Mary is making arrangements with the Chazen Museum for a tour of the “Offering of the Angels: Paintings and tapestries from the Uffizi Gallery” exhibit followed by lunch. Other events include a lecture series on bio-medical topics and a trip to the Epic Systems HQ in Verona.

D. Financial Resources – Marv Beatty

1. The Committee membership is changing with the resignation of Ann Falconer and the addition of Pat Becker.
2. Marv Beatty reported that the Financial Resources Committee and the DCS Adult Career and Special Student Services staff met to revise the PLATO criteria established in 2003 for awarding scholarship funds. He distributed copies of the revised “Criteria for Awarding Scholarships Funded by PLATO.” Mary Mercier, who coordinates the DCS scholarship program for returning adult students, and Judith Strand, Associate Dean and Director of the Adult Career and Special Student Services, suggested more liberal and inclusive terms. Marv directed attention to #5 “Indicate strong potential for academic success.” The evaluation by committee is important to PLATO. #6 requires that the recipient “Be enrolled for at least as many credits as the PLATO scholarship will fund.” Tim noted that this is more realistic than the former requirement for a minimum enrollment of 9 credits as the award only pays for about ½ credit at the present tuition rate. He also pointed out that the revisions are more consistent with other DCS scholarships. **Motion:** Marv Beatty moved that PLATO adopt the revised “Criteria for Awarding Scholarships Funded by PLATO” and transmit the same to DCS. Arden Trine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. Leadership Development – Patricia Becker

Patricia Becker reported that the September 13<sup>th</sup> Fall Committee Member Recognition Luncheon was a success. People enjoyed the restaurant setting, the food and the chance to socialize. 24 of the 51 committee members attended. A discussion of the merits of recognizing volunteers acknowledged that busy people have conflicting engagements and maybe others don’t especially care about recognition. Are there other ways to show appreciation for volunteers’ efforts? The luncheon bill total was \$750.00.

B. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Judy Sadowsky

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: Friday, October 12, 2012 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Pyle Center in the Alumni Lounge. The location, food and program are confirmed. Greg Bell invited 3 local journalists to the event. An announcement was made at the Fall Preview and Wendy is sending email messages requesting people to register online so that we have a rough idea of how many to expect. Wendy's 9/21 email shows a count of 94.

C. The Agora - Lauren Blough

Volume 2 of *The Agora*, PLATO's literary journal, has been received from the printers and has been sent to the mailing facility. Expect copies to arrive in the mail the week of September 24<sup>th</sup>.

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Website Issues and Opportunities

Discussion will continue when Scott Kolar returns.

B. Institute on Aging Colloquium

PLATO's booth at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> Institute on Aging annual Fall Colloquium will be staffed by Tim Otis, Greg Bell and Shelley and Elliot Abramson,.

C. Q & A Session for PLATO Members (retained for future discussion if necessary)

D. Transportation Assistance (retained for future discussion if necessary)

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. PLATO Diversity

Pat Becker noted that there was one African-American woman present at the Fall Preview. She is involved in Madison Senior Center activities and left before the first session was over. Greg Bell said CAM members have contacted NESCO and another center on the northeast side to reach out to unrepresented residents. He is seeking speaking engagements. Two other suggestions were made for contacts with African American communities: The James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation on East Johnson and the Interfaith Alliance.

## **IX. FUTURE BUSINESS**

- A. Discussion of the Board's role in providing leadership and policy development for the PLATO organization was delayed for a future meeting. What are the Board's roles and responsibilities in this unique organization?

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

**NOTE:** Next meeting Friday, October 19, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. DCS - 21 N. Park, Room 7041.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Blough