



# Society for Technical Communication

Board of Directors  
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago E/F  
Atlanta, GA  
5 May 2009

## Call to Order

Cindy Currie called the meeting to order at 9:00 am EDT (GMT-4). A quorum was established and the Board approved the agenda.

## Attendees

### Board

- Cindy Currie, President
- Mike Hughes, 1st Vice President
- Hillary Hart, 2nd Vice President
- Aiessa Moyna, Treasurer
- Char James-Tanny, Secretary
- Mark Clifford, Immediate Past President
- Karen Baranich, Director
- Nicky Bleiel, Director
- Lori Corbett, Director
- Leah Guren, Director (came late)
- Judith Herr, Director
- Steve Jong, Director
- Rich Maggiani, Director
- Lisa Pappas, Director

### Office

- Susan Burton, CAE, CEO
- Diana Buttram, COO
- Tom Gorski, Director of Communications
- Lloyd Tucker, Director of Membership & Education

### Guests

- Jackie Damrau, Nominating Committee Chair

## Agenda

Who's Who...Roles & Responsibilities  
Mentoring and Leadership Development  
Strategic Plan  
Board Restructuring Task Force  
Membership Dues  
Meetings  
Communication  
Next Steps  
Calendar

## Who's Who...Roles & Responsibilities

Ms. Currie displayed lists of directors, office staff, and supporting outsourced personnel. Ms. Burton discussed the responsibilities for directors and the legal perspective. Ms. Currie emphasized the relationship of the Board (strategic) and the office (operational).

## Mentoring and Leadership Development

Mr. Clifford will be this year's mentor for new Board members.

## Strategic Plan

Ms. Currie posted the new strategic plan, where the number one item is "Ensure the Viability" of the Society.

**A motion was made to accept the new priority levels of the strategic plan. Larry Kunz will take all comments from the Strategic Planning Workshop and incorporate them as sub-items into the new Strategic Plan. A friendly amendment was made to change the order to 1, 3, 2, 4, 5, so as to further emphasize how the value is communicated. It was pointed out that defining the profession (#2) is required to set the value. Further layout suggestions to the graphic were suggested. Communicate the Value (#3) takes more of the office time than Define the Profession (#2), which is primarily done by volunteers. It was suggested that the design go back to being a circle. It was then pointed out that the Board's primary goal for the year is #1, Ensure the Viability, and that the other strategic goals support that one. Membership must be retained for the next year or STC will be out of business in two years. The friendly amendment passed. The motion passed.**

## Board Restructuring Task Force

Mr. Clifford discussed the original restructuring plan, which included fewer directors in total and a mix of invited and elected directors. The new restructuring plan reduces the number of directors by 2 and removes the 2nd Vice President from the presidential chain.

The Board needs to identify the skills that are needed going forward so they can find appropriate candidates. By removing the 2nd Vice President from the chain, presidential burnout is reduced.

The number of directors (8) was originally directed by the number of regions (which are no longer used). Therefore, it is possible that fewer directors are needed on the Board.

Mr. Clifford presented a timeline of activities for the Task Force. The new restructuring proposal affects the Bylaws and requires communication with members. All Nominating Committee guidelines will need to be changed.

A Knowledge-based Survey will collect member opinions on the proposal. The Board can vote to change the bylaws, but would like to get members' opinions.

It was pointed out that the number of directors cannot immediately be dropped as there would be a gap in the setup because of the cycle (three directors, three directors, and two directors elected annually for three-year terms). Also, people would like to know if the trade-off between the loss of experience and the savings is worth it.

Messaging can include that this is part of becoming a leaner and meaner Board. It was noted that Board experience is very helpful.

**The will of the Board is for the Task Force to proceed.**

## Membership Dues

The Basic Membership Package currently includes :

- Online publications
- Advance notice at Career Center
- Members-only website
- Free sponsored seminars
- Access to professional development, including the Body of Knowledge
- Exclusive discounts on products
- Access to Aberdeen research

**A motion was made to take down the STC Forums website as per the SPA recommendation. The historical perspective of the forums is that they tend to take an inordinate amount of staff time, and removing them will help STC save both time and money. The message should include information about the new system scheduled to go online soon. A friendly amendment was made to change the wording from "to take down" to "to suspend". The friendly amendment was accepted. It was discussed that the STC Forums are only a semi-official forum of the STC, are hosted on an external server, and are outside the control of the office. A friendly amendment was made to change the motion to "Suspend support for the STC Forums website as per the SPA recommendation, requiring a change in URL, removal of the STC logo, and removal of the W3C logo." The motion passed unanimously.**

The possible membership add-ons and their approximate costs are:

- Chapter membership (\$25)
- SIG membership (\$10)
- TechComm (printed, annual) (\$35)
- Intercom (printed, annual) (\$45)
- Salary database (online and printed) (\$20)

The discussion centered around various pricing plans. It was mentioned that if the price is under \$200, it should be close to that number (for example, \$195), but if going over \$200, then it should be way over (for example, \$250) for psychological reasons.

The Board discussed subscription costs for the publications.

Offering monthly payments has been suggested. It would require hiring another membership person.

**A motion was made to set a base membership price of at least \$240 that includes a printed version of Intercom or Tech Comm, and that everything else is an add-on. The motion was withdrawn.**

**A motion was made that the staff set up various plans that include the options discussed this weekend and bring them with projections back to the Board, where the final cost is under \$300 and the base price is at least \$195. The plans must be ready by the June concall with approval at the July concall at the latest. The motion passed unanimously.**

The office review will include the tier membership information. Given the current economy, Tier 2 countries are on par with Tier 1, and Tier 3 countries may need to be re-evaluated but should continue to be subsidized.

It has been suggested that student dues are also raised the same percentage as standard membership. If the dues are raised more than that, the Board should revisit students' voting rights. (Student dues are equivalent to one venti latte per month.)

A Planned Giving plan was suggested last year and should be brought forward this year.

The office will present scenarios to the Board that include all levels of membership.

## Meetings

The Board must decide about next year's face-to-face meetings. The staff will ask the individual directors which hotels they have frequent traveler plans at; directors are willing to share rooms.

Meetings will be held in mid-November and before the beginning of next year's Summit.

The Board would like to hold monthly concalls that are shorter and more focused. Ms. Currie will be in touch with the schedule for the Strategic Planning call.

Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month starting at 11:30. Ms. James-Tanny will send a preliminary schedule to all directors. The tentative schedule is:

- 7 July 2009
- 4 August 2009
- 8 September 2009
- 6 October 2009
- 8 December 2009 (if needed; the Board doesn't always meet in December)
- 5 January 2010
- 9 February 2010
- 9 March 2010
- 6 April 2010

The next face-to-face meeting will be held 13-14 November 2009.

## Communication

Ms. Currie asked that everyone read all communications from the Board and follow any instructions in the emails (for example, reply to the appropriate people when requested and not the entire board).

## Next Steps

Ms. Burton verified that all directors have copies of *Managing Transitions*.

## Calendar

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, 9 June 2009, at 11:30 am. Slides are due 2 June 2009.

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm EDT (GMT-4).