

PLATO Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2023

(Approved on August 11, 2023)

Board Present: Rod McKenzie, Mike Kernats, Kathy Brown, Jatinder Cheema, Kathie Burman, Tim Otis, Hedy Lukas, Carla Di Iorio, MaryJo MacSwain, Jack Mitchell,

Non-voting Guests Present: Marian Fisher, Tobey Marsceill, Steve Sparks, and Edie Urness-Pondillo

PLATO Staff: Stephanie Steigerwaldt

- 1) **Approval of Draft Board Meeting Minutes** from April 14, 2023 – Motion made to approve and passed.
- 2) **Treasurer's Update:** Cheema presented her proposed FY2023-2024 budget and committee chairs shared some highlights. **A motion was made to approve the budget. Motion was approved.** Discussion highlights included:
 - a) Curriculum – Kathie Burman reported that they are considering a revival of a Coordinator Lunch in order to provide coordinators with a social opportunity to catch up and share what is new with their course offerings – this would additionally require funding.
 - b) Membership & Communications – Asking for \$2,000 in program initiatives such as the annual survey and potential associated data mining costs, as well as \$1,000 for potential advertising/promotion initiatives and graphic web design software like Canva.
 - c) Cheema noted that it is a challenge to provide actuals in real time because we receive actuals on a quarterly basis.
 - d) As soon as FY23 ends (June 30), we will submit for Ed Fund reimbursement in order to close the typical gap which can be as long as nine months. Cheema, Tim and Steph will be meeting in the near future to review this process.
 - e) There was a question of whether we operate on a cash or accrual basis? PLATO has operated on a cash basis for about the last four years. Each approach has pros and cons.
 - f) There was discussion of whether member dues need to be raised. PLATO needs 1,085 members paying \$60/year in order to meet current budget. We currently have 912 members, so we are 173 members (\$10,380) short. However, we have substantial combined savings of about \$84K so raising dues will continue to be a discussion topic, but it isn't urgent. We are still coming out of the pandemic so there is room for improvement. This will be very closely monitored going forward.
 - g) There was a suggestion to make it easier to make a direct donation to PLATO's operations via the website. Currently, it is clear how to make a donation to the PLATO Education Fund but not to PLATO itself. Can we add an easy way to donate to PLATO's operations when people renew their annual memberships? This will be an agenda item at the next EC meeting.
- 3) **Committee Items:**
 - a) **Agora** – The Agora, Volume 8 is moving along – Edie is working on the estimate for the printing and mailing costs.

- b) **Special Events** – Still no new Chair to take over when Carla and Mike retire at the end of June 2023. None of the current SEC members are able to take over the Chair position as they all put in substantial volunteer hours with their current commitments. There is hope that because these volunteers are so experienced that the overall SEC will hold together in the months to come until a new Chair is appointed.
- c) **Membership & Communications** – There was a discussion about the goals of this committee. Hedy explained that M&C is directed to maintain membership, not drive membership. And now that PLATO has experienced a drop in membership, perhaps it is time to revisit these internal target goals? Do we want to set a goal of reaching 1,085 members? COVID and losing DCS support were urgent issues that shifted the landscape. More reflection is needed on this subject.
- d) **Fund Development** – The PLATO Education Fund is going into its 12th year – the first year PLATO gave \$12,000 in donations and this year we are giving \$46,000! The Fund provides financial assistance to low-income, marginalized adult students pursuing a college education, and to support educational opportunities for learners of all ages through local community organizations. There was a question about whether there is a goal of how much goes to adults versus kids and the answer was no, there is no goal. **Tim Otis presented the 2023-24 Proposed Education Fund Budget**, explaining that the Committee has a goal of donating the full amount raised each year plus an additional amount that has been accrued in interest to bring down the savings balance and be as generous as possible:

Returning Adult Student Program, UW Madison:	\$14,000
Odyssey Project, UW Madison:	\$6,000
MAYDM, teaches stem skills to young girls:	\$5,000
Lussier Com. Ed. Center, Education for pre-teens:	\$5,000
CLIMB USA, teaches financial literacy to youth:	\$5,000
Madison Literacy Network, teaches English language	\$5,000

Add the following Program:

Badger Ready Program: 2 nd chance to earn a BA degree:	\$6,000
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Total recommended funding for FY 2023-24:	\$46,000
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A motion was made to approve the FY2023-24 Education Fund budget of \$46,000. Motion was approved.

Next Board Meeting: Friday, August 11, 2023 @ 9:30am