



General Policies

Management by the Board

The Board shall be responsible for control and management of the affairs and interests of the organization. Any changes in committee policies and procedures that affect the PLATO mission or have significant financial implications must be approved by the Board.

Copying

Committees: Use of the DCS (UW-Department of Continuing Studies) copy machine for committee work is legitimate. To the extent possible, committee materials should be distributed by email.

Courses: Coordinator use of the DCS machine for class organization, e.g., syllabi, class lists, is legitimate. Coordinators should communicate with and distribute handouts to class members as much as possible by email. Class members should be asked -and expect- to contribute to the costs of class materials. Copyright law must be respected.

Use of the Copy Machine: The number of copies made should be recorded on the sheet at the copy machine. Committee members and course coordinators should consolidate copying as much as possible to reduce the number of visits to the DCS copy machine. To the extent possible, for each committee and course there should be a designated "copier" who will be familiar with the machine, where paper is stored, etc.

Policy on Alcohol at PLATO Events

PLATO does not provide alcoholic beverages at PLATO-sponsored events, nor does it encourage

members to bring their own alcoholic beverages to PLATO-sponsored events (e.g. No “bring your own bottle” statements on event announcements). This policy is not meant to prohibit individual members from purchasing alcoholic beverages at PLATO meal events where the site venue has a bar at which members can purchase alcohol with their own funds.

Exceptions to this policy must be explicitly approved in advance by the Board of Directors.

(Approved June 8, 2018)

FINANCIAL

Nonprofit Status

PLATO is a nonprofit corporation organized under Wisconsin law and is recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

Memorandum of Agreement

PLATO is affiliated with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and its Department of Continuing Studies (DCS). UW-Madison and PLATO are parties to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) relating to the purchase of services from the University. This MOA is typically renegotiated every two years.

The MOA gives PLATO the option of operating directly with vendors or individuals from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Continuing Studies. With transactions or contracts involving other entities within UW-Madison, or contract transactions such as bus trips, catering or facility use, with potential liability, PLATO members need to operate through UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies and UW-Madison purchasing.

Expenditures

For transactions involving outside vendors, PLATO members should ensure that the purchase or obligation they are undertaking is within the budget of the relevant committee. In general, financial transactions other than bus trips, catering or facility use (which involve potential liability) should be handled within PLATO’s traditional mechanism for reimbursement, including

obtaining committee chair approval for purchases over \$50 and forwarding invoices or receipts promptly to the PLATO Treasurer for payment or reimbursement.

Committees may spend budgeted funds without further approval. Committees wishing to make non-budgeted expenditures or spend on a budgeted item substantially in excess of the amount budgeted must obtain prior approval from the PLATO Board.

Budgets

Each spring, the Treasurer, with input from committee chairs, shall submit a proposed budget for the following fiscal year for Board approval.

Vehicle Rental

PLATO does not carry insurance for rental vehicles, thus it does not allow its officers, committee members or members to rent vehicles without a driver. For most PLATO events members drive their own vehicles. If it is desired to have members travel in one vehicle, various size vans and buses can be rented from commercial carriers such as Badger Bus, Van Galder/Coach USA and others that provide a driver and carry insurance. Because of the lack of insurance for PLATO there are no exceptions to this policy.

PLATO does not authorize nor encourage members to use their personal vehicles to give rides to other members. If a PLATO member chooses to give a ride to another member, they are doing so on their own, under their own insurance.

(Approved February 9, 2018)

Honoraria and Expenses

Honoraria policy generally falls into one of four categories as follows:

Courses – PLATO does not pay honoraria or expenses to speakers at courses.

Special Events – the Special Events Committee has a budget overseen by the chairperson. Honoraria are sometimes built into the event cost and paid, often to a person's charity.

PLATO Annual Meeting and Board authorized special activities – these are overseen and

approved by the Board.

Volunteers – honoraria or expenses are not paid to PLATO volunteers, with the exception of waiver of registration fees for trip organizers and assistants.

(Approved December 13, 2019)

CURRICULUM

Course Approval

New courses may be proposed by any member, following procedures established by the Curriculum Committee.

The Curriculum Committee anticipates approving proposals for new and ongoing courses submitted by potential and current course coordinators. The committee reserves the right to reject any course. The decision will be based on a review of the course's content, the interests or experience of the individual coordinating the course, and his/her willingness to abide by PLATO policies in leading the course.

Course coordinators and presenters are volunteers and do not receive remuneration for teaching.

Course Host Locations

Venues for PLATO courses include, but are not restricted to: senior centers, residential communities, libraries, churches, community centers and banks. Sites meeting the needs of members typically provide the following:

1. Ample parking.
2. A location close to city bus lines.
3. Accessibility for the physically handicapped.
4. Connections for audio-visual equipment and/or internet access. The equipment may be owned by the facility, PLATO or the course coordinator. Fees paid to venues are determined by the PLATO Board.

Nonmember Participation

Nonmembers may attend the first two sessions of a course at no cost, but if they intend to continue with the course, they should join PLATO by paying the appropriate fee. Residents of host facilities are exempt from fees when participating in PLATO activities at their residence.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Managing Inappropriate or Unsafe Behavior

PLATO is committed to providing a welcoming, safe and respectful environment for all participants in PLATO's many local activities and on its various out of town events such as bus trips.

Event Coordinators have the responsibility for promoting and maintaining this welcoming and safe environment. PLATO Event and Associate Trip Coordinators should have patience, understanding and an awareness of the physical challenges and disabilities that some adults may face.

When necessary, respectful dialogue concerning any perceived inappropriate behavior should be initiated. Individuals should be reminded of the negative effects of such behavior on their fellow participants. Participation may be denied, temporarily or permanently, if a participant has displayed a history of inappropriate behavior. Event and Trip Coordinators can expect the full support of the Special Events Committee Chair and PLATO Board should any formal action be necessary.

(Approved August 21, 2015; Updated September 15, 2017)

PLATO does not authorize external recordings of any PLATO function.

(Approved December 14, 2018)

Disability Issues

PLATO fully values the Americans with Disabilities Act and welcomes people with disabilities at its events. However, PLATO's Event Coordinators and Bus Drivers do not provide assistance with boarding and exiting the bus, navigating the venues or with Activities of Daily Living such as

eating, taking medications or using the rest room. Participants unable to manage these necessary activities themselves must bring, at their expense, a companion to assist them.

Committee members will assess all venues and trips regarding mobility and disability issues. Information about hearing assistance and general mobility issues such as wheelchair availability, many stairs or much walking should be provided with each event's promotional materials.

(Approved September 15, 2017)

Nonmember Surcharge

Nonmember guests of PLATO members may participate in PLATO special events trips. Nonmember guest registration fees will include a surcharge to cover indirect costs. The fee will be a percentage of the member registration fee and be set to cover not less than the total of all indirect costs. The rate shall be set annually by the treasurer, in consultation with the Special Events chair.

(Approved December 13, 2019)

Bus Trip Accessibility

Participants must be able to climb steps to board and exit the bus. Those who need assistance should be advised to bring a friend to provide the required assistance. Trip organizers will not be responsible for providing this assistance. **Trip Registration materials will describe accessibility limitations.**

Refunding Trip Cancellations

This policy provides guidelines for refunds when trips are canceled and to establish a restricted trips' account (RTA) to pay for refunds and to pay for potential annual trip operating losses.

- Whenever a decision is made by the PLATO trip coordinator(s) to cancel Special Events Trip due to unforeseen circumstances, such as weather, all paid participants shall be entitled to a full refund.
 - A surcharge representing a percentage of direct trip costs will be added to each participant's trip fee to help fund a RTA to offset losses when trip cancellations occur. The rate shall be set annually by the treasurer, in consultation with the

Special Events chair. The RTA will only be charged for trips that require the advance purchase of non-refundable tickets.

- At the end of each fiscal year if there is an overall surplus of revenues over expenses for trips that surplus will be added to the RTA. If, at the end of the fiscal year there is an overall deficit of revenues and expenses, then that amount will be debited from the RTA, and added to the PLATO general revenues account.
- It is anticipated that there will be very few instances when trips will be canceled or that there will be overall annual operating losses for trips. Thus, it is anticipated that, over time, the RTA will accumulate sufficient funds to pay for these infrequent events. On an annual basis, the Treasurer, SE Chair, and the SE Trip Coordinator will review the status of the RTA to determine if adjustments to the surcharge or other actions need to be taken to preserve the adequacy of the funds available in the RTA.

(Approved December 13, 2019)

MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATION

Fee Waiver/Modification

A person who cannot afford the annual PLATO membership fee should contact the PLATO Administrative Assistant. The PLATO Administrative Assistant will offer the person the option of joining for a reduced fee (50% of the established membership fee). The PLATO Admin. Assistant will keep this information confidential, and will only report aggregate numbers. This option will need to be renewed annually by the member. A complete fee waiver may only be implemented in unusual situations and with the approval of the PLATO President.

Member Information and Privacy Policy

PLATO maintains the following information about its members: name, address, telephone number, email address, year of birth, how they learned about PLATO, their areas of interest,

whether they would be willing to share their knowledge and whether they would be willing to serve on a PLATO committee. Member information is stored in a secure database. PLATO only uses this information to benefit PLATO members. PLATO member information is never sold or provided to outside organizations for commercial purposes. This information may only be used for PLATO purposes.

(Approved September 19, 2014)

Member Directory Listing

PLATO provides a member directory to facilitate communications among PLATO members. The directory lists the member's name, address, telephone number and email address. Members may designate which items should be displayed or opt out of being listed in the directory by contacting the PLATO office. The directory will be in electronic format. Members wishing a paper copy may contact the PLATO office to request that a copy be mailed to them not more than once a year.

(Approved September 19, 2014; Updated November 20, 2015)

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Library System may access the electronic membership directory to facilitate issuance of UW Library Courtesy Cards to PLATO Members (a PLATO membership benefit).

(Approved May 15, 2015)

Communications to Members

The primary means of communication from PLATO to its members shall be the Tuesday PLATO Update delivered via email. The Tuesday Update is designed to work in concert with the PLATO website. It should provide PLATO members with access to all the news they need to fully enjoy their membership. It also goes to other interested parties (non-PLATO members) who are added to the list at the request of the board. Whenever possible, the Update will contain a link to the PLATO website where readers can find fuller information. **PLATO's administrative staff shall have exclusive authority to send out e-mail communications.**

Under normal circumstances, **only one e-mail blast should be released in a week** out of respect for our members' time and to establish the weekly Updates as a predictable and meaningful vehicle of information.

On some occasions, the PLATO executive committee acting collectively or the PLATO president may authorize exceptions. The expectation is that these shall be few and the following list offers **guidelines to the executive committee regarding the circumstances in which it should consider granting an exception:**

- High priority organization-wide events and activities that need extra focus. An example would be: the opening of registration for courses at the beginning of a new semester.
- Organization-wide voting or an organization-wide poll or survey where a link is embedded and restricted to members. An example would be: ballots for election of officers or satisfaction surveys.
- Organization-wide events that require registration or a financial transaction. Examples would be: the Annual meeting or a fund development appeal.
- Sudden events of importance to members that were not known prior to the weekly update, but which would take place before the release of the following week's update.

Emergency announcements affecting health or safety should be made at the judgment of Staff without requiring executive committee or president's approval. An example might be: announcements of cancellations due to weather.

(Approved April 13, 2018)

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Fund Development Expenses

The activities of the Fund Development Committee shall be entirely self-funded.

WEBSITE, MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND GUIDELINES

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the PLATO website is to provide members with accurate and timely information about PLATO's offerings and services. It and the PLATO Weekly Update email constitute the authoritative sources of PLATO communications. The secondary mission of the PLATO website is to provide information about PLATO to prospective members and the public.

Objectives

1. To provide members and the public with relevant and timely information regarding PLATO and its programs

2. To provide online access to join and renew memberships and to register for PLATO courses and events
3. To provide a secure, online method of paying for PLATO services
4. To provide potential members with information about PLATO and an online method for joining
5. To provide a source for the latest version of PLATO organizational documents

Guidelines

To ensure the website mission is accomplished, the website should:

1. Reflect the breadth of PLATO offerings — Members and site visitors should see that PLATO offers classes and special events as well as provides ways to connect and share.
2. Take a balanced approach to content — The Home page is the gateway to the website, providing direction and access to other content. As such there is a high demand for space on the Home page. Consequently, the placement of content on the Home page should be dynamic and flexible with the goal of providing a balance between information fundamental to PLATO's mission and responding to time-sensitive activities and events.
3. Offer an easy and secure means to join or renew membership and to register for courses and events.
4. Provide an appealing and professional appearance, including the consistent use of PLATO brand identity, typography, colors, images, and graphics.
5. Posted content should be informational in nature and related to PLATO sponsored activities or services.

(Approved Dec. 14, 2018)

REVISION OF POLICIES

This document is to be reviewed annually and updated if needed.

(Revised May 16, 2014)