

Fall 2009 WCTE Board Meeting
Hyatt Hotel, Milwaukee
6:00 pm, October 22, 2009

Members present: Emily Tymus Ihrke, Lynn Frick, Jess Swell, Paula Wolfe, Jacki Martindale, Barbara Dixon, John Zbikowski, Emilie Amundson, Linda Tabers, Jess Gallo, Tim Kaufman, Erin Schwane, Tom Pamperin, Marti Matyska, Tom Scott, Scott Oates, Lisa Arneson, JoAnne Katzmarek, Penny Parsons, Karen Kelley Rigoni, Donna Pasternak, Lynn Aprill, Patrick Osowski, Joanna Fradrich

Agenda and Minutes from Summer Board Meeting were approved.

Tom Scott presented his **treasurer's report**, which was approved after discussion.

Emily Ihrke highlighted the following **Robert C. Pooley Foundation Annual Report**:

I. Status of the Fund

The current market value of the Robert C. Pooley Foundation accounts as of 9/30/2009 is:
\$55,318.25

This represents the combined amounts in a bond mutual fund and a cash account (money market) held for us at B. C. Ziegler, Chicago. The bond fund at present comprises 91% of our account; the cash portion stands at 9%.

One year ago, on 9/30/2008, the combined account's market value was \$49,162.32. However, the new recession was just beginning, and its damage was soon reflected in the Foundation account. While the cash fund did not lose money, our bond fund soon reached its lowest value in November of 2008; as of the 11/30/2008 statement, the combined market value was \$43,563.32. In other words, it fell some \$5600 in two months, or nearly 11.5%.

During this recession, returns on cash accounts were also falling quickly, and as they were falling, the bond market began to recover. In April of 2009, as these returns continued to move in opposite directions, I transferred \$10,000 from the Foundation's cash accounts to the bond mutual fund, an action that established our current overweight in bonds (91%). At present this weight seems about right to me, although historically it is on the high side. Accordingly, until short-term interest rates recover, or unless the bond market reverses again, I plan to keep 90% or more of our assets in the bond fund.

By June, the account's market value had recovered, thanks in part to the over-weighting in the bond fund, but mostly to improving market conditions. Cash interest rates are still low, but the bond market continues in decent shape. The account stands today at its all-time high.

In addition, a modest balance remains in the Foundation's checking/savings account held at Royal Credit Union (RCU) in Eau Claire. This account exists only for the purpose of writing award checks to Pooley Award winners. After this year's winners cash their checks, the RCU accounts will total approximately \$773.

II. Trustees: Description and Duties

Many years ago, Trustees helped advise the Trust Officer regarding new bond purchases and other investment decisions. In the middle 1990's, Trust Officer Jack Kean began converting Foundation investments from individual bond issues to a bond mutual fund. Upon his retirement in 1999, Dr. Kean offered his opinion (and I agreed) that the bond fund was superior in performance, overall, to our former succession of individual issues, and recommended that we reduce the workload of both the Trust Officer and the Board of Trustees by investing only in the bond fund and cash accounts. (In about 2004 I obtained Executive Board approval to add REIT funds to this array, but have not seen market conditions that would justify this form of investment – and at this point, such market conditions look to be a long way off.) Ever

since Dr. Kean's recommendation, the Foundation has invested new money only in the bond fund and in cash. In 2004, the debtors for our last single-bond issue redeemed it ahead of schedule, and from that date our entire bond investment has been placed in the bond fund.

Thus the Trustees have only one remaining duty: to assess applications submitted for one or another of the Pooley Awards (that is, for the purpose for which the Foundation was established). This evaluation of proposals is light duty, a pleasant way of keeping in touch with the research in our field, and a highly suitable form of service for long-time WCTE members who have retired from active teaching. However, all interested WCTE members are welcome to serve, and often one or two Trustees are still active in the profession's work force.

Trustees are elected by the WCTE Executive Board during its own business meetings. Trustees typically rotate off the Board (or stand for re-election) after serving a three-year term. Among the five Trustees, this length of service provides for both continuity and rotation. At present, we have four active Trustees:

Carol Conway-Gerhardt

Mark Heike

Donna Hitchens

Carmen Manning

Clearly we need a fifth Trustee, and typically I would simply ask the Executive Board to elect someone. However, a computer disk failure in summer of 2008 destroyed my record of the terms of service of these Trustees, and I cannot verify their terms' expiration dates. In consultation with Executive Board members during this past summer (2009), including an unsuccessful attempt by John Zbikowski to reconstruct the roster from earlier Board minutes, we decided to propose that the Executive Board repopulate the Board of Trustees from among the willing continuing Trustees and, as needed, newly elected Trustees from the WCTE membership. Mark Heike and Donna Hitchens would like to continue. Carol Conway-Gerhardt is not yet done with her first term as Trustee (though I'm uncertain whether she has one year left or two).

If the Board agrees to take this on, I would ask members also to indicate which designated Trustees shall serve for one more year, who for two, and who for three. A relatively even turnover process is desirable (although in practice, Trustees have been re-elected and served for many years). This new roster need not be in place until summer of 2010.

After establishing this initial rotation, I will take the information from the Board and resume my former practice of notifying the Board, from time to time, of an opening on the Board of Trustees, and whether the incumbent is willing to stand for election again.

III. Building the Fund

From its inception in the late 1970s until the late 1990s, WCTE made annual contributions to the Pooley Foundation out of the organization's membership dues. These contributions supplemented the original seed money donated in memory of the Pooleys (and later, Jarvis Bush) by surviving founding members of WCTE. Through careful management and investment by Jarvis Bush and then Jack Kean (the two Trust Officers who preceded me), the Foundation grew healthy enough to generate funds for the awards it was created to establish. For most of our history, the contribution from WCTE was 25 cents per year per active member. In those days, total membership was above 600, so even 25 cents added up to some \$150 per year. In the early 1990s, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the general membership voted to increase this contribution to 50 cents per year per member. For a few years, accordingly, WCTE donated \$300 or so annually to the Foundation, ensuring continuing growth of its capital regardless of market performance.

Unfortunately, in the mid-to-late 1990s, membership began to fall off fairly dramatically, and at the same time, revenues from WCTE's regional conferences and workshops dried up. The only reliable sources of income that remained were WCTE's annual convention (which even lost money a couple of years) and its membership dues. Soon after I took over as Trust Officer, recognizing that the Pooley Foundation was much more solvent than the WCTE itself, the Executive Board approved of my suggestion that the Pooley

Foundation not demand payment from its parent organization in any years when WCTE was struggling just to pay its bills. The decision each year was left to my discretion. Assuming things had not changed much, I have never asked for this payment in any year since that time.

I do not know to this day if WCTE can afford to donate any money to the Foundation these days. I'm not sure it's still necessary; certainly the Foundation is now self-sustaining. I bring up the topic of this former donation only to remind the current leadership of the Foundation's origins and history as a fund created by teachers, its membership, for the benefit of other teachers who were trying new approaches and conducting new research. It's possible that, should the parent organization find itself in improved circumstances, it may decide it wants to continue this very worthy tradition.

IV. The Trust Officer Position

It has been my honor to serve as the Pooley Foundation's third Trust Officer. It's a pleasant duty for a worthy cause, not overly time-consuming, and an interesting way for me to continue service to an important organization in spite of my increased professional responsibilities. However, I serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board, which may at some time conceive plans for a different approach to this office. I want the Executive Board to understand that I am ready at any time, upon its request, to withdraw in favor of a newer member who has an interest this duty. Things are in good shape; the learning curve is not too steep; the transfer of power will be peaceful whenever it happens.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marty Wood, Trust Officer, Robert C. Pooley Foundation
10/20/2009

Emilie Amundson -- DPI Report:

* October 30th summit: 46 Common Core States will send reps (including Tony Evers) to attend and to adopt the new standards, which will impact our state's prior standards work. Expect a set of revised exit standards by December with the remainder to come in January.

* Tony Evers' August 27th announcement: WKCE will be phased out. This calls for conversations on what its replacement would look like

* MPS Grant:

*RtI: moving up from elementary level and implications for WCTE calls for conversations—The March Green Bay Conference wants proposals from speakers addressing RtI in the secondary level.

*Graphics of visual images: looking for feedback.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

District Director Liaison -- Jacki will meet with directors for informal breakfast tomorrow.

Membership --Tom Scott reported that of the 328 names on roll, only 145 are current with dues. Discussion followed on possibility of committee formation to develop a strategic plan to work on membership. Emily appointed an ad hoc committee: Erin Swane, Emily Tymus Ihrke, Kathy Nelson, Linda Barrington, and Tom Scott. Tom will convene the group.

WCEE—Barbara Dixon hinted at the proposal of amendment to WCTE by-laws to formally establish an affiliate and to notify NCTE by Nov. 6.

WCEL—Tom Scott noted our current unofficial, loosely structured group is not affiliated with NCTE's CEL.

Awards--Carol was not present but Emily reported that awards will be presented during the Welcome and Lunch along with display boards in atrium.

Website —John Zbikowski reported hits of 13 K+ since 2005, with a 10K milestone around the July retreat.

1330 loads this week w/630 unique visitors and 500 1st time visitors. Increase may be content-driven with more conference info: registration form, preview, and preliminary program. He reported that as for the site revisions, no progress has yet been made.

Update—Linda Barrington shared ideas including interactive features such as hovering mouse links to email template and video embedding. Concerns about the delivery of the Update were raised including size as an attachment, blocked e-mails, union encouragement to use personal rather than school e-mail. We could check a Constant Contact Service to manage this problem for us. A suggestion was made that the tech committee should deal with these concerns.

WI English Journal – Emily Ihrke shared that past editors sent word that their last issue is just about ready to go to printer. Paula Wolfe reported the UW-Madison faction will only be handling an online edition. Their Library System will be covering all costs. As to the recent flurry of email, she answered concerns with assurances that they know their audience and guarantee we will like it. Tom Scott clarified his initiation of the emails. The board continued the discussion “to clear the air”.

Archives—Emily Ihrke reports the archives are “alive and well.”

OFFICIER REPORTS

Past President/Director at Large--Election Report and directory was distributed w/corrections.

Second VP—Lynn Aprill distributed her flier calling for program proposals for Eau Claire 2010.

First VP/ Convention Update: Donna Pasternak expressed concern for upcoming conference planners’ scheduling: committee meetings during convention limits programming. She thanked Emily for a rejuvenation of our organization under her presidency.

President—Emily Ihrke reported that the officer job descriptions are almost completed.

OLD BUSINESS--none

NEW BUSINESS—none

Emily Ihrke ended the meeting at 9:00 p.m. and encouraged all to attend tomorrow’s Annual Meeting.