

PLATO Board of Directors Meeting, October 13, 2023
Approved on December 8, 2023

Board Present: Rod McKenzie, Mike Kernats, Kathy Brown, Jatinder Cheema, Tim Otis, Steve Sparks, Jack Mitchell, MaryJo MacSwain, Marian Fisher, Kathie Burman, Gail Bergman, Bob Shaw, Dory Christensen, Edie Urness-Pondillo. PLATO Staff: Stephanie Steigerwaldt

1) **Approval of Draft Board Meeting Minutes** from August 11, 2023 – Motion made to approve and passed.

2) **Treasurer's Update:** Treasurer Jatinder Cheema reported there the reconciliation was not available for the meeting, but wanted to direct the board to the membership line which shows \$55,500 (\$41,000 is actual income from members dues paid). The higher amount reflects dues that are not yet paid. MaryJo MacSwain noted she did not feel unpaid membership income should be included in the report.

Kathie Burman asked if committee chairs could be CCed when invoices are paid. For more clarity, Stephanie Steigerwaldt will add that to her duties as payments are made.

3) Committee Items

Curriculum Committee: Kathie Burman responded to the request from the August 11th Board Meeting minutes in which Rod McKenzie asked if the Curriculum Committee had discussed the value of an in-person open house (as was done before the pandemic). Burman indicated that the CC has discussed this a couple of times. They are currently promoting Coordinator Videos in lieu of the open house and online Coordinator Coffee Klatches in lieu of the coordinator luncheon that historically followed the open house. Our long standing committee members have indicated that participation had been dropping off significantly prior to the pandemic. Additionally, we do not have anyone interested in coordinating such an event.

A discussion then ensued by the board regarding other options. An idea to combine the annual meeting and open house isn't feasible because PLATO bylaws specify it must be held in May, which is not conducive for an open house. Christensen suggested PLATO hold mini open houses at senior residential homes focusing on the courses offered. Rod McKenzie noted the open house benefits all committees, so even mini open houses should include them, as well. The various committees and the board will continue to discuss possibilities.

The Curriculum Committee is working on spreading out courses across the week to allow PLATO members more choices; they are working with new course coordinators to achieve that goal. An effort is also in progress to find new coordinators and develop training for current coordinators to create videos for their courses.

Burman shared charts that show number of classes offered remains steady and that in-person class numbers are recovering. Kathy Brown said the data shows 691 people are participating in fall classes (self-reported by coordinators).

Diversity Committee: MacSwain noted the committee is looking at a series of lectures, "Did You Know?" items, and at least one course each year to promote diversity initiatives.

Fund Development: Tim Otis cited \$34,000 in donations received and \$40,000 given out in the past fiscal year. The new fiscal year of giving will include the Badger Ready program and a donation target of \$46,000 for the next fiscal year.

The committee is working on making it easier to donate to PLATO for both internal and external giving, as well as publicizing the agencies PLATO supports.

Membership & Communications: Steve Sparks updated the board on FaceBook posting guidelines. His committee recommends maintaining the same directives adopted for the Weekly Update (Posted content should be informational in nature and related to PLATO-sponsored activities or services). Mike Kernats moved to approve this recommendation and it passed. FaceBook posting will still be done by designated committee reps and PLATO members can comment on these posts.

The 2023 annual survey is in progress and some baseline questions were added to help future planning.

Key planning is being done to retain members and recruit new members. There will be a USPS mailing to those who did not renew this fall and, early next year, there will be an attempt to contact those who've attended trips and classes in the past, but haven't renewed or joined.

The Executive Committee asked the M&C to discuss a possible dues increase and make a recommendation to the EC early next year.

Special Events: Bob Shaw represented SEC and reported a recent theater trip was canceled because of low sign up numbers. Field trips, Friday breakfasts, and local walks are still well attended. There are three lectures planned for the fall.

To increase offerings by this committee, Shaw said there is a need to make organizing trips less complex, as well as possibly linking with Oakwood, Capitol Lakes, UW-Retirement Association, and senior centers to help create opportunities. These connections would also be a way for PLATO to offer trips without going over budget.

Due to United States Department of Transportation regulation changes, it is more difficult to plan trips to Chicago and other long-range destinations, thus limiting the SEC in its planning.

5) Ad Hoc Committee Items:

The Agora, Volume 8 – The new volume of *The Agora* is available online and the printed version was mailed to members who did not opt out. Edie Urness-Pondillo gave special thanks to Steigerwaldt for her incredible support and work on this project.

COVID-19 Recommendations: The SEC Committee requested an update of COVID protocols for trips, which prompted McKenzie to ask for a revision of guidelines. Kernats moved to approve the following guidelines and it passed unanimously.

1. Masks are not required, but persons wishing to wear a mask are encouraged to do so.
2. Health protocols in place at any PLATO event/class venue must be observed.
3. Please stay home if you are not feeling well. If you are part of a trip, please inform the organizer of your decision.
4. Health protocols are subject to change as conditions change; PLATO reserves the right to make changes to protocols accordingly.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 am.

The next PLATO board meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2023.