



# Society for Technical Communication

Board of Directors Meeting  
Rockbridge Room, Hyatt Dulles  
Herndon, VA  
04 February 2012

## Attendees

### Board

- **Hillary Hart, President**
- **Alan Houser, Vice President**
- **Aiessa Moyna, Treasurer**
- **Rachel Houghton, Secretary**
- **Cindy Currie-Clifford, Immediate Past President**
- **Karen Baranich, Director**
- **Nicky Bleiel, Director**
- **Lori Corbett, Director**
- **Rich Maggiani, Director**
- **Tricia Spayer, Director**
- **WC Wiese, Director**

### Office

- **Kathryn Burton, FASAE, CAE, CEO**
- **Greg Larsen, CPA, CFO**
- **Lloyd Tucker, Deputy Executive Director**
- **Steve Skojec, Director of Community Relations**
- **Liz Pohland, Director of Publications**
- **Barbra Sanders, STC Membership Manager**
- **Elaine Gilliam, STC Meeting Manager**

## Call to Order

Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 8:06 am/pm EST (GMT-5). A quorum was established and the Board approved the agenda. The Frank R. Smith Awards were accepted by consent agenda.

# Committee Reports

## **Finance & Investment Committee**

Ms. Moyna introduced the F&I committee report. Greg Larsen reported that the preliminary December financials project a deficit of \$168,000 which is significantly lower than the original estimate of \$400,000 in June and about \$11,000 lower than reported last month. The fund balance is anticipated to be \$110,000,

Ms. Moyna is going to work with student chapters to develop an off-cycle budget. Student chapters will be included in budget process next year. Ms. Moyna will bring dues and community funding models to May board meeting.

## **Audit Committee**

Ms. Currie-Clifford reported the work for the audit will start in March and the audited financial statements will be ready for the Board's acceptance at the May board meeting.

## **Nominating Committee**

Ms. Hart reported that the election rules regarding social media have been revised and updated. The committee interviewed each candidate and checked references for those selected for the slate.

## **Policies and Procedures Committee**

Mr. Houser reported the committee is dormant, as the committee chair stepped down in the third quarter of 2011. Currently the responsibilities of the committee have been handled ad hoc by other committees which have been following their own policies and procedures. The question was posed if the functions of this committee could become a staff function. Ms. Burton indicated that although STC needs to have standardized policies and procedures developed for each committee, there is no extra bandwidth for the staff to handle this because the staff needs to focus on programs and services to generate revenues for the Society. Ms. Burton stated that the committee chair would need to develop a policies and procedures template that could be sent to each committee to customize.

The will of the Board is to find a volunteer to chair the committee. Ms. Corbett volunteered to serve as the chair until the end of her Director term in May 2012 and work with Mr. Houser to find a replacement. Ms. Corbett will review the committee template developed by Ms. Bleiel for recognitions committees to determine if it can be adapted for all committees. Ms. Corbett will also work out a system to notify chapter chairs that they must fill out the template regarding policies and procedures for their committees.

## **Community Affairs Committee**

Ms. Spayer reported that she and Vici Koster-Lenhardt had been co-chairs but Ms. Koster-Lenhardt resigned due to a new position but will support the committee in an advisory capacity.

The Leadership seminar program is proceeding. Each webinar is recorded and made available to community leaders immediately following the webinar.

A number of chapter and SIG leaders have indicated that they do not understand the funding model since they are not receiving funds per chapter/SIG member. There is a belief that STC is financially doing well and there has been some questions why STC is asking for donations. The STC staff was directed to work on a communication for Ms. Spayer to communicate to the CAC and chapter officers regarding how the dues collected for chapter and SIG membership is handled within the budgeting process

The STC staff was also directed to work on communication points that the installment plan has been suspended indefinitely due to technical issues with the membership database. The Executive Committee and Ms. Spayer will review the staff draft prior to release.

Mr. Skojec reported that the Montreal Chapter administrative council announced it was dissolving the chapter. A chapter administrative council does not have the power to dissolve a chapter; only the STC Board can do so. Mr. Skojec will be following the proper procedure by an email to current members of Montreal Chapter asking for their input about the dissolution of the Montreal Chapter. Mr. Houser will be speaking at a Montreal Chapter event and will have "informal" conversation with chapter members and leadership.

Some student chapter faculty advisors have expressed concern about funding from STC. It was suggested that, like the Orlando Chapter, student chapters should investigate funding from their colleges or universities. Several faculty advisors and student leaders have not responded to Mr. Skojec's communications regarding the loss of their EIN numbers. Mr. Skojec will be following up again with faculty advisors and student leaders before taking steps to send emails to current student members of affected student chapters asking for their input about dissolving their chapters.

### **Recognitions Committee**

Ms. Bleiel presented the recommendations from the Associate Fellows Committee for the Board's vote. The motion carried to approve the committee's nominees: Bernard Aschwanden, Pam Brewer, Ann Grove, John Kohl, Nathaniel Lim, Janette Lynch, Lori Meyer, Linda Roberts, and Heather Sommerville for the rank of Associate Fellow.

Ms. Bleiel presented the recommendations from the Fellows Committee for the Board vote. The motion carried to approve all the nominees: DJ Cline, Charles Fisher, Helen M. Grady, Jeff Haas, Deborah Lockwood, Michael Markley, Patricia Moell, and Lisa Pappas for the rank of Fellow.

### **International Summit Award Committee (Competitions)**

Ms. Baranich reported that there were some chapters have requested that bring back Newsletter and/or PR competitions. Ms. Spayer will check with the CAC to see if there is any interest in resurrecting these competitions.

The motion carried to appoint Nathaniel Lim as the chair of International Summit Awards Committee for 2012-2013.

The motion carried to appoint Ms. Paula Robertson and Mr. Robert Brown as sub-managers. Ms. Baranich will notify Ms. Damrau of the approval of the new chair and sub-managers.

### **Publications**

Ms. Pohland reported that the *Intercom* editorial advisory panel members' two-year terms ends in May 2012. Ms. Pohland will ask *Tech Comm* editor Menno de Jong to report on the status of his editorial advisory board. The contract for Mr. de Jong is coming up for renewal in August 2012.

### **Education and Technical Summit**

Mr. Tucker reported that he and Phylise Banner are working on the next virtual conference on technical editing. Ms. Banner is sourcing speakers. A date for this conference has not been confirmed. Mr. Tucker will have the program for 2012 Summit completed by end of February. The name of this year's keynote speaker (Mr. Scott Berkun) will be posted to the STC website as soon as the contract is ratified. Ms. Gilliam will move forward with identifying an appropriate site for the 2014 Summit, based on the current requirements..

### **Development Task Force**

Mr. Wiese reported that the work of the task force is now ready to be turned over to Finance and Investment Committee since the preliminary steps for the donation programs have been completed. Mr. Larsen will be the staff liaison.

### **Organizational Synergies Task Force**

Mr. Wiese talked about the lessons STC can learn from American Society of Indexers (ASI) about understanding freelance members and how to do successful small conferences. He recommended that Karen Lane continue to be STC's liaison to ASI.

Mr. Wiese also talked about the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) and that there is some synergy with them, but it has proven hard to achieve any significant collaborative activities.

Mr. Wiese also discussed the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) and how cooperative they have been in initial discussions for future opportunities.

Mr. Wiese made a motion to disband the Organizational Synergies Task Force at the Summit. Not seconded.

### **Standards Committee**

Mr. Houser made a brief report about the Standards committee. He indicated that he would post a post a more formal report in the week of 6 February.

### **Body of Knowledge Task Force**

Ms. Hart reported that Connie Kiernan has resigned as chair. Ms. Hart will work to find new leadership and may be recommending a reorganization of the development team.

### **STC Certification Commission**

Ms. Baranich reported that the STC Certification Commission will be holding a face to face meeting in March to review submissions for the CPTC certification. In addition, the Commission is looking to develop criteria for the proposed CPTW designation. Eventually the Commission will be identifying and training evaluations

### **Membership Committee**

Mr. Maggiani reported that the Membership Committee is developing a membership survey. This survey will be sent to Ms. Burton, who will send it to the survey committee for vetting. No date was given for when this will be completed.

Ms. Burton reported that although the survey review committee has been in existence since 2007, this committee was never put on the official list of committees for Board approval. Ms. Burton will be submitting the names and the charge to the committee for approval at a future meeting..

### **Ethics Committee**

Ms. Currie-Clifford will review ethics statement developed three years ago and compare it to the earlier version that is still on the web, with recommendations for changes. The responsibility for adopting the final statement will be pushed to the 2012-13 Board.

### **Volunteer Opportunities Task Force**

Ms. Corbett made a motion to disband her position as Monitor of Volunteer Opportunities. Motion carried unanimously.

## Communities and Members

Mr. Skojec reviewed the IRS issues in 2011 and then reviewed the member numbers in chapters and SIGS, both international and US. Discussion ensued about non-responsive chapters and what the Board can do to facilitate either closing or revitalizing them. Mr. Skojec thanked the CAC Outreach team and would like to see the CAC Mentorship team take on a bigger role in mentoring community leaders.

Ms. Spayer reviewed various CAC concerns, including few communities are using MySTC for communications even though the majority of members have registered..

Mr. Larsen reported that there are major technical problems with the installment payment plan so that the staff must make all entries manually. With over 800 members opting for the installment plan in 2012, the work load is becoming a major problem, especially since many members' credit cards lapse during the installment period.

There was a motion to suspend the installment payment plan. Discussion ensued about the motion, including the possible negative impacts on renewals and on whether this would cause undue hardships on members. There were several proposals:

- Keep the installment plan and add part-time staff to handle the manual processes
- Add a fee to the installment plan to help pay for the additional staff expenses
- Suspend the installment plan indefinitely until the technical issues can be resolved

The motion to suspend the installment plan carried.

Ms. Moyna talked about the dues model and the community funding model. Discussion ensued about possibly developing a new model for community funding. Ms. Hart asked Ms Moyna to bring proposals to the Board for discussion in spring 2012.

Lunch break from 11:55 a.m. to 13:01 p.m. EST (GMT -5).

The Board reconvened at 13:01 p.m. EST (GMT -5).

## STC Certification Commission

The STC Certification Commission report was not presented, due to absence of. Jacqueline Henson, STC Legal Counsel.

## International Strategies

Ms. Burton talked the importance of STC having an international presence and how STC can serve members around the globe even if there are no STC chapters in those areas. She reported that tekomp has offered STC a free booth at TC World. The motion carried to support an STC booth at TC World (tekomp) in Wiesbaden, Germany in October 2012.

Ms. Burton reported that a number of members have recommended that STC consider holding a one day conference in Europe based on their opinion that STC's programming is superior for English speakers. The will of the Board is for the staff to explore the possibility of doing a conference in 2013 or 2014 with a European conference management firm.

Ms. Burton reported that Phillipa Benson, with the Charlesworth Group, works with associations and other organizations to enter the China marketplace with publications and educational offerings. Ms. Burton presented a list of the Charlesworth's clients, included the United Nations, the World Bank, and a host of major associations. Ms. Burton asked the Board to approve a \$5,000 research trip to China by Ms. Benson on STC's behalf to explore the possibility of getting STC's publications on the Chinese government's approved list of publications for educational institutions and to hold initial talks with several universities about partnering with STC on educational programming. It was noted that the Charlesworth proposal indicated that the full costs for STC to participate in the Charlesworth publications tour and other efforts would be an additional \$18-23,000.

The motion carried to approve the \$5,000 expenditure for the Charlesworth Group's exploratory April-May trip to China.

## STC and ASAE Ratios

Ms. Hart talked about 2010 and 2011 revenue streams as compared to the ASAE recommended revenue streams. STC is coming more into line with the ASAE recommendations with more revenues coming from educational offerings and a slightly smaller percentage from membership dues.

# STC Vision, Mission, and Strategic Planning

The Board reviewed the current STC Vision and Mission statements and developed a new vision and mission statement and reordered the strategic goals.

The new vision statement is: "Technical communication is recognized globally as an essential part of every organization's competitive strategy."

The new mission statement is: "STC advances the practice and theory of technical communication and promotes the value of technical communicators globally."

New ordering of strategic goals:

1. Promote STC as the global leader in technical communication
  - Develop, market, and deliver high-quality programs and services to meet the current and emerging needs of technical communicators.
  - Increase STC's overall customer and member base by providing the most robust professional and educational resources available to technical communicators.
  - Identify, develop, equip and recognize volunteer leaders, thereby contributing to their professional development
2. Communicate the value of technical communication
  - Work with government and standards organizations to increase awareness and provide an accurate perception of technical communication.
  - Promote the value and stature of technical communicators to employers and consumers.
  - Aggregate, analyze, and publish data on the contributions made by technical communicators.
3. Improve the practice of technical communication
  - Meet the information needs of members, the profession, and others through Society publications.
  - Deliver high-quality programs that provide professional growth and skill development opportunities for technical communicators at all levels of experience.
  - Promote the value of certification and the CTCP certification program.
  - Foster constructive working relationships between industry and the academic community to implement high-value education programs for future technical communicators.
  - Contribute to international standards that positively impact the profession.
  - Leverage social media networking and digital technologies to support member collaboration and professional development.
4. Establish and expand strategic partnerships
  - Facilitate academic-industry partnerships to achieve shared goals.
  - Identify related organizations and explore potential synergies.
  - Pursue shared methods to add educational value and demonstrate the value of professional memberships.
  - Seek shared recognition of and research on best practices and programs.
5. Define the profession of technical communication
  - Identify and promote the skills and aptitudes associated with competent and successful technical communicators
  - Recognize competence in technical communication through certification.
  - Recognize high achievement in technical communication practice through recognition programs.
  - Define and promote ethical standards for the profession.
  - Establish a body of knowledge for the profession.

# Programs and Services

## Publications

Ms. Pohland reported on the status of association publishing, and the importance of focusing on new media and mobile delivery in 2012. She also reported analytics and data on the popularity and increased interest in the publications as a result of an open publication strategy.

Ms. Pohland reported that *Intercom* Online has been open based on the Board's approval to test the activity results and because of technical issues with authentication. The will of the board is to keep *Intercom* Online open until October 2012 (the start of membership renewal season for 2013). As soon as the authentication problems are solved and a way to capture visitor data is implemented, a communications strategy for publications will be developed.

The will of the Board is to keep the *Technical Communication* closed as a members-only benefit. Back content for both publications will be uploaded when possible.

The *Intercom* editorial advisory panel members' two-year terms ends in May 2012. In accordance with other publications, as editor of *Intercom*, Ms. Pohland will select the new members in May to be reported to the Board.

The contract for the current *Tech Comm* editor is coming up for renewal in August 2012. Ms. Burton and Ms. Pohland will find out if the current editor wishes to renew the contract and will report back to the Board.

Ms. Pohland will re-evaluate all publishing-related contracts in 2012 to attempt to reduce costs.

Ms. Pohland will distribute a readers' survey to be completed this year that will help determine future directions for the publications.

Content for the blog *STC's Notebook* will be developed further. *STC's News & Notes* e-newsletter will change in 2012 to include industry news in addition to STC news.

Ms. Pohland will implement a new STC Imprint program, selecting a review panel for potential books from small publishers in the TC field.

Ms. Pohland will research and report on new nonmember and institutional subscription and pricing models for non-dues revenue. She will also research additional modes of delivery, such as ebooks and mobile sites.

## Conference

Ms. Hart made the motion to make former President Bill Clinton an Honorary Fellow if he appears in a satellite or pre-recorded fashion at the Summit. Motion did not pass.

Ms. Houghton reviewed ideas for the 60th anniversary task force. The motion carried to approve the formation of the 60th anniversary task force with Ms. Houghton as the task force chair.

# Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm EST (GMT-5).