

**Society for Technical Communication**

**Board of Directors Meeting Summary**

**Conference Call**

**19 April 4-5:30pm US EST/ 20 April 6-7:30am AEST**

# Attendees

Board

* Adriane Hunt, President
* Alyssa Fox, Vice President
* Kirsty Taylor, Secretary
* Jane Wilson, Treasurer
* Bernard Aschwanden, Immediate Past President
* Craig Baehr, Director
* Alisa Bonsignore, Director
* Liz Herman, Director
* Cindy Pao, Director

Office

* Liz Pohland, STC CEO

Guests

* James Bousquet, 2017-2019 Treasurer
* Jessie Mallory, 2017-2019 Director
* Robert Perry 2017-2019 Director

# Consent Agenda Items

* Approve the 20 March and 22 March meeting minutes and summary.
* Approve the SIG rechartering form.

# Agenda Items

* Call to order and approval of agenda
* President’s Report (10 minutes) – Adriane Hunt
* CEO report (15 minutes) – Liz Pohland
* Treasurer’s Report (15 minutes) – Jane Wilson
* International Summit Awards and Competition update (20 minutes) – Kit Brown-Hoekstra
* Community Model Taskforce (15 minutes) – Robert Young
* Community Leader Accountability (15 minutes) – Cindy Pao

The meeting commenced at 4:01pm. A quorum was established. The agenda was approved. The consent agenda was approved.

# President’s Report

Ms Hunt welcomed incoming board members, Mr Bousquet, Ms Mallory and Mr Perry, to the meeting.

Ms Hunt discussed strategy items from the Nov 2016 Face-to-Face meeting. Board members were reminded to view the strategy spreadsheet, make actions and update your action items.

# CEO Report

Ms Pohland presented some general staff updates.

The audit has been delayed; there was some confusion about an item of deferred revenue. The audit will go ahead, but will not be finalised before the Annual Business Meeting. A tax extension has been filed.

Regarding personnel, Ms O’Donnell’s title has been changed to Chief Operating Officer. She will be assuming extra responsibilities, including a new office lease/location. Ms Pohland is working on an RFP for the next Editor of Intercom. Dr Saul Carliner has reviewed the RFP and provided feedback. The intent is to have the new editor on board by September, 2017. Ms Pohland is also researching the possibility of a marketing director position. She continues to update the staff handbook, and will present it to the board when it is ready to approve.

Since the last meeting, Ms Pohland has attended the Rochester Spectrum and Philadelphia Conduit conferences.

**Summit update**

501 registrations as of Monday, 17 April. There are several marketing campaigns for last three weeks before Summit starts. Working on offers for DC area locals.

The Washington DC Baltimore chapter has launched a dine around event, which is almost sold out. Ms O’Donnell has offered to host another table of people. The organisers in the chapter will try to add more tables/ more restaurants. The Expo hall is sold out.

**Certification update**

As of Monday, there are 84 certificants. 67 passes, and a further 42 registered who have not yet taken the exam.

Focussing efforts on a range of marketing to various programs, schools, and universities. Northeastern University has published press release about CPTC being approved as a prior learning assessment for their [Master of Science in Technical Communication](http://www.cps.neu.edu/news/tcc-transfer-credits.php).

The STC office will need assistance from the iMIS vendor to set up CEU tracking. Ms Pohland will need to spend time with them on setting this up and explaining the program so that it can be implemented correctly.

**Membership update**

As of Monday, 3675 members have joined or renewed. The number is down on 2016. Trying assorted campaigns, including one to win the CPTC textbook, a snail mail campaign. Some membership cheques have come back from that. Gold membership renewals are still the strongest renewing membership category. Ms O’Donnell and Ms Gallalee are working on new member research.

**Education update**

As of Monday, we are right on budget - $53,534. Education has been tracking ahead for most of the year. Education is planned out for almost the rest of 2017, and is looking positive. Both webinars and online certificate courses are being run. There will be a free Adobe technical communication tools workshop on the Sunday afternoon at the Summit. All are encouraged to attend.

# Treasurer’s Report

Ms Wilson presented the Dec 2016 financial report, and Jan 2017 report.

At end Dec 2016, total cash was $181,661, which was about $46k less than Dec 2015. Actual variance year-on-year is $26k due to some recognitions being different in 2015 and 2016.

In Liabilities, accrued expenses are considerably less than 2015. This reflects the December payroll and January credit card bill, both of which are less due to changes in staffing. Deferred revenue in dues and seminars was not as high as in 2015. Total liabilities and net assets was $665,648. At end of year, total net assets was **-**$50,511. While it doesn’t sound great, it’s almost $80k better than 2015.

Budgeted revenue was missed for all three major revenue areas (conference, web seminars, membership dues). $51k off budget for membership. Total revenue was $2,193,160; $79k less than 2015. Personnel expenses for Dec 2016 was $121k better than budget, due to changes in personnel. This helped numbers overall. IT support was $61k higher than budgeted. Lower than November, as some invoices were mis-coded in Nov. The items classified as miscellaneous included a higher than normal tax bill and a one-time assessment from the office landlord ($37,300).

Total expenses $2,130,382. Operating change in net assets $62,777. Investments made money. Actual total change in net assets $87,739. Going forward, the “miscellaneous” category in the report will be used rarely by the new accountant.

Jan 2017 – assets can look a little wonky as revenue has not been realised yet. Cash was up on Jan 2016 by $80k. Total assets $959,444. Liabilities and net assets – accrued expenses will be lower than last year; that will change as there is some staff hiring this year (replacing Ms Pohland’s former role, etc). Splitting out Summit as a separate line item in deferred revenues., which will help track how it’s going.

Total net assets -$152,033. Total liabilities and net assets $959,444.

Jan 2017 revenue – a lot of revenue has not yet been realised. There were returned funds from the closure of Wilamette Valley chapter, who returned their reserve of $3,821. Total revenue was $87k.

Expenses were light due to it being January. Insurance is already at $20k, which is higher than 2016 and higher than budgeted, because it was paid on an annual basis, rather than in instalments. Professional fees were a little lower than expected; due to using the accountant a little less than expected. Total expenses were $165,343. Operating change in net assets  **-**$77,842. Total change in net assets **-**$73,257.

*Move that the financials for December and January are accepted as posted. The motion was seconded. The motion passed.*

Ms Brown-Hoekstra joined the meeting at 6:37am.

# International Summit Awards and Competition

Ms Brown-Hoekstra presented a summary of progress since July 2016. The vision was to make the competition more profitable, streamlined, valuable, etc. Some of the problems included dwindling participation, but the biggest issues related to ongoing administrative burden.

Opportunities for the competition included aligning it with competency areas by offering continuing education, and so on. Solutions suggested so far include to reset pricing at local and international level, so that it is reflective of costs. The committee started tracking budget information differently to get a better idea of costs. Other areas of improvement include judge training and evaluation forms.

The committee had thought of a phased approach for going forward. They could still provide oversight, depending on the board’s decision for the future direction. Suggested options for the oversight included a monthly call with regional managers, sharing best practices, etc. The intent was to reduce the dilution of the STC brand due to potentially variable quality of competitions at the local level.

Ms Christina Mayr and Mr Bob Young joined the meeting at 4:45pm. They left the meeting at 4:46pm.

Current challenges include accurate website content and transition to the new website.

Mr David Caruso joined at 4:58pm.

Evaluation forms need to have new, modern criteria added.

Mr Bob Young joined the meeting at 4:59pm.

In short, the committee recommends use of an application management tool, and to have an oversight committee, even if there is only one level of competition.

Ms Christina Mayr joined the meeting at 5pm.

Ms Hunt thanked Ms Brown-Hoekstra for her report to the board, and for the work of the committee. The board will discuss the competition in more details in the future and make their decision.

Ms Brown-Hoekstra left the meeting at 5:01pm.

# Community Model Task force

Mr Young reported to the board on the community model task force progress. Three members of the taskforce also joined the meeting. So far, the task force has held approximately six meetings of two hours each. Committee members come from successful and less successful chapters.

Mr Young presented the purpose of the task force. The task force had conducted a SWOT analysis; they chose to look at challenges rather than weaknesses. Strengths of society included that it’s a 501c3, and the salary database. More valuable mentoring could be provided to younger members or those new to the profession, as they are typically members for a year or two, and then leave. A buddy system for chapter was discussed, as well as options for virtual meetings, and hosting more webinars. Technology for virtual meetings, and the costs associated with those technologies were seen to be a barrier for some communities.

Leadership training should include Adobe Connect training, e.g. at Summit. Communications between leaders could be facilitated by a quarterly call. There is competition with more informal groups for younger potential members pursuing their professional development.

Ms Hunt thanked Mr Young for his report.

Board members requested that the task force consider the community model from a different and higher level. If we were starting a professional association today and didn’t already have the model of chapters and SIGs, what would we form and what would the baseline member experience be? The board requested that the task force consider this from the member or customer experience perspective. We have strong geographic chapters, so we don’t want to throw that out entirely.

The task force was asked to aim to report back to the board at their June meeting.

Mr Caruso, Mr Young, and Ms Mayr left the meeting at 5:26pm.

# Community Leader Accountability

The board discussed two questions; Should community leaders have a reporting relationship with someone on board or with the CAC? Currently the primary relationship with communities is with budgeting and taxes. Some leaders are not aware of the existence of the CAC. The CAC is not currently having regular or semi-regular meetings with community leaders. There should be governance around budgeting. The board decided to continue this discussion at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.

# Board votes since the last meeting

*Move that the board accepts the recommendations of the Frank R Smith committee for the 2017 award recipients. The motion passed.*

*Move that the recommendations of the Intercom Editorial Advisory Panel for recipients of the Best Guest-Edited Issue and Best Article of the Year are accepted. The motion passed.*