****

**Society for Technical Communication**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**19-20 January 2018**

# Attendees

Board

* Alyssa Fox, President
* Jane Wilson, Vice President
* Kirsty Taylor, Secretary
* James Bousquet, Treasurer
* Adriane Hunt, Immediate Past President
* Alisa Bonsignore, Director
* Liz Herman, Director
* Jessie Mallory, Director
* Robert Perry, Director

Office

* Liz Pohland, STC CEO

# Agenda Items – 19 January 2018 - Friday

* 8:45 – Welcome and consent agenda
* 8:45-9:15 – Opener
* 9:15-9:20 – President report – Alyssa Fox
* 9:20-9:50– CEO report – Liz Pohland
* 9:50-10:30 – Associate Fellows and Fellows discussion and approval – Alisa Bonsignore
* 10:30-10:45 – Break
* 10:45-11:00 – Treasurer’s report – James Bousquet
* 11:00-11:45 – SIG community funding concerns – James Bousquet
* 11:45-1:45 – Lunch with STC staff
* 1:45-2:10 – Economic Value taskforce report – Sarah O’Keefe
* 2:10-2:35 – 65th Anniversary taskforce report – Rhyne Armstrong
* 2:30-3:00 – Reports from work with committees/taskforces
* 3:00-3:15 – Break
* 3:15-4:15 – Finish reports from work with committees/taskforces
* 4:15-4:45 – Executive session – CEO performance review
* 4:45 – Board meeting concludes
* 4:45-5:15 – Audit committee meeting

# Agenda Items – 20 January 2018 – Saturday

* 8:45-9:15 – F&I Committee meeting
* 9:15 – Board meeting starts
* 9:15-9:45 – Audit report – Alisa Bonsignore
* 9:45-9:55 – Community Model taskforce report – Jane Wilson
* 9:55-10:20 – Staff handbook updates – Liz Pohland
* 10:20-10:35 – Break
* 10:35-11:45 – SWOT analysis – small groups
* 11:45-1:15 – Lunch
* 1:15-2:15 – Review and finalize SWOT
* 2:15-2:30 – Nom Comm topics
* 2:30-3:00 – Review strategic plan and objectives
* 3:00-3:15 – Break
* 3:15-4:00 – Review previous start/stop/continue spreadsheet
* 4:00-4:45 – Executive committee meet with CEO for performance review
* 5:00 – Board dinner

# Friday 19 January

The meeting opened at 8:45am.

Ms Fox welcomed the board members to the meeting.

The agenda was approved.

# Opener

The board members participated in a getting to know you game.

# President report

Ms Fox provided an overview of various Presidential tasks. There is much administration involved in being President of STC. Has received update on charter for API SIG.

Ms Fox will be appearing on Scriptorium’s podcast next week. In early Feb, Ms Fox will be presenting to the Chicago chapter via webinar. The board will have a report from the Academic Taskforce in Feb. Ms Pohland and Ms Fox have discussed Tech Editing SIG web hosting/website.

# CEO report

As of Monday, membership is tracking close to last year. Currently only 50 behind last year, 2017 were hundreds behind.

Education did really well at the end of year, almost meeting budget (missed budget by about $200).

**Conference**

Registrations a little behind, but more room nights have been booked compared to 2017. Schedule and education sessions are being finalized and posted to the website. There will be several panels and workshops.

Pre-conference workshops have been sorted; various topics, and registrations have already been received. Will be holding an Improvisation workshop – registrations will be required, at a minimal cost to ensure numbers.

The opening keynote speaker will be Carla Johnson on Monday morning. Ms Johnson is a Content marketing executive. There will be an opening party on Sunday night, but not the keynote. The closing keynote will be Wednesday lunch – Andy Hines. Three invited speakers at this stage – Mike Parkinson, Peter “Scotch” Scocimara, and Karen Schriver.

The Summit will be using a new app – Crowd Compass AttendeeHub.

**Certification**

At 15 Jan, 143 exams have been taken, with 101 passes and 42 fails. The CEU module is being tested by our vendor. The Certification commission is meeting about quarterly. The 6th edition of the text book is now available. The publisher (Pearson) is not commenting if the 5th edition will stay in print. Need to decide if 6th ed can be used.

Practitioner level – considering what it will be based on. Need to decide what the evaluation tool will be – have always thought exam and work sample. Need to develop a way to assess work samples. Aiming to launch Practitioner level in 2018.

There was a big bump in royalties with APMG in Oct-Dec. There have been 10 non-member exams so far.

APMG marketing has been focusing on Universities. Rochester Institute of Technology, Wilmington University, UC Santa Cruz Silicon Valley, and Seneca College.

**General office updates**

Hiring for the marketing position has been problematic.

Need to select a new audit firm for FY2017 audit.

Ms O’Donnell is working on upcoming office move. Lease expires in April 2019.

Annual performance reviews will be held this month. Ms Pohland gave an update on staff and which staff would be attending lunch today with the board members.

The meeting paused at 9:45am.

The meeting resumed at 9:55am.

# Associate Fellows and Fellows discussion and approval

Board members were reminded of the confidential nature of this discussion.

This year was the first year of updated criteria. Wanted to focus more on external aspects, and not as much an internal award for service. Ensure that awardees are perceived to be external ambassadors for technical communication. STC service is still a factor.

**Associate Fellow**

There were seven applicants – one was rejected. Three were accepted, and three did not meet the criteria. The changed criteria was mentioned in the process.

There were various reasons for the three applications that did not meet the criteria.

The board discussed whether there was sufficient promotion and information about the revised criteria and focus. A comment was made that in some cases, the committee chair had to follow up on applicant’s recommendation letters, as they were not submitted with their application.

Looking at more stringent criteria, and more streamlined scoring experience. This year there were about half as many applications as there have usually been (seven vs ten to fifteen). It is not know if this is a trend or a one-off.

Feedback to applicants needs to be consistently given – both awardees and non-awardees.

The board requested that the Associate Fellow committee provide us with some more information on scoring and applications.

**Fellows**

The committee recommends three Fellow recipients. The committee declined some applications.

It was suggested that it should be made abundantly clear that the criteria for Associate Fellow and Fellow have been raised.

*Move that the board approve the recommendations of the Fellows nominating committee for 2018 awardee.*

The motion passed.

The meeting took a break at 10: 52am.

The meeting resumed at 11:04am

# Treasurer’s report

The Community budget process is ongoing. A number have been approved, one rejected, nine from whom there are no submissions. Chapter checks have been processed, and should be sent to communities in the next two weeks.

Mr Bousquet presented the financial highlights to end Oct.

Total assets are $583,107, which is a little bit down on Oct 2016. Liabilities – have slightly increased the commercial loan. Overall liabilities have decreased compared to 2016. Now $683,019. Total net assets -$99,912. Not as negative as Oct 2016, -$144,689.

The pattern for total net assets over the calendar year was shown. Lowest point was April, big jump in May (conference and how deferred revenues are realized when the conference occurs).

Revenue. Webinar revenue is slightly down on Oct 2016, slightly below budget but very close ($3k). Membership dues down $147k compared to Oct 2016. Below budget by almost $200k. Total revenue $1,622,330. Variance to YTD budget $250k.

Expenses have been kept down as much as possible. Personnel is a main factor, approx. $92k below budget. Overall, expenses are better than budget by over $200k.

Operating change in net assets. Operating profit to end Oct $31,135 – better than Oct 2016 which was -$36,463.

Total change in net assets - $76,855 (was -$6,439 in Oct 2016). Shy of budget (which was $99,936), but a lot closer.

Cash flow has improved since membership opened, and the conference registration has opened. Membership numbers continue to be a concern – membership is the most significant source of revenue, but then ripples out into numbers attending the Summit, and so on.

Membership loss has slowed down compared to the last two years.

It was noted that it takes three weeks to do month end/close, which has a flow-on impact as to when the financial reports are available for the board’s review and approval.

*Move that the board accepts the October 2017 financial statements.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

# SIG community funding concerns

Mr Bousquet has been working with CAC on SIG funding. Same SIGs, same concerns as last year.

All SIGs have the opportunity to receive community funding. Following up with CAC on certain SIGs’ activity levels.

**Activity and value for members**

It was noted that not all SIG activities generate revenue/expenses on budget proposals. Suggest that it’s looked into to verify cases of seeming inactivity, and forward to the CAC SIGs that are indeed struggling. Mr Bousquet proposed that there be follow up to determine if the SIGs’ activities line up with what’s listed in their approved charters. The goal is to improve SIG activity and value for members, not to get rid of SIGs.

Another possibility is for communities to provide a report with their budget submission. There should be objective criteria. What would be the consequences and accountability if the criteria aren’t met?

We need to consider the overall effect of communities and their activity on membership. When SIGs and chapters aren’t appropriately active, then that can reflect on membership numbers.

The meeting paused at 11:49am.

# Lunch with STC staff

The meeting resumed at 1:45pm.

# Economic Value taskforce report

Ms Sarah O’Keefe joined the meeting at 1:46pm.

There have been challenges around scheduling, but the taskforce is making progress. The charter has been broken down. Collaboration and reaching out to other professional organizations – the two highest priority – localization and product management. On localization side, a lot of people are aware that improving technical communication makes localization easier, better, etc. On product management, there are two associations the taskforce are aware of that STC could work with. Product managers have responsibility (generally) for product content. Don’t necessarily think of it as technical communication, and can include content beyond technical communication. Distinguish between product content and technical content. In general, the taskforce feels that software is an industry that is well-covered by technical communication/STC. What is not well covered?

When we talk about the issue of awareness, understanding value, and looking at technical communication – are we dealing with ignorance and lack of awareness, or are we dealing with people who are not prioritizing that type of content? i.e. it’s an intentional strategy. Would need two different approaches depending on the answer to that question.

Ms Fox made some comments to clarify priority and scoping.

Maybe meet again before BoD’s February meeting to get ideas of ways to get this all together.

Ms O’Keefe left the meeting at 2:01pm.

A comment was made about the potential overlap with the Tech Comm Council and partnerships.

Mr Rhyne Armstrong joined the meeting at 2:10pm.

# 65th Anniversary taskforce report

The taskforce has four other members on the committee.

Before Summit – plan to write articles about general anniversary, women in STC, international contributions to STC, minorities in STC, future of Tech Comm to align with a Summit session that is being planned. Hoping they will be blog posts for wider reach. Social media – one article a week – informational about the anniversary, then closer to Summit they will be about what is going on at the Summit. After the Summit – more looking towards the future.

A media kit will be completed by 27 Jan, and will be distributed to all community leaders. It will be online, with no postage costs associated with it.

At conference, there will be anniversary lapel pins, with anniversary logo, trying to make it look like a sapphire/shape and color. Highlight gem of the 65th year. Mr Armstrong discussed various other plans for the Summit and after the Summit.

One event will be held in conjunction with the Orlando chapter.

Mr Perry left the meeting at 2:24pm.

Mr Armstrong discussed the contents of the media kit in more detail.

Mr Perry re-joined the meeting at 2:26pm.

Idea to include a suggestion for donations in the media kit.

Mr Armstrong left the meeting at 2:30pm.

# Reports from work with committees/taskforces

**Jay R. Gould committee**

This committee is going well. Have a recommendation for the awardee.

*Move that the board accept the committee’s recommendation for the 2018 Jay R. Gould award winner.*

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed.

**Ken Rainey committee**

Reviewing four nominees. Meeting around this time to discuss and put the nomination to the board. Issue with website’s search engine (Ken Rainey results not coming up).

**Sigma Tau Chi/Alpha Sigma committee**

Application forms have been revised. A third person is required for the committee. Might need to revisit the requirement that one person on the committee must be a previous award winner; hard to meet that requirement as students do not always maintain their membership with the society.

**Scholarship committee**

Had been planning to meet monthly, have been waiting for the STC budget to be approved so that they knew what they had to work with. Met in Dec. Reviewed the letter from the President informing there would be no scholarship funding. With the society’s budget considerations, the earliest when a scholarship could be offered is in Spring 2019. Looking at getting sponsorship to cover the scholarships. Any sponsorships need to be financially funneled through the STC office. Looking to initiate communications with chapters to help support them with their scholarship offerings.

**Community Affairs committee**

Ms Herman discussed some background around the request to merge Austin chapter into Houston.

*Move that the Austin chapter merge into the Houston chapter.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

Ms Herman has been working on leadership program planning for the Summit. Still planning on 8am-12noon on Sunday morning. Surveying members to help frame the agenda.

Ms Mallory discussed the student outreach she is leading on the CAC. Assorted activities – welcome pack, encouragement throughout the year to attend Summit, and a graduation pack for the end of the year. There are nine active student chapters, about 30 people on the current student outreach list. The Clemson university has reactivated their student chapter. There is interest from Austin community college to form a student chapter.

A lot of other activities happening behind the scenes in the CAC supporting communities and promoting STC activities.

**CAA/Pacesetter**

Application deadline reminders have been sent.

The meeting paused at 3:16pm.

The meeting resumed at 3:32pm.

# Finish reports from work with committees/taskforces

**TCBOK**

Ms Mallory provided an update on the TCBOK activities. Trying to get students more involved in TCBOK. Ms Mallory is meeting with Ms Deanne Levander every two weeks. Getting BOK more in line with the Certification program. Running a proof of concept getting IDL SIG content for the TCBOK. Trying to get a sense of urgency into the teams.

**DCSA**

All committee recommendations have been approved previously by the board.

Ms Pohland left the meeting at 3:47pm.

# Executive session – CEO performance review

Ms Fox provided background and update to the board on Ms Pohland’s performance goals for 2017. 2018 goals were discussed.

The board left executive session at 4:48 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 pm.

# Sat 20 January

The meeting started at 9:27 am.

# Audit report

Ms Bonsignore reported that the audit report for 2016 is clear. Suggestions that were made for change in 2017 had already been implemented. We will be looking for new auditors for 2018 so that there is not such a delay in the audit process.

Ms Pohland commented that 2017 will be in a deficit, but not as large as the end of 2016.

*Move that the board accept the 2016 Audit report.*

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed.

# Associate Fellows

More information was received from the Associate Fellow committee about the scoring of some applicants.

*Move that the proposed Associate Fellow recipients per the committee are accepted.*

The motion was seconded.

The motion carried.

# Community Model Taskforce version 2

Ms Wilson discussed ideas around a new community model taskforce, as a board-sponsored and appointed taskforce. Aim to get actionable changes. This taskforce will evolve on from the great work done in 2016-2017 by the prior community model taskforce.

Suggestion it should be a taskforce rather than a committee – get in, suggest, change, and done. Still keen to get some people from struggling communities involved. Membership will include Ms Wilson, Ms Mallory, Mr Perry and two 2 members. Will be focusing on geographical chapters first.

There is currently a variety, and inconsistent, chapter experiences. We need to establish a baseline. Intend to use the term engagement plan rather than activity plan.

Questions to consider include – should a minimum number of members be a requirement for valid chapter? It would be helpful to have an At Risk plan for chapters that are in trouble. Some small chapters do have engagement. How can the society and the CAC identify what chapters are at risk?

Suggestion that there be a taskforce of webmasters who are excellent to help out other webmasters.

Goal to present at leadership program or a CAC webinar later, before the end of August.

# Staff handbook

Ms Pohland discussed updates that have been made to the staff handbook. Changes include removing old employees and positions, updating vision and mission statements, timekeeping policies, emergency closing policy, and more.

The STC office follows US federal government policy re snow days, office closures, etc. Due to technical changes, the current expectation is that staff would work from home if they have laptops, rather than the office being shut and employees not working.

It was decided to give the board a bit more time to review the staff handbook and have an email vote to approve the updates to the handbook.

The meeting paused at 10:41am.

The meeting re-started at 10:53am.

# SWOT Analysis

The board broke into three groups of three people each to undertake a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

Mr Perry left the meeting at 11:33 am.

The meeting paused at 11:34 am.

The meeting resumed at 1:28pm. The CEO and all members were present, except Ms Fox who is unwell.

Various Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were discussed.

# Nominating Committee

The election site is live, and candidate biographies are up. Thanks to Ms Pohland, Ms Fox, Mr Cameron, and Ms Gilliam for their help.

Ms Fox and Ms Hunt will be hosting a candidate orientation webinar. Candidates have been made aware of the upcoming deadlines. Members need to renew by 1 Feb in order to be eligible to vote. The petition process has been updated per the discussions and motions made in the past year.

Idea: Have a list of former board members who are willing to talk to or answer questions for candidates.

The meeting paused at 2:44pm.

The meeting re-started at 2:57pm.

# Review strategic plan and objectives

Held over for future meetings.

# Review previous start/stop/continue spreadsheet

The Action Items from the Nov 2016 F2F meeting were reviewed to see if any activities should be altered or if the Start/Stop/Continue decision may be different now.

Notes were made directly in the spreadsheet.

The 2020 Summit location was discussed. Surveyed membership regarding location – people wanted changing locations. Planning to visit West Coast locations.

CEO Performance review is to be deferred until the President is better. To be done via phone.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09pm.