

Board Minutes 2006 Feb 2

Sakai Foundation Board of Directors Conference Call
February 2, 2006

This document contains minutes from the conference call of the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors held on February 2, 2006. Corrections, suggestions should be sent to Joseph Hardin and Mary Miles.

These minutes capture both the discussion and formal resolutions of the board. Simply because something was discussed does not mean that it is the agreed-upon position of the board. When the board makes a formal resolution to approve an item, it will be noted as such in the minutes. If there is no such notation, readers should assume that the minutes are simply the notes of the board discussions.

Board members present: Joseph Hardin, Brad Wheeler, Ian Dolphin, Chris Coppola, Jutta Treviranus, Lois Brooks, Vivie Sinou, John Norman, Chuck Severance, Mary Miles (staff)

Topic: New SCA member (Stoas):

Brad announced that Stoas has become the newest SCA member. Mary will follow-up with them to obtain the necessary information for the website. Along the line of SCA membership, Brad continued that justStudents has determined they are unable to continue.

Topic: SCA Dues for 2006

Earlier, a report was circulated to the board showing the status of 2005 dues. Mary was authorized to send 2006 invoices as soon as possible with an instruction that the \$10,000 yearly fee could be paid in one lump sum, or spread over 2 payments (June 1 and December 1).

Topic: Conference Updates

Joseph reported that Wende Morgaine is putting together a description of the kind of work she would like to be involved in, allowing Sakai Foundation to engage Wende and provide her with some level of funding to supplement her current funding.

Topic: Educause in 2006

The Board was asked whether there was an interest in having conference space at the Educause conference. The Board agreed to pursue this, but with a push to have some meeting space within Educause controlled conference area. Lois agreed to check further into this matter and report back to the Board. She was authorized to speak on behalf of open source in general, not just a special Sakai-endorsed deal. This more general approach may be more palatable. Ian suggested that this also be placed on the agenda for the upcoming joint JA-SIG/Sakai Board meeting.

Action: Lois to discuss Sakai meeting space at the Educause Conference in Dallas. The Educause meeting space issue will be placed on the JA-SIG/Sakai Board Meeting of February 24.

Topic: Creative Commons

The board agreed that this was a good licensing model and method and that the effort is something that's very important to the Sakai community. The Board felt they should work to expose the community to this effort in as many ways we can. Joseph requested a Board understanding that this is one of the underlying things that should be done. Ian agreed, however he noted that there may be some discrepancies from country to country. Jutta added that Canada has created their own Creative Commons which relates to their own copyright laws.

The Board agreed that in principle, we support Creative Commons. In practice, it's more of a feature request in Jira for methods of dealing with it.

Topic: Status of Sakai Associate Partner Relationship

Ian reported that JISC has just about all the materials they want. One outstanding issue in this respect was a need for a copy of the foundation by-laws which were at .8x in confluence, rather than a 1.0 release. Joseph stated that there is a URL to the official online document and Brad has normalized a word document of the same version. Joseph will send the URL and word document to the Board. Ian will pass the document to JISC as soon as possible. There is nothing further to be done until it has been put through the JISC internal procedures.

Topic: Follow-up on Georgetown Proposal

Lois reported that she will be meeting with Charlie in about a month. Until that meeting occurs, there is nothing to report.

Topic: Oracle Presentation

The following Oracle personnel joined the conference call for an informational discussion only:

Curtiss Barnes, Senior Director, Applications Strategy - Education & Research

Cary Brown, Development Manager, Student Systems

Linda Feng, Director, Student Products Development

Mark Armstrong, VP of Development, Student Systems

Sandra Sanvido, Director of Product Strategy, Education & Research

Curtiss stated that Oracle is investigating a project that would get them into the course management system space. Their interest stems from the perception that the market is ready for the next generation of course management systems - one that considers the entire academic & research enterprise. Oracle has a vision of bringing the academic and research areas of the institution into a collaborative environment, along with a student system, grading system, competency management system, portfolios, grants management system and clinical trials - with dimensional analytic solutions to help institutions manage learning performance and other outcomes. They have been looking at embracing an open source community and contributing as a commercial vendor. The idea is that they would bundle Sakai with their student product and provide with a support offering. This would be the underpinning of their collab suite. They came to this conference call to discuss Sakai's interest as well as ways to work together.

Oracle identified key barriers as the licensing model, community reaction, and development arena. Joseph added that Oracle could take the software and do as you wish with it so he was curious as to what they see as stumbling blocks. Linda replied that Sakai itself seems very straight forward but there appears to be several sub-licenses that Sakai brings with it that end up having the GPL and LGPL license. They would like to pick and choose which pieces they would use and the associated licenses that would accompany those pieces. Chuck responded that technically, you can pull any parts out, making it easy to come up with a hibernate of Sakai which would work. Chuck suggested that he and Chris Coppola should have a separate conference call with Linda around these issues. Curtiss agreed to arrange this.

Curtiss continued that Oracle gets both positive and negative reactions. They want this to be a partnership in the truest sense of the word and not seen as the evil vendor coming in to destroy Sakai. Brad added that the Sakai community is making considerable progress in the arena of open source and that they are not an anti-commercial group. Joseph agreed, adding that the Sakai community is very pragmatic. Open source communities are very results oriented and as a result the behaviors of those organizations and their contributions have been critically reviewed. In the areas where vendors have contributed in a good way, they have been very successful. That's something Oracle would have to learn. The Sakai community would be concerned if it looked like Oracle was going to push or pull things in a direction what was just of benefit to Oracle. Brad stated that Oracle's affirmation that they were trying to work well with the community could go a long way. Opinion data are often leading indications but behavioral data tells you a lot.

Curtiss said that they have identified a few areas in the code base they would like to discuss further, but they should be addressed on a separate call. Chuck, Glenn, and Lance should be involved in that call.

Curtiss confirmed that Oracle is considering becoming a Sakai Commercial Affiliate as a part of their strategy, but are still in the proof of concept mode.

Linda asked if the formation of the Foundation had changed the model for schools or members contributing. Joseph assured here that there was not much difference. He continued that contributions can be made in a number of ways: 1) as a member of the foundation; 2) as a contribution of effort - development or design work, bug fixing, contribution of code, resources, specific project work that may not directly involve code but might involve building some of the infrastructure around the conference or any other part of the foundation.

Chuck added that the biggest change is one of not trying to do complete top down project management any more, but rather following the Apache model more. He again suggested that the Oracle team talk with the lead people who are in the best position to give you correct answers. Chuck feels that this is a much healthier environment because we could never control the richness of Sakai.

Joseph assured the group that their contribution, participation, and suggestions, would be welcomed. Chuck added that Sakai doesn't treat anyone differently. Once a contributor is respected as a committer, it doesn't matter whether they are a commercial vendor or an individual at an institution. They are all treated as individuals.

Joseph asked the Oracle group to outline why Sakai would be a good organization, a good community, and a good set of software to work with. Curtiss replied that they are looking at several organizations. While it makes a lot of sense for them to do this, they are not interested in going off and buying a vendor. Sakai has demonstrated skills that are very attractive to Oracle. From a purely technical approach, the architecture is very flexible and easy to deal with and it plays well with their vision. They are interested in helping to drive Sakai to the overall objective which is more in the pedagogical state. By doing things right, Oracle feels they can provide some pretty robust engines that would help the entire community.

Curtiss stated that they are within a few weeks of making a further commitment. In a perfect world, they would come to Vancouver with some kind of announcement.

Topic: Release Updates

Chuck reported that the release is going very smoothly. Megan crafting a nice release that is not likely to slide into 2.1.2. Megan and Lance are doing a great job.

Report on CRIM Visit and Sakai Quebec Request

Jutta reported on her recent CRIM visit and the issue with Sakai Quebec. She clarified that they are not a for-profit group. There are some specific learning design things they would like to do with Sakai as well as some other features which would be of interest to Quebec. They would like to contribute code for things that might be on the Sakai priority list but are also important to them. Jutta was asked whether someone joining Sakai Quebec would result in joining Sakai as well. She responded that they are willing to discuss those issues with us. Chuck will talk with Jutta and set up a draft MOU in preparation for a meeting with them.

Topic: Membership agreement

Joseph noted that he had sent around a suggested version of the membership agreement. The original document was re-purposed to represent the Foundation and not the Sakai Project. He asked that the board review the document and send back comments, copying Lon Raley on responses.

Topic: Fellows Discussion

Chuck reported that he had sent a document on the Fellows proposal to the Advocacy group. He will also put a copy of the document into Confluence where comments will be captured. Chris agreed to put the document in SCP and give it a tracking number. Chris will send a link and Chuck can reply back to the Advocacy group.

Topic: Other Updates

Brad reported that Michael McRobbie has been named the Bloomington campus's first provost. He will serve in an interim capacity for 12-18 months until a new president can be appointed. In addition, Brad will be named acting-CIO. The board congratulated Brad on this news.

With no further business, the call ended at 2:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Miles