****

**Society for Technical Communication**

**Board of Directors Meeting Summary**

**Celebration 7-8, Hyatt Regency Orlando**

**23 May 2018 1:30 AM – 5:00 PM EDT**

# Agenda Items

* 1:30 – 1:35 Call to Order, Meeting Logistics
* 1:35 – 1:40 Phoenix Chapter Name Change (Jessie Mallory)
* 1:40 – 1:55 Strategic Overview (Liz Pohland, Jane Wilson)
* 1:55 – 2:00 SWOT Analysis Proposal (Ben Woelk)
* End of Public portion of meeting
* 2:00 – 2:15 Welcome to the Board (Jane Wilson)
* 2:15 – 2:30 Nonprofit Associations/Boards (Liz Pohland)
* 2:30 – 2:45 Icebreaker – all
* 2:45 – 3:00 break
* 3:00 – 3:15 Committee Chairs 2018-2019 (Jane Wilson)
* 3:15 – 3:30 Nom Comm update (Alyssa Fox)
* 3:30 – 4:30 Strategic Discussion – Focus Area 1

# Board

* Jane Wilson, President
* Ben Woelk, Vice-President
* Kirsty Taylor, Secretary
* James Bousquet, Treasurer
* Alyssa Fox, Immediate Past President
* Alisa Bonsignore, Director
* Todd DeLuca, Director
* Jessie Mallory, Director
* Robert Perry, Director

Office

* Liz Pohland, STC CEO

Guests

* 4 members in attendance (Bethany Aguad, Nick Ducharme, Alan Houser, Nicky Bleiel).

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 pm.

The agenda was approved.

Ms Wilson welcomed the guests to the meeting, and provided some guidance on the rules of the meeting.

Mr Woelk joined the meeting at 1:33pm.

Ms Wilson reminded the board members of Robert’s Rules of Order.

# Phoenix Chapter Name

Ms Mallory discussed that the Phoenix chapter has reached out to the CAC about a potential change to their chapter name. They asked the board to review, provide feedback for them to consider.

A comment was made that local names that relate to a local region are not always meaningful to all society members.

# Strategic Overview

The strategic plan draft was distributed to board members prior to the meeting.

The current strategic plan was begun around five years ago, and was developed through research, survey, interviews. The focus areas were conceived at that point. Need to review the strategic plan on a regular basis (but not too often), to make sure it’s still valid for the direction we want to go in. The strategic plan is the directive from the board to the CEO and staff for areas of growth and focus.

Ms Wilson intends for the board to look at the various focus areas in more depth in upcoming meetings.

Tech Comm skills are foundational and can go into many career areas. STC needs to offer services that help members solve the problems that their companies have. In the past year, the board has updated both the vision statement and mission statement.

**Focus Area 1 – Offer continuing education that enhances the competencies and skills of our members and enables lifelong learning.**

Ms Pohland commented that there can be a dichotomy between what’s in the plan and what the staff actually spend a lot of time on.

Ms Wilson intended to have the board review all areas of the strategic plan by end of year; but the CEO and staff will need direction prior to 2019 budgeting.

**Focus Area 2 - Define and publicize the economic contribution of technical communication practices and the use of skilled practitioners to businesses and governments.**

What are the tactical elements? Logistics, goals, etc.

Objective 2.2 is the purpose of the economic value taskforce. 2.3 may also have input from the economic taskforce.

**Focus Area 3 - Promote the concept that technical communication training develops foundational skills and fosters in practitioners’ habits of analysis, discernment, and problem-solving that underpin their ability to successfully perform in many fields.**

Opportunity of exposure to other professions, and how they can develop communication skills.

This focus areas seems to be about getting technical communicators to appreciate and promote their own value. Helping TCs communicate their value and how to communicate.

**Focus Area 4 - Foster the means and opportunity for technical communication professionals to succeed in today’s workforce and to grow into related career fields.**

This is focussed on the members. Identifying possible opportunities.

**Focus area 5 - Manage the operations of the Society in a sound and sustainable manner, investing strategically to enhance our ability to deliver member value.**

Ms Wilson asked the guests is they had comments or questions in relation to the focus areas.

Ms Aguad commented that she joined due to a personal connection with someone. When joining, it wasn’t clear how to be an active member, what the communities and SIGs are, navigating through the joining process. Mr Ducharme commented that having an understand of the different roles for technical communication – not all are known as technical communication.

# SWOT Analysis Proposal

Mr Woelk discussed how he worked with academic colleagues form other disciplines who helped him develop a SWOT analysis of the Rochester chapter. He has colleagues who have offered to undertake a study of STC for us. Could have an external viewpoint, provide extra input. It would be a Fall class project, with a deliverable in mid-November.

The potential project would be led by professor; with graduate-level MBA students working on it. Would be willing to sign an NDA.

Board members asked a number of clarifying questions around the potential scope of the project, staff and board time required, how the findings of the study might be published (or not).

The public portion of the meeting finished at 2:05pm. The four guests left the room.

# Welcome to the Board

Ms Wilson welcomed the members to the board of directors. She commented that she is looking forward to an exciting year.

Have talked to a few people about committee liaison assignments.

Ms Pohland requested that meetings be held in the fourth week of the month for financial reasons. Mr Bousquet commented about planning to hold F&I meetings the week prior.

F2F meeting will be 2-3 November in Fairfax, VA.

Ms Wilson reiterated some basic rules around preparation for meetings. Ms Wilson presented the board with gifts and inspiration for the upcoming year.

Be original. Don’t be afraid to do something that hasn’t been done before. The Golden Gate bridge was the first suspension bridge of that size. It is a great connection bridge, and engineering feat. The bridge is orange is because it’s the colour of the primer of the steel. Most people said it should be gray, because bridges are always gray. From that, Ms Wilson wants everyone to use their experience, share their experience, as every board member should be heard.

Orange and Blue are opposite on the colour wheel. They make each other beautiful. So we should have opposing views. Everybody who works on the bridge is trained in crisis management; Ms Wilson wants everyone here to feel that we’re here for each other. If there’s a crisis, we’re here (inside or outside this room).

We are building something. We have a strong foundation. We want to have useful construction that is hopefully beautiful at the end.

# Non-Profit Associations and Boards

Ms Pohland provided a handout from Board Source.org.

Ms Pohland went through some outlines of what a strategic board does, including their responsibilities and primary legal duties, as well as the scope of responsibility for the board, and the scope of responsibility for the CEO.

Ms Pohland is often the information owner, and is our point of contact if we need further information about matters relating to the society. The CEO is the main interface to the staff.

The strategic plan mentions the book “The End of Membership as We Know it”. Many organisations try to focus on too much – be everything to everyone. Need to have a clear niche. We should be the go-to resource for expert knowledge. Be useful to *someone*, not *everyone*.

Recommendation for the board to read this book.

The meeting paused at 2:34pm.

The meeting resumed at 2:53pm.

# Icebreaker

The board undertook an icebreaking exercise.

# Committee Chairs

Ms Wilson presented some of her proposed committee chairs.

The board engaged in a discussion around the conference chair role, various aspects of succession planning, preferences for single year terms in any committee chair role, what should occur when a succession plan is not able to come to fulfilment, financial impacts of adding any more members to the conference committee, and more.

There are no public guidelines on the number of years that a committee chair might serve – so there is public confusion. More clarity is needed on what the responsibilities are, who does what, what happens when.

Are there other models to consider for the conference going forward?

The board determined to release a Request for Proposals for the 2018 Summit Conference Chair.

Ms Pohland commented that the current structure seems appropriate.

Ms Mallory left the meeting at 3:34pm.

Proposed committee chairs:

* Audit committee – Robert Perry
* CAC – Jessie Mallory
* F&I committee – James Bousquet
* Nominating Committee – Alyssa Fox

Other committee chairs:

* Associate Fellow – Aiessa Moyna
* Fellow – Kit Brown-Hoekstra
* CA/Pacesetter – Tim Esposito
* Distinguished Chapter service award – Liz Herman
* Certification – Craig Baehr

Ms Wilson discussed with Mr Baehr about continuing as chair of the Certification committee, and discussed succession planning, as the board is currently intending to have most chairs only serve for one year as a committee chair.

The Certification Committee charter needs to be reviewed.

Ms Wilson intends to present the academic and award committee chairs at the June meeting, as well as taskforces. Look at the economic taskforce after their presentation in the June meeting. Also SIG community model.

*Move that the board approve the list of committee chairs as presented.*

The motion was seconded. The motion passed.

Give committee chairs til end of June to put their committees together.

# Nominating Committee Update

Outgoing and incoming Nom comms met on Monday. Discussed numerous elements that worked really well. Committee guidelines will be ready end of June, and Ms Fox should have them for the board to review in July. Suggestion that the election not close on a Friday, so there is not a delay in letting people know. Want to formulate some new questions to be used during the interview process. Will have some questions that aren’t asked of sitting board members (are redundant to re-ask once they are on the board). Supportive of VP candidates who have served on the board before. Ms Pohland will check for list of board members who served for the past 10 years.

All agreed that the IPP is good to have as Nom Comm chair. Acting primarily as chair worked well, and not being involved in the interviews. Will review staff responsibilities with Ms Pohland to ensure they are correct.

Many people dropped out from running last year as they felt they didn’t have enough information to run on the slate. Loved the idea of a resource guide for potential candidates to consider. Make sure the position descriptions are posted and available.

The agenda was amended to allow a motion on the scholarship committee.

# Scholarship Committee

*Move to direct the committee to move forward with the proposed scholarship plan, with value of the scholarships to be determined, for a trial period of one year.*

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed.

# Strategic Discussion

The board were reminded of the difference between strategy strategy and tactics. In current work market, probably best to have a strategic plan for three years (no longer).

Monitoring and reviewing STC’s strategic plan – where are we now and where are we going? Are there new things in there that we need to start?

Suggest we have our strategy together before we agree to next year’s budget.

The board discussed many elements about the first focus area of the current strategy.

Ms Fox left the room at 4:10pm.

Ms Fox returned to the room at 4:12pm.

Items currently listed as strategies that are actually tactical actions are to be moved to the business plan.

Will look at Objective 1.4 at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm.