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**Society for Technical Communication**

**Board of Directors Meeting Summary**

**01-02 November 2019, Fairfax, VA**

# Agenda Items

Friday 01 November

* 8:30-8:45 Welcome and Icebreaker
* 8:45-10:15 Consent agenda, October meeting items
  + CEO Report (30 min)
  + Finance Report (30 min)
  + Diversity Advisory panel (15 min)
* 10:15-10:30 break
* 10:30-12:00 Begin education strategy discussion--current portfolio strengths and weaknesses, Roundtable, CPTC, courses, webinars, etc., opportunities

Lunch (noon-1:30)

* 1:30-2:30 Continue education strategy discussion-- strawman models, next steps
* 2:30-3:15 Conference committee report and discussion
  + Committee 30 min
  + Board discussion 15 min
* 3:15-3:30 Break
* 3:30-4:15 Nominating Committee
* 4:15-5 Membership Engagement task force

Adjourn for the day

Saturday 02 November

* 8:30-11:15 Budget, Strategy, Resource allocation discussions
* 11:15-12:00 Non-Dues Revenue task force
  + Bernard 30 min
  + Board discussion 15 min

Lunch (noon-1:30)

* 1:30-2 CAC Report
* 2-3 What’s the Future--SWOT, gaining a competitive advantage
* 3-3:15 Break
* 3:15-4 Committee Liaison reports
  + CAA, DCSA
  + Associate Fellow
  + Fellow, Audit, STX/AS, Business Value
  + BoK, Tech Comm Journal Editor Selection
  + Jay R Gould, Ken Rainey
  + Scholarship, SIG-specific community model
* 4-4:15 Wrap up; Adjourn.

# Consent Agenda

* Approve September 26 Minutes and Summary

The meeting was called to order at 8:36am. A quorum was established.

Mr Woelk welcomed the board and started an icebreaker exercise.

The agenda was approved. The consent agenda was approved.

# CEO Report

Ms Pohland presented the CEO report for September/October.

**Membership**

Membership by category YOY details were presented for 2017, 2018, and 2019.

2020 membership YTD – 447 members so far, (down 158 on last year at this time). Revenue is $86k, which is $51k behind the straightline budget, $36k below FY19 at this time.

**Education revenue and attendance**

Huge number of attendees (1957 YTD compared to 1010 at this time in 2018), with $88k in revenue. Revenue is not increasing in line with the increased numbers of attendees. Ms Ventura finished with STC yesterday. Ms Gilliam is going to help with education and build a pipeline for the end of the year. The Education committee has been doing more of the pipeline work.

**Certification**

107 exams taken this year, 24 purchased but not yet sat. STC CC’s bank balance is $16,619.94. The board should consider naming members of the STC CC in the future to oversee the funds. Practitioner exam is close to being launched. Association Headquaqrters will be providing a ¼ time staff person to manage the certification program, CEUs, iMIS data, etc.

**Roundtable**

Roundtable committee met last week, very concerned with the general lack of interest in the program. Need marketing assistance.

**Summit**

Conference committee met 11-12 Oct. Program is finalised, Mr Fiagbedzi is preparing the website for the program launch. 2020 conference registration opens today. Keynote speaker has been proposed by the committee.

A venue for 2022 Summit has been selected.

**Association Headquarters update**

Contract was signed at end of October; the term is 1 Dec 2019 – 31 Dec 2022. Begin transitioning next week. Wanting to hire in a curator for education rather than an administrator.

Schedule of fees was presented, as well as the scope of works.

Industrial Relations contract – to start on 1 Jan 2020 through to 31 Dec 2022.

**Office updates**

Rent payments start this month after the initial free period. Less than half of what we used to pay in the old office. Salary database is almost complete. Editor RFP has been posted for Technical Communication journal.

Machine Learning project proposal from Laura Bellamy at VMWare. She has a three month sabbatical during which she can undertake a special project. Has several project ideas.

Updates on staff were presented.

# Finance Report

Mr Bousquet presented the society financial report to end Sept, 2019.

Mr Baehr left the room at 9:24am.

Assets - $539,027. Cash and investments up on 2018.

Liabilities – $669,740. AP lower than 2018.

Mr Baehr rejoined the room at 9:26am.

Total net assets - -$(130, 713). 2019 pattern of total net assets is similar to 2018.

Revenue - $1,475,454. Webinars aren’t performing the way we’ve budgeted for them. At a bit over 50% of budget. Membership dues realised so far are $75k below budget. Expecting sponsorship payments to come in.

Expenses – personnel variance still favourable. Total - $1,294,587; lower than budget by $187k.

Operating change in net assets - $180,867 (against a budget of $53,851).

Total change in net assets - $229,434 (against budget of $75k). Investments are up $48k this year.

*Move that the board accept the financial report for September, 2019.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

Cash projection to end 2019 was discussed.

Investments

The Finance and Investment committee have reviewed the investment portfolio. Details were presented.

# Diversity advisory panel

Ms Taylor went through the draft charter for the Diversity advisory panel.

The scope should include global initiatives, considerations around global inclusion. 3-5 members. Should have a formal calendar of meetings, as well as being able to respond to ad hoc requests/interactions from the staff or board.

Would like the panel to be actively looking at what we’re doing, for example reviewing the website, with diversity issues in mind. Could also provide business cases to help us recruit members from diverse groups, other locales, proactive component to their work. Provide guidelines/checklist for planning to ensure diversity is being considered. Think about these things when we’re marketing.

Quarterly reports to the boards, and advise communities as required.

Ms Taylor will update the charter for review by the board.

The meeting paused at 9:53 am.

The meeting re-started at 10:17am.

# Education Strategy

Ms Pohland compiled some data on education revenue in the past six years. The board discussed various matters relating to education.

Budget and attendance since 2015 was discussed. Attendance is generally over 1000/year. Reviewed the webinar details for 2018 – list of topics, number of registrants, number of attendees, revenue per webinar.

Is there competition with the community education offerings? Fewer courses have gone ahead in 2019 than in 2018. Often get last minutes registrations for courses. Not a lot of advance notice for presenters. Current pricing of the education offerings was presented. Pricing of webinars and courses has been the same since 2014. Needs to cover Go-To-Webinar, phone expenses, and if an honorarium is offered.

Benchmarking research needed. Can the offerings be simplified? Ideas from the Non-Dues Revenue taskforce are primarily around education.

Part of our mission is to provide education to our members. Reaching more in webinars than in courses. Could STC offer an online conference? Can some of the seminars be repackaged for higher education?

Would like to see more sponsored webinars offered that are free for members.

What do Gold members value the most about their membership?

Ms Palmer left the room at 11:05am. Ms Palmer came back into the room at 11:07am.

What should the STC educational offerings look like?

The vision for the new education manager role was discussed.

There is potential to change the Education Advisory Panel to a committee. Get feedback from the Education Advisory Panel on role and their input on how the committee can work.

Education curation needs to be holistic across all educational offerings.

The meeting paused for lunch at 11:48am.

The meeting resumed at 1:30pm.

# Continue education strategy discussion

Ms Palmer led a discussion on the future potential for society educational offerings.

What is the future of the field?

Could focus education around the certification 9 core areas. Audit what’s in the current slate of classes so that we know where it should go.

Shifting from traditional “tech writing” to other areas? Software people with writing skills – a potential future increasing audience/segment of the field.

Ms Pohland receives requests on a traditional tech writing course, as it’s not available anywhere else. Either people new to the profession or want to transition into it. Get requests for tool training as well. Could easily be sponsored by the tool vendors.

STEM

What about some courses on the basic fundamentals? Focus back in on the verticals identified by the industry council. Need to be able to execute and know/do what we do really well.

How do we resource this? Hope to get an LMS in the future; are currently reliant on the Instructors to build the courses.

Excellent opportunities with foundations. Marketing is required. Can some of the foundations be repurposed for discipline-specific content?

Inventory/content audit of what we have now. Where do they apply to verticals? Where are the gaps?

Mr Woelk left the room at 2:11pm.

Use job ads to identify potential educational trends.

Mr Woelk rejoined the room at 2:13pm.

How does someone transitioning into the field find out about these offerings? Path or coaching for the training they need.

Action plan:

1. Audit of current course list.
2. Make immediate quick fixes
3. Gap analysis – can we identify some short-term gains? (Who is doing this work?? The education committee?)

Need to change Education Panel to a committee and re-charter. Ms Palmber to serve as board liaison for that committee.

Objectives:

* Diversify core short course offerings
* Standardise ID for courses
* List & define major educational offerings and categories so it can be communicated effectively
* Re-assess member educational benefits by category (membership category)
* Determine our educational strengths for marketing purposes
* Expand and align offerings with certification framework
* Repackage “best of” content as customised products for sale
* Hire an SME/TC educational curator
* Research analytics, benchmark, attendance and revenue data on all of our educational offerings (against other associations, etc)
* Determine gap/emerging educational trends
* Create a network of SMEs or Instructors.
* Broaden educational sponsorships
* Develop educational path models.
* Audit existing offerings for viability
* Create education committee

# Conference committee report

Ms Moyna joined the meeting at 2:30pm. Ms Currie was unable to join due to an overlapping commitment. Ms Moyna provided an update on the progress of the Summit 2020 committee.

Went through the goals for the Summit from the original proposal. All have been met thus far.

Went through the still-to-come goals for the Summit, will be working on in coming months.

Summit is unique in that it is backed by the community of STC members and the society. distinguished by being backed by the Society; no other conference like that. STC has community, practitioners, students, educators, and more programs that go beyond what we offer at the Summit.

Registration is open, session details will be populated by Ms Ventura tomorrow (Sat 2 Nov).

Sessions: 160 proposals, accepted 100 (62.5% acceptance rate), Three invited speakers.

Pre-conference workshops - received 21 proposals and accepted 11. Invited four speakers for half or full day workshops. Have 13 pre-conference workshops. Will also have a two-day certification workshop. Pre-conference sessions will have a minimum required number of attendees. All workshops ran in 2019.

Creating some panels by enlisting speakers from speakers who have already been accepted at the Summit.

Overview of the special events for the Summit. Opening Keynote on Friday evening. Honours Reception on Sunday night. Closing session will be Monday morning.

Overall Summit 2020 themes:

* Career Focus
* Enhanced Networking
* Building Community

Ms Moyna left the meeting at 3:09pm.

Need a way for new members to sign up at the conference.

The meeting paused at 3:19pm.

Board meetings at the 2020 Summit are likely to be on Thursday (last 2019-20 board meeting) and Monday afternoon (first 2020 board meeting).

The meeting re-started at 3:34pm.

# Nominating Committee

Ms Taylor and Mr DeLuca left the room at 3:35pm.

The board discussed the proposed slate for the 2020 society election, as prepared by the Nominating Committee.

*Move to waive the requirement that two candidates be presented for the office of Vice President for the 2020 Election.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

*Move to accept the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee for the 2020 Election, excluding the student member due to ineligibility per the bylaws.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

Ms Taylor and Mr DeLuca re-entered the room at 4:24pm.

A request has been received to publicise the election much less than it is, due to competing with other promotions. In general, it is important to streamline the information that is sent to the membership (there may be potential for further streamlining than what was done in the 2019 election).

(Note: This message was issued by the STC Board after the preliminary slate was published, in response to concerns expressed: <https://www.stc.org/notebook/2019/11/14/an-important-message-from-the-stc-board-concerning-the-2020-election/>).

# Membership Engagement task force

Mr DeLuca provided an update on the progress of the Membership engagement taskforce. The team has met four times, including some intensive meetings in the past month. Reviewed and discussed engagement ideas from the team’s point of view. Team: Todd, Kat Kelley, Mirhonda Studevant, Erin Gallalee.

Discussion points – existing resources can be hard to find or are underutilised. Conversation and participation is happening outside of current circles. Some members may be hesitant to participate because they don’t know where to start, what’s available, or who to contact. Some members don’t have personal connections to STC.

Findings are broadly in themes:

* Easier participation
* Broader Reach
* Personal Contact and Touch

CAC is hearing that communities need help finding volunteers.

Reddit - tech writing thread in Reddit is very much alive. There are members in some of these various places, but they aren’t self-identifying as STC members. Enable our members to be brand ambassadors. Various ideas were mentioned.

Mr DeLuca will come back to the board in an upcoming meeting with a strategic plan and calendar.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.

# Saturday 02 November

The meeting was called to order at 8:39am.

Mr Justin Martin from Association Headquarters joined the meeting.

# Budget, Strategy, Resource allocation discussions

Ms Pohland introduced Mr Martin and made starting remarks about the budget.

Ms Pohland went through the assumptions that underpin the budget. Ms Pohland, the board members, and Mr Martin all discussed various aspects of the budget, assumptions, and projections.

Ms Palmer left the room at 8:50am.

Ms Palmer re-entered the room at 8:52am.

Ms Palmer left the room at 9:57am. Mr Bousquet left the room at 9:58am.

Ms Palmer re-joined the room at 10:00am.

Ms Aguad left the room at 10:00am.

Mr Bousquet re-joined the room at 10:02am. Ms Aguad re-joined the room at 10:03am.

Mr DeLuca left the room at 10:07am. Mr DeLuca re-joined the meeting at 10:09am.

Ms Bonsignore left the room at 10:16am. Ms Bonsignore re-joined the meeting at 10:18am.

There are AH staff who are experts in board strategy – would be good to have a full-day strategic exercise at some time mutually convenient between AH and the board that does not add to the board’s travel costs for the year.

Ms Pohland will make updates to the proposed budget based on the discussion today, and advise the board when the budget is updated. Mr Martin had no comments or questions on the proposed budget.

Mr Martin left the meeting at 10:30am.

The meeting paused at 10:52am.

The meeting re-started at 11:15am.

# Non-Dues Revenue task force

Mr Bernard Aschwanden joined the meeting via phone at 11:15am.

Mr Aschwanden provided an update on the activities of the Non-Dues Revenue Taskforce. Mr Aschwanden provided an overview of the individual business cases that have been put together.

An area that overlaps the business cases put forward and an issue Ms Pohland has encountered is when STC is contacted about the society offering training for a company. A list of vetted trainers would be required to be able to offer classes to them.

Ms Palmer left the room at 11:45am.

Action item for Mr Aschwanden – discuss training idea with the task force to put together some ideas for how it could work, guidelines or information for the Education manager to help find the right trainers/talent acquisition management.

Ms Palmer re-joined the meeting at 11:47am.

Are there existing podcasts, YouTube channels, where STC should have presence? Mr Chris Ward and Mr Aschwanden would be happy to work on this idea.

Mr Aschwanden left the meeting at 11:49am.

Ms Wilson provided some updates on advising the Nom Comm of the board’s determination yesterday and they will be contacting all potential candidates on the preliminary slate in the coming week.

The board discussed the budget further.

The meeting paused for lunch at 11:57am.

The meeting re-started at 1:34pm

# CAC Report

Ms Aguad presented a report on the activities of the Community Advisory Committee.

*Move that the board approves the merger of STC East Bay and Berkeley chapters.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

There are three SIGs in need of leadership – Agile, Usability and User Experience, and Women in Tech Comm. The board requested that the CAC provide suggestions back to the board as to what to do. Have members of the SIGs been asked if they will step up to lead the SIG?

The CAC did a survey. Main issues identified – member, or rather, volunteer recruitment (feel almost like they are competing with the society for member volunteers), request for help. Most frequent request for help is related to IT – meetings, listservs, etc. A list of IT requests from communities is to be provided to Ms Pohland. Could the comms from the board to the CAC and members be better? Blog posts? Promote the email address [board@stc.org](mailto:board@stc.org).

Common community concerns – leadership, volunteers, technology, finances, admin.

Community finances were discussed, particularly in relation to community leaders using their personal finances for events or functions. The notion of gift credit cards was discussed, but thought to be too risky, prone to loss, and lacking financial tracking.

# What’s the Future - SWOT

Ms Bonsignore discussed strategy – there’s two types – financial and operational. Certain aspects will be covered by Association Headquarters when our relationship with them commences.

Questions that we need to answer:

* What is our competitive advantage?
  + What are we best at now?
  + What can we do better than anyone else?
* What are our long-term objectives?
  + What does STC look like in 1/3/5 years?
  + What programs are central to that?
  + What resources (people) are needed?
* What short-term goals are on that path?
  + Identify
  + Define
  + Assign

The board undertook a SWOT analysis on STC.

Mr Baehr left the room at 2:44pm. Mr Baehr re-entered the room at 2:46pm.

Objective

* Leader in professional development
  + Engagement
* Clearly market (communicate) our value to personas.
* Become a lean, mean operating machine.
* Focus
* Virtual
* Push and pull opportunities
* Get involved

What is a way to encourage communities to network more?

The meeting paused at 3:00pm.

The meeting re-convened at 3:12pm

# Committee Liaison reports

# CAA, DCSA

Ms Taylor provided an update on the activities of the CAA and DCSA committees.

# Associate Fellow

Mr Baehr noted that applications are coming in, assume chair will call a meeting soon.

# Fellow, Audit, STX/AS, Business Value

Ms Bonsignore provided an update. Fellows going OK. STX/AS going well. Business Value is progressing. Audit no activity until after the end of the financial year.

# BoK, Tech Comm Journal Editor Selection

Ms Palmer provided an update on her committees. The BoK board liaison will transfer to be Mr Baehr, rather than Ms Palmer. Tech Comm journal editor selection – a committee has been formed for the search. The RFP has been released. Ms Palmer has released it with CPTSC, ATTW and other locations. The office has published it on LinkedIn and Facebook. Ms Palmer will become the education committee liaison.

# Jay R Gould, Ken Rainey

Mr Bousquet provided an update. Both awards have nominations due 15 Nov. Jay R Gould currently has a membership requirement of 8 years, but Ken Rainey award has only one year membership as a requirement. Suggest the committee considers the only membership requirement is to be a current member

*Move that both the Jay R Gould and the Ken Rainey award membership criteria be revised to the applicant being a current member of STC.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

Website and guidelines for these awards will have to be updated.

# Scholarship, SIG-specific community model

Mr DeLuca presented an update on the scholarship committee. Will be awarding a $500 scholarship in early 2020.

SIG model – will talk to the CAC and get their suggestions. Work towards a more specific list of recommendations that are both short-term and long-term.

Mr Baehr left the meeting at 3:35pm.

Ms Palmer left the meeting at 3:35pm. Ms Palmer rejoined the meeting at 3:37pm.

Each board member and Ms Pohland made closing comments.

The meeting adjourned at 3:46pm.