

PLATO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

November 21, 2014

DCS Office, 21 North Park, Madison, WI

Present: Mary Boyd (President), Patricia Becker, Sybil Better, Bob Blitzke, Lauren Blough, Lewis Bosworth, Mike DiIorio, Gail Gordon, Aleta Murray, Scott Kolar, Tim Otis, Frank Power, Nina Sparks
DCS: Barry Orton, Louise Fowler,

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Boyd called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Boyd welcomed Nina Sparks who was filling in for Mary DeWolf.
- II. **MINUTES** – Otis recommended that the final sentence of Section IX relating to the Agora be revised to indicate that the Board included \$2,000 for the Agora in this year’s budget and an additional \$2,000 in next year’s budget. On a motion by Power and a second by Kolar, the revised minutes were approved.
- III. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – Boyd reported that the Annual Luncheon will be held on May 20, 2015 at the Nakoma Golf Club. Possible luncheon speakers were identified. Boyd and Power will follow-up.

The Spring Preview will be held on February 18, 2015 at the Senior Center. A different format will be used with all coordinators seated at tables on the first floor.

- IV. **DCS REPORT** – Orton reported that the PLATO office is substantially complete.

Access to some 7th floor corridors will be limited. Use main corridors to access interior rooms.

A program for PLATO members interested in becoming guest auditors is being held this afternoon.

UW will be offering 6 MOOCs starting in February. The UW has offered to create discussion groups for PLATO members taking these MOOCs. Gordon, on behalf of the communication committee, offered to publicize these classes and help coordinate discussion groups.

- V. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – PLATO is now managing its own revenues. As a result of this change, Otis presented Orton with a check for over \$15,000 which represents the first reconciliation.

The financial reports for FY 2014 were distributed and reviewed. Revenues exceeded expenditures (despite a change from cash to accrual accounting) and total assets grew despite several significant expenditures (e.g., website development, the Agora). With

PLATO doing the accounting, questions from committee chairs and others can be more easily answered. A statement of revenue and expenditures for the first four months of FY 2015 was also distributed and reviewed. These statements will be made available on a regular basis.

A request for donations to the PLATO Fund will be mailed soon. The Fund Development committee recommends that donations to the PLATO Fund be split equally between scholarships for adult returning students and the Odyssey Project. The Board will ultimately determine the allocation between these two areas.

Financial record-keeping is becoming more complex and time-consuming (e.g., the volume of trips is expected to double with travelers having more options). It no longer seems reasonable to expect a volunteer to do the necessary back-end work. Otis proposed that he and Gordon be authorized to negotiate with bookkeeping services to do the trip revenue and expenditure reconciliation with the cost of this service to be covered by trip participants. On a motion by Becker and a second by Power, bookkeeping services will be investigated with a report back to the Board at its next meeting.

Otis also recommended that PLATO develop structures and systems to better manage the organization including decision making and setting of priorities. Although the PLATO Board normally does not meet in December, Boyd proposed that this be the sole focus of a meeting on December 19th from 9 – 11 am. On a motion by Otis and a second by Becker, the December meeting was approved.

VI. AGORA REPORT – Becker reported that a request for submissions was sent in October. In addition, an e-mail request for donations was sent to members interested in the Agora. Otis expressed concern that this fund raising was not done in consultation with the Fund Development Committee and in the absence of explicit Board approval. He stressed the importance of developing processes so that fundraising initiatives do not overlap. Also, accounting systems are needed to handle earmarked donations.

VII. ARTS CAFÉ – Bosworth reported on plans for an Arts Café to be held on December 9th at the Senior Center featuring members whose work had appeared in previous editions of the Agora. At this event, donations for the Agora will be sought. Concerns about fundraising in the absence of coordination with the Fund Development Committee and processes for handling donations were again raised.

IX. Task Force Report on Mission, Vision and Core Values – Power reported that the task force met two times and made some modest revisions in the existing mission, vision and values statements of PLATO. On a motion by Power and a second by Murray, the Board approved the Ad Hoc Long Range Planning Committee's revision of Plato's vision, mission and core value statements as PLATO's official version of same until the Board of Directors determines otherwise. On a motion by Power and a second by Murray, the Board also approved replacing the existing mission statement in Article IV of the PLATO bylaws with the revised mission statement.

Boyd discussed using the upcoming retreat to develop goals for the next two years. She recommended that the retreat be held prior to the start of the spring semester. Fowler will query members about their availability in late January and early February.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Committee – Sparks commented on recent visits to meet with potential members. Boyd suggested that the group have a table at the Senior Center’s health fair next fall. Power recommended reaching out to sites attracting younger people such as pre-retirement programs.

PLATO currently has 919 members.

Communications Committee - Gordon reported that the conversion to exclusive use of Wild Apricot for the website was underway. Trips are already on Wild Apricot and the Curriculum Committee’s needs are in the process of being addressed.

The deadline for the next issue of the Persimmon is December 10th.

Special Events – Blitzke reported on the positive response to the “independent study” option. Questions were raised whether this unstructured activity might be used by people planning to engage solely in non-educational or non-cultural activities. It also raises again the issue of PLATO’s decision-making processes.

Curriculum – Bosworth indicated that the Committee’s minutes had been previously e-mailed to Board members. Blough reported that there would be 5 classes this winter and 39 this spring.

XI. REIMBURSEMENT – The official forms should be used when seeking reimbursement. Copies are available from Otis.

XII. CALENDAR

December 12th - officers meeting.

December 19th from 9-11 am - next board meeting (note earlier start time).

December 19th from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm at Biaggi’s - holiday gathering.

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sybil Better

Approved by the PLATO Board on December 16, 2014.