



Society for
Technical
Communication

Society for Technical Communication

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

Hyatt House, Falls Church, Virginia

30 January 2015 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM EST

31 January 2015 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM EST

Friday, January 30

Attendees

Board

- Kit Brown-Hoekstra, President
- Bernard Aschwanden, Vice President
- Alyssa Fox, Secretary
- Jane Wilson, Treasurer
- Nicky Bleiel, Immediate Past President
- Deanne Levander, Director
- Ben Woelk, Director
- Ray Gallon, Director
- Charles Fisher, Director

Office

- Chris Lyons, CEO
- Molly Jin, Director of Education and Meetings
- Stacey O'Donnell, Director of Membership and Corporate Engagement
- Liz Pohland, Director of Communications

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM EST.

A quorum was established. The agenda was approved.

Consent Agenda Items

- Approval of December 2014 board meeting minutes and summary
- Jay R. Gould awards
- DCSA awards

The consent agenda items were approved.

Agenda Items

- 8:30 AM – Call to order and consent agenda items
- 8:35-8:40 AM – Associate Fellows/Fellows awards
- 8:40-8:55 AM – Executive Director's report (Chris Lyons)
- 8:55-9:10 AM – Treasurer's report (Jane Wilson)
- 9:10-9:20 AM – President's report (Kit Brown-Hoekstra)
- 9:20-9:40 AM – Competitions report (Bernard Aschwanden)
- 9:40-10:00 AM – CAC Report (Ben Woelk)
- 10:00-10:15 AM – BREAK
- 10:15-10:45 AM – Summit Changes (Molly Jin)
- 10:45-11:00 AM – Strategic planning introduction (Chris Lyons)
- 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM – Sustainability discussion (Chris Lyons)
- 12:30-1:30 PM – Lunch with staff
- 1:30-2:45 PM – Promotion of value discussion (Stacey O'Donnell, Liz Pohland)
- 2:45-3:00 PM – BREAK
- 3:00-4:30 PM – Lifelong learning discussion (Molly Jin)
- 4:30-5:00 PM – Wrap-up
- 5:00-6:00 PM – Executive session

Associate Fellows/Fellows Awards

A motion was made that the board approve the Associate Fellows list as presented by the Associate Fellows committee. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

A motion was made that the board approve the Fellows list as presented by the Fellows committee. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Lyons led the board in a discussion of the areas where STC is looking stronger, and where we still need more work to improve our standing. We need to make some changes quickly, and be willing to let some old habits go.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Wilson reviewed the November 2014 financial report. Cash is more than double what it was at this point last year. We have also paid down a significant amount in the line of credit as well, and we will use some of that to reinvest in the stock portfolio.

A motion was made to accept the November financials as presented. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

Community budgeting is well underway.

President's Report

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra sent her mid-year report to Ms. Pohland to be included in an upcoming issue of the Intercom magazine. In the report, she highlighted these items:

- Member value
- Certification restart
- Columbus and the Summit
- Staff updates

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra reviewed where the charter for each committee or task force is.

Competitions Report

Mr. Aschwanden talked about the current status of chapter-level and society-level competitions.

A motion was made that the board create a task force to, within 90 days, identify how to rework competitions based on suggestions in this presentation, for delivery to the board in April 2015, and for delivery on or before May 2015 to competition managers. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

CAC Report

Mr. Woelk reported on the current status of communities. We've had a lot of student chapter inquiries, but not a lot of them set up. The requirement for setting up tax IDs is a barrier to student chapters. There are three regional conferences this spring – Interchange (New England), Mid-Atlantic Conference, Spectrum (Rochester) – all of which are at the end of March.

Summit Changes

Ms. Jin reviewed the changes to the Summit this year.

We will have the virtual summit again this year.

Strategic Planning: Sustainability

Our membership is wide and varied, working in many industries, and has many titles. The commonality among all our members is the set of skills they employ while doing their work. STC needs to celebrate those skills and say they are foundational/useful in many different careers.

We want to build on those skills and help our members grow. We also want to understand the dollar value of technical communicators. We want to show that we solve business problems, not that we just sit in our cubes and write with our heads down.

Focus area: Manage the operations of the Society in a sound and sustainable manner, investing strategically to enhance our ability to deliver member value

Right now our pillar for revenue is membership. We need to find areas of non-member revenue.

Mr. Lyons is exploring ways to streamline IT operations.

The board recessed at 12:42 PM.

The meeting resumed at 1:40 PM.

Membership

Ms. O'Donnell reviewed membership numbers with the board. 2015 cumulative membership to date is 3847. Total membership for 2014 was 5860. The grace period ends today and un-renewed members will be inactive on Monday. The gap between membership now and this time last year is about 200 people. We had some website issues in December during membership renewal time, which likely impacted our numbers.

We are doing well with renewal numbers – overall there is about a 68% renewal rate. The Corporate Value Program (CVP) is very successful and we're already doing well this year in that area. As of September 15, we have 10 new CVP members.

The membership department is looking at new mailing lists for new prospects.

Publications and Communications

Ms. Pohland reviewed the current status of publications.

The salary database has been downloaded by about 12% of our members. We pushed it out in November this year, which is quite a bit later than usual (usually around summit time), so we're seeing a good download number.

Ms. Pohland reviewed the marketing schedule with the board. The schedule is much more stable and targeted, and is done on a regular basis.

Body of Knowledge progress and plans are as follows:

1. Launch new WordPress site (90% complete).
2. Tag papers in Technical Communication.
3. Update style guide and edit site (30% done with editing).
4. Work with SIGs to develop content.
5. Increase social media presence.

In 2013 and 2014, we have achieved above budget on advertising. Getting all of our websites together in one big STC enterprise will improve our advertising efforts. We can advertise on all of those sites.

Education

Ms. Jin reviewed current 2015 education revenue. The majority of education revenue comes through online courses. Both online courses that started this month maxed out on attendance.

Progress and plans:

- Webinar scheduling and outlook
 - Reduced frequency to make management easier
 - Improves consistency for members to know when to expect webinars each week
 - Professionalism of staff in conducting webinars has led to good feedback from attendees
 - Immediately after webinar you get an evaluation survey and a recording
 - Have created series of webinars, these are very popular
- Online course scheduling and outlook
 - Biggest source of revenue for education
 - Currently offering ones we have offered in the past, because we haven't had enough time since Ms. Jin has joined to develop new ones
 - More consistent scheduling (1-2 per month)
- Education Advisory Panel
 - Working primarily through email right now
 - Good resource for Ms. Jin's questions
- Email and social media marketing
 - Working closely with Ms. Pohland to market education
- IEEE course
 - Tech Comm for Engineers – written by Hilary Hart and Leah Guren
- Certification alignment
 - Looking at how to align webinars and online courses with upcoming certification program
- Education report card
 - New benefit to members: attendance report for all STC events attended since 2012
 - Will assist in certification efforts for applicants

- Could offer some suggestions for courses to take based on what you've taken before

Wrap-up

There was some discussion about what we accomplished today and preparation for tomorrow.

Executive Session

The board entered executive session at 4:21 PM.

A motion was made that the board approve a salary increase for Chris Lyons to \$175,000 annually and award a bonus of 15% for 2014. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

The board exited executive session at 5:12 PM.

Adjournment

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra adjourned the meeting at 5:12 PM EST.

Saturday, January 31

Attendees

Board

- Kit Brown-Hoekstra, President
- Bernard Aschwanden, Vice President
- Alyssa Fox, Secretary
- Jane Wilson, Treasurer
- Nicky Bleiel, Immediate Past President
- Deanne Levander, Director
- Ben Woelk, Director
- Ray Gallon, Director
- Charles Fisher, Director

Office

- Chris Lyons, CEO

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM CST.

A quorum was established. The agenda was approved.

Agenda

- 8:30 AM – Call to order and review
- 9:00-10:00 AM – Strategic discussion: student chapters (Chris Lyons)
- 10:00-10:15 AM – BREAK
- 10:15 AM - 12:00 PM – Strategic discussion: volunteers (Kit Brown-Hoekstra)
- 12:00-1:00 PM – Lunch
- 1:00-3:00 PM – Policy issues
 - SIG scholarships
 - Community awards
 - Student liaison/outreach process
- 3:00-3:15 PM – BREAK
- 3:15-4:30 PM – Wrap-up, Q&A, and Adjournment

Focus Areas Review

Mr. Lyons reviewed the five focus areas for STC. He explained that the strategic plan he is working on includes the mission statement, vision statement, focus areas, objectives and strategies for that focus area.

Strategic Discussion: Student Chapters

Mr. Lyons noted that in the past couple of months, he's received several notices from the IRS about failure of communities to submit 990s, most of which came from student chapters. As of January 29, there were 125 members of student chapters. All of the student chapters are subsidized by STC. The current student chapter membership is not representative of all the technical communication programs at schools in the United States.

The board requested that Mr. Lyons, Ms. Brown-Hoekstra, and Mr. Woelk come back to the board in February or March with a motion and plan for what we want to do with student chapters.

The board held a discussion about communities.

The board requested that the CAC go back and work with Mr. Lyons and staff on where we're going with communities and how to get there, and report status to the board in March.

Community Awards

How do our community awards recognize the ways that the communities support our overall mission and organizational requirements, and how can we improve these criteria?

There is a CAA revamp task force currently looking at this.

Student/New Professional Liaison Process

How are we going to use the student/new professional liaison?

- Work with CAC group on redefining communities
- Be at board meetings for specific topics, not entire meeting
- Create a group
- Student SIG
 - Moderating topics online
 - Collecting information and summarizing to board
- Let them pick topics
 - Getting a job
 - Case study of those who have gotten job through STC

Ms. Brown-Hoekstra adjourned the meeting at 5:09 PM.