

PLATO Board of Directors Meeting, August 11, 2023
Approved on October 13, 2023

Board Present: Rod McKenzie, Mike Kernats, Kathy Brown, Jatinder Cheema, Tim Otis, Steve Sparks, Jack Mitchell, MaryJo MacSwain, Marian Fisher, Tobey Marsceill, Gail Bergman, Edie Urness-Pondillo
PLATO Staff: Stephanie Steigerwaldt

- 1) **Welcome New Board Members** – New members Edie Urness-Pondillo (secretary), Steve Sparks (Membership & Communications Chair), and at-large directors Gail Bergman, Marian Fisher, and Tobey Marsceill were introduced.
- 2) **Continuing Board Members** were thanked for their service.
- 3) **Approval of Draft Board Meeting Minutes** from June 9, 2023 – Motion made to approve and passed.
- 4) **Treasurer's Update:** Cheema presented documents including PLATO 2023-2024 budget, budget and actual financials July 2022 to March 2023, 2022-2023 Activity by Cost Center, and PLATO 2022-2023 budget and actuals for board review.

A letter was prepared and sent to the UW Foundation for reimbursement to enable the Development Fund to send support to four educational charities presented at the last board meeting. Cheema asked for input on whether that request could be made earlier to include it in PLATO's actual fiscal year. Tim Otis (Fund Development Chair) agreed with that plan.

5) Committee Items:

Curriculum – Kathy Brown reported for this committee. PLATO members are still interested in both online and in-person classes, so the committee is still working on the technology challenges. Their aim is to meet everyone's needs.

Rod McKenzie asked if the Curriculum Committee had discussed the value of an in-person open house (as was done before the pandemic). That issue will be deferred to the committee.

Tobey Marsceill asked if the committee would consider spreading out the days of courses to expand possibilities for members. She noted that many courses share the same time and day of the week. MaryJo MacSwain suggested this could be applied to new courses.

Jack Mitchell suggested the committee keep tally of the numbers of people taking classes.

Fund Development – Tim Otis announced the annual fund drive begins the end of September and the addition of Badger Ready to PLATO's funded educational programs.

Otis reported in the past 12 years, PLATO members donated \$230,000 to this fund. Mike Kernats noted that none of those donations come from PLATO's dues.

Steve Sparks asked if there is a way for members to donate to PLATO without having the funds go to that program. At this time, there is not a systemic way to do it. MacSwain agreed we should have a way to accomplish this and Brown said it is on the Executive Committee's radar and is being discussed. Stephanie Steigerwaldt said when checks come in for renewal there are members who donate to the PLATO general fund in that manner. Otis agreed it should be made clear to members when they go to the website.

Diversity Committee – MacSwain (Diversity Awareness Committee Chair) reported the committee is meeting to determine objectives and plan to include a class and a lecture each year.

Special Events Committee – Carla Delorio is acting chair until there is a new chair in place. The committee continues to plan events.

Membership & Communications Committee – Sparks is the new chair and plans to meet with the committee in the next month. MacSwain and Steigerwaldt made a plea for new business cards for PLATO. Steigerwaldt will contact Ad Press for an estimate of cost before the next M&C meeting.

6) Ad Hoc Committee – Annual Meeting Recap

Steigerwaldt shared a few suggestions from the post-meeting survey, which included the refreshments to have both sweet and savory offerings. More survey data will be available next meeting. McKenzie gave thanks to the SEC and everyone else who helped make it a success.

Kernats pointed to the PLATO By-Laws and its language that sets May as the official month for the annual meeting.

MacSwain suggested there be more “bragging” in the program to present those attending with PLATO’s accomplishments.

McKenzie asked board members to consider who should be charged with organizing the annual meeting. Cheema said there is money budgeted to use for next year’s annual meeting and Marian Fisher suggested the committee be ad hoc and start the planning now.

7) Operations -

As of 8.11.23, there are 603 active members, according to Steigerwaldt.

McKenzie urged board members to consider leadership needs for both the **SEC** and the **Technology Committee**. He asked for discussion on whether technology needs a committee or whether it is possible to simply assign the work. Kernats proposed putting an Information Officer in place with a solid relationship with all committees.

Fisher recommended having a **paid consultant** with deep knowledge of **Wild Apricot** (our membership and website software) for Steigerwaldt’s use. Since she makes most of the changes and maintenance of web pages, as well as the membership data and payments, it would allow her specialized support when she needs it. That recommendation will be discussed at the next Executive Board meeting in September.

McKenzie asked the board to consider who is going to be interested in PLATO in the next 4-5 years and how to maintain **PLATO’s relevance**. Sparks said the M&C committee will be discussing this, but asked for clarity. In the past, membership grew organically, but membership has decreased since the pandemic. Sparks asked if the M&C committee is charged with this challenge, or whether other committees should be involved. Otis said strategic planning may be called for to address this issue. It was last done in 2017.

Kernats suggested the MOAs (Memorandum of Agreement) with Oakwood and the University of Wisconsin should be posted on the PLATO website. This idea was withdrawn after discussion about whether certain policies should be placed behind a membership wall, rather than made public.

Kernats moved to continue updating policies, procedures, and by-laws and the motion was passed.

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 13 @ 9:30 am.