Society for Technical Communication

Board of Directors Meeting
Rockbridge Room, Hyatt Dulles
Herndon, VA
15-16 January 2011

Attendees

Board
- **Mike Hughes, President**
- **Hillary Hart, Vice President**
- **Aiessa Moyna, Treasurer**
- **Rachel Houghton, Secretary**
- **Cindy Currie, Immediate Past President**
- **Karen Baranich, Director**
- **Nicky Bleiel, Director**
- **Lori Corbett, Director**
- **Judith Herr, Director**
- **Rich Maggiani, Director**
- **Tricia Spayer, Director**
- **WC Wiese, Director**

Office
- **Kathryn Burton, CAE, CEO**
- **Lloyd Tucker, Deputy Executive Director**
- **Greg Larsen, CFO**
- **Diana Buttram, COO**
- **Steve Skojec, Director of Community Relations**
- **Chip Boyd, IT/Web Content Manager (16 January only)**
- **Kevin Cuddihy, Media Manager (16 January only)**
- **Liz Pohland, Editor (16 January only)**

Guests
- Judith Glick-Smith
- Mikah Sellers, The Bakery (16 January only)

Call to Order

Mr. Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm EST(GMT-5) on 15 January 2011. A quorum was established. An amended agenda was approved by the Board.

Finance

Motion carried to approve September 2010 and October 2010 financials.

Aiessa Moyna reported that STC's reserve accounts balance was $762,569 on 31 December, with an annual rate of return of 10.78%. She noted that while STC's cash position showed only a modest increase at year-end, $150,000 borrowed from STC's line of credit during 2009 had been repaid during 2010 and there had been no need to utilize reserve funds during the year.

Ms. Moyna reported that several communities had yet to submit their budgets for review to the Community Budget Review Committee. A request was made to double-check whether:

1. Chapters are required to have budgets [Note: This requirement is in Community Handbook/Community Requirements; Chapter Bylaws Template/Article IV, Section 2; and the Community Treasurers Manual].
2. Chapters must submit their budgets to the Society [Note: This requirement is in the 2010 budget and funding guidelines].

Certification Committee

Karen Baranich reported that the Certification Task Force had been meeting weekly. Due to legal issues related to certification, the Task Force recommended the creation of a commission to oversee the certification process.

Discussion

Among the issues discussed:

- Board would approve first set of commissioners. After that, the commission would approve future members.
- The process to award certification must be legally defensible. This is important on both the side of issuing the certification and on the decision not to issue the certification.
  - Repeatable results in evaluating submitted materials
  - Training of evaluators
- The commission must be independent from influence by the Board of Directors regarding who should receive certification status.
- The certification of editing skills may require testing since it will be very difficult to prove editing skills based on submitted material. The board requested more information on this item as work moves forward.
- Staff will need to review office Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policy. There may be a need for a certification rider.

A motion was made and seconded to approve, in principle, the concept of a commission, independent of the board, to maintain the integrity of the certification process. The motion passed.

Global Audit Task Force (GATF)

Lori Corbett reported that the GATF members were conducting a phone survey with international members. The group expects to have results ready for distribution by the end of February. The task force was also in the process of reviewing materials on the website for globalization and style in preparation for the launch of the new site.

Organizational Synergies Task Force

W.C. Wiese reported on discussions with the American Society of Indexers (ASI) and the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW).

- ASI
  - There are several areas where they are interested in partnering with STC.
  - Karen Lane has a strong relationship with ASI.
  - Direction needed from the board on what STC may wish to accomplish in addition to the current partner agreement.
- ATTW
  - Tommy Barker has been working very hard to open a dialog.
  - There is potential for extending STC's educational webinars into the schools. The goal would be to build stronger ties with both the academics and with students.
  - Utah State: Senior tech class used Tech Comm as their text for the year. Tommy Baker doing something similar at Texas Tech next year.
  - W.C. and Lloyd will work with Menno de Jong on possible next steps.

Lloyd Tucker noted STC has a formal agreement with ASI, an informal agreement with LISA, and a relatively new MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA). These are primarily geared around shared mailing lists and advertising. The agreement with AMWA is for their mailing list for the western part of the U.S. in order to promote the 2011 Summit. STC provided them with its mailing list for the Midwest to allow them to promote their conference.

Membership

Rich Maggiani reported that initial results from the Membership Committee were somewhat disappointing. In 2011, the committee needs to be in place earlier and major activities need to be ready to go in October.

Mr. Tucker reported that STC ended the year with 7,841 members. Of these, 6,118 were renewals and 1,704 were new members. The 2010 renewal rate was 53.4%.

As of 13 January 2011 , there were 2,561 renewals for 2011 and 505 new members. An encouraging note was that 13 January historic renewals are at 32.7% compared to 27.6% in 2010 and 30.0% in 2009.

Conference and Education

Online education continued to expand in 2010, helping to offset lower than budgeted dues and conference revenue.

- In 2008, STC conducted 14 live web seminars and no online courses. In 2010, STC conducted 41 live web seminars and 11 online courses.
- 2010 Revenue from online education was $175,700.
- In order to better serve international members, the Society coordinated with several Asia-Pacific chapters and some international companies to offer live education at times that were more convenient for those areas.

Mr. Tucker reported that planning for the 2011 Technical Communication Summit was going well:

- Preliminary program was complete except for Institutes.
- Tim O'Reilly has been selected as the 2011 keynote speaker.
- Northern California chapters were working together to promote the conference and to plan activities.
- 134 people registered as of 13 January (compared to 35 in 2010)
- Over half way to goal on sponsorships.

Executive Session

The board entered executive session at 7:40 PM to discuss nominations for Jay R. Gould, Fellow, and Associate Fellow honorary ranks.

The board exited executive session at 7:55 PM.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm EST(GMT-5).

Call to Order

Mr. Hughes called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM EST (GMT-5) on 16 January 2011. It was noted that the agenda had been accepted on the previous day.

Project Phoenix

Mikah Sellers provided a preview of the new STC website to the board and answered questions regarding functionality that would be available when the site launched on 31 January 2011.

On behalf of the board, Mr. Hughes commended STC and The Bakery staff for the excellent work in meeting a very aggressive deadline for the phase one launch of the project.

Mr. Hughes noted that there is a distinction between "tool" and "content." Staff built the tool. The board should be the steward of the site's professional relevance. He strongly encouraged board members to visit the site, fill in their social media profiles, and look for ways to actively promote relevant content on the site to members and outside audiences.

Publication Options

Liz Pohland presented options regarding member-only vs. nonmember access to STC publications. The main focus of the presentation was for Intercom, however the possibility of additional options for Tech Comm was discussed.

Discussion:

Options presented were:
- Closed (current model)
- Semi-Open (various permutations possible). Among models discussed were:
  - Some content free, some content member-only
  - Previous years free to nonmembers
  - Subscriptions for nonmembers
- Open (content freely available to all on the web)

Ms. Pohland noted that the staff recommendation was to work toward a semi-open model. Among rationales for this recommendation were:
- Increased awareness of STC to potential members
- Further STC's educational mission
- The trend of other publications moving to a semi-open model
- Potential increase in advertising (nondues) revenue because of the larger audience for the publications.

The will of the Board was for staff to explore a semi-open strategy for Intercom and present a more fleshed-out proposal for board consideration.

Community Affairs Committee

Judith Herr and Tricia Spayer reported on activities and accomplishments of the Community Affairs Committee (CAC). Among items reported were:
- Non U.S. CAC Reps interacted with several international leaders to better understand their concerns.
- CAC Student Community Reps began the process of revitalizing the STC student membership base. It was noted that the two reps (Sarah Baca and Dan Voss) have a good model to work from, since they are involved in the partnership between the Orlando chapter and the Central Florida University student chapter.
- U.S. CAC Reps counseled several struggling chapters.
- Provided ten Leaders Resource web seminars between June and December 2010.
- Provided guidance and support to the Scientific Communication and Online SIGs.
- Worked with six of the California chapters to jointly host (and promote) the 2011 Technical Communication Summit in Sacramento.

One of the 2010 charges to the committee was for a recommendation on whether the CAC should be an elected body. The committee recommended that there be no move in that direction at this point in time. The need for additional board dialog on this issue was also raised.

Kathryn Burton presented a draft outline of social media groups to be established on the new website. This outline will also be presented to the CAC for discussion.

The purpose of the proposed structure was to address issues of communication to community leaders, as well as providing current community leaders an environment to dialog with each other. It was clarified that board members were not expected to belong to each group.

Social Media Groups – Leadership (Draft)

- Board of Directors
- Society Level Committees
- Community Leaders Announcement Group (required membership)
- Chapter Presidents/Vice Presidents/SIG Mangers Announcement Group (required membership)
- SIG/Chapter Treasurers Announcement Group (required membership)
- Community Leaders Discussion Groups (participation optional)
- Governance Discussion Group
    - Anyone who has ever been a community leaders, committee chair, STC board members (optional), staff liaisons
- Current Chapter Leaders Group
    - Open to all current chapter council members, STC board members, and committee members
    - Strongly suggested for presidents, vice presidents, and treasurers
- SIG Managers Group
    - Open to all current SIG council members, STC board members, committee members, and staff liaisons
- SIG and Chapter Treasurers Group
    - Open to SIG and chapter treasurers, presidents, SIG managers, STC board members, and staff liaisons
- Community Webmasters Group
    - Open to all community webmasters, other community leaders, STC board members, committee members, and staff liaisons
- Others?

Challenges that Face the Profession and STC's Role in Those Challenges

During this period, the board conducted a discussion and brainstorming session regarding challenges facing the profession.

Ms. Houghton left the meeting.

2012 STC Technical Communication Summit

Ms. Burton reported that the Chicago chapter requested that the board review the planned location for the 2012 STC Technical Communication Summit.

The 2012 Summit is currently scheduled to be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont. Members of the Chicago chapter requested that the STC Board of Directors consider moving the event to the Hyatt Regency Chicago in downtown Chicago (Wacker Drive). As an alternative, there was a suggestion to move the conference out of the Chicago area for 2012 and holding the conference in a future year at a downtown hotel.

Ms. Burton informed the board that staff had investigated this option several times over the past years and that the Hyatt Regency Chicago had been unavailable for the Summit dates each time. Mr. Tucker added that neither the Hyatt corporate office nor the Hyatt Regency O'Hare were willing to release STC from its contract regarding the 2012 Summit.

A motion was made and seconded to move the 2012 conference to the Hyatt Regency Chicago. The motion failed unanimously.

Development Program

Hillary Hart proposed creating a development program to look at various ways for individuals to donate to STC.

The will of the Board was for Christopher Juillet and Nancy Hoffman of the Fundraising Task Force to work with Greg Larsen on a more fleshed-out concept and present it to the board.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm EDT (GMT-5).