

Board Minutes 2006 Jan 19

Sakai Foundation Board of Directors
Conference Call
January 19, 2006

This document contains minutes from the conference call of the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors held on January 19, 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, Chris Coppola, Vivie Sinou, Jutta Treviranus, Lois Brooks, John Norman, Chuck Severance, Mary Miles (staff), Mike Elledge (staff)

Topic: February 24 JA-SIG/Sakai Meeting in New York

The joint meeting will be held on February 24 at Columbia University in New York. Details have already been sent by separate email. The board reviewed the goals of the JA-SIG meeting and determined that this meeting would get the boards together for a first time to determine ways to align on a more formal basis. Joseph reported on recent conversations with Jonathan Markow who has expressed an interest in developing ways the two boards can work together going forward. This is a first step in that process. Brad reported that Barry Walsh, a new JA-SIG board member would not be attending that meeting. John Norman noted that there seems to be a common agenda in the open source arena and this is a good way to cross one of the tribal boundaries in higher education. The main goal is to start a conversation leading to a better understanding of each other.

Topic: Discussion of Community and Open Source Projects

Brad reported that discussions are moving rapidly regarding a possible research administration collaboration. This should get sorted out in the next month.

Topic: Status of Sakai Associate Partner Relationship

Since Ian was not on the call, no updates were provided.

Topic: Financial Review - Lon Raley

Lon Raley distributed a document showing the financial status of actual membership plus commitments under actual agreements, including the institutions that have chosen to withdraw. Chris asked what was known about the reasons for withdrawal. Lon and Joseph replied that there had been no unhappiness, but had been some hard budget hits.

The second tab on the report shows the financial data through December and allows a quick review of current funding being carried forward. The sources are booked revenue (cash plus receivables). Affiliates are not included in this report. They were not invoiced until very late in 2005 and it's now almost time to resend for 2006. One note was that consultant fees increased in 2005 and these fees could shape the 2006 budget information in a very different way. The carry-forward numbers include encumbrances such as the hotel bills for Austin. Lon indicated that the January numbers will give a clearer picture of the final numbers for 2005. Joseph reminded the board that the board needs to develop a budget for 2006.

Chris noted that there appeared to be some concern around retention of our current members. It was suggested that further discussion should be held around this subject. John Norman agreed to take the lead on this issue and define what we need to do in this regard. One of the outputs should be something all board members can all use as this goes forward. Chris further noted that there needs to be a program in place to talk to existing members. Brad agreed that it would be good to understand why people are staying with Sakai. Joseph suggested that in addition to meeting with JA-SIG, the Sakai board should also meet with other sibling organizations like the Quali board.

Action: Brad will contact Dennis Abersol at the University of Oklahoma to discuss their withdrawal last year. John Norman will put together a document defining what needs to be done in the area of member retention.

Topic: Use of Sakai Name

Chuck stated that he was very comfortable with the current stand taken on this issue. He continued that where there is a rather strong MOU, such as the SCA MOU, there might be some confusion. If groups want to form using the Sakai name, there should be an SCA-like agreement that states their purpose must be to promote the goals of the Sakai Foundation. Joseph also noted that these MOUs should be revocable or renewable. John Norman noted that the important thing would be to understand the purposes of anyone using the Sakai name. A sub-committee consisting of Jutta, Chuck and John was formed to start putting together a document that might be associated with this. After that document is completed, it will be sent to the remainder of the board. In the meantime, Chuck will send a note to the group requesting use of the Sakai name saying that "even though we said no, we are still talking about it."

Topic: Project Manager Posting

Joseph reported that there has been no forward movement on this. He noted that he was looking for discussion from the community on this position and perhaps a volunteer could be located to fill this position. Chuck stated that unlike the situation where we were without a QA director, this will be moderately light work for a while which gives us some time to work and think about the position. While the position is important to have, the dimensions of filling this position need to be further examined. Chuck agreed to take on the activity of defining this position and looking for a candidate without taking any action without going back to the board first. He will develop some organized thoughts, report back to the board, and then take it to the Advocacy group for further discussion.

Topic: Staff Contribution Form and Formalization

This topic may tie in with MOUs and other contracts. Chuck will work on this issue and report back to the board.

Topic: Follow-up on Georgetown Proposal

Lois indicated that there was nothing to report at this time, but she promised to pursue the issue with Charlie.

Topic: Unicon presentation

This issue was resolved in Austin and no further discussion is needed.

Topic: Executive Director Job Description Posting

Joseph reminded the board that he had circulated a draft job description document but would like their input to it. He requested additions, revisions, and/or changes within the next 18 hours. We would like to post the job description on the Sakai website within the next few days.

It was noted that the board has not discussed the Executive Director position in depth. This draft will give us a place to cement the requirements. This job position will be the foundation for a regular job search. Jutta reported on a recent recruitment just completed by the University of Toronto. Over 100 people responded and many were highly qualified. The board decided not to hire a recruiter but to advertise through our website, through various list servers, and by advertising in national newspapers.

The question of confidentiality was discussed. In order to maintain confidentiality, initial contacts will be sent directly to Joseph. Once an initial review has been made, they will be reviewed by a sub-committee of the board consisting of Jutta, Joseph, and Lois. If others are interested in getting involved with the sub-committee, they should send a note to Joseph. Once a first-level cut has been made by the sub-committee, the entire board should be involved in the selection process. Lois agreed to chair the sub-committee and shepherd the hiring process for the Executive Director.

Topic: Vancouver Updates

This discussion was deferred to a later time. Discussions will occur over email with the board.

Topic: Mark Norton Proposal

Chuck reported on conversations with Mark in which he had detailed some further deliverables. Mark returned a second proposal. One thing to consider right away is short term solutions. In that regard, the board approved Mark attending and providing training at the Sacramento meeting. Joseph noted that Mark's proposal involves the development of training materials which Mark does not consider to be the property of the Sakai Foundation. As a condition of future contracts, the Board would demand that materials built while under contract to Sakai would be the property of the Foundation. Joseph indicated that he had an email from Mark and that he would reply that the short term items were fine but that in the future a more detailed contract would be required. In the long term, a contract must be very specific and define more specifically the terms under which Mark was delivering the training. In principle, the Foundation should never contract with anyone to work on anything that does not come under the Foundation ownership.

Mark's role needs to be clearly defined. Chuck will draft a MOU for Mark which will be reviewed further.

Chuck indicated that we find ourselves increasingly in need of "evangelist positions." These positions would express the Sakai image to the rest of the community and beyond. These positions would apply in several areas, including web services, pedagogy, and others. The role of an evangelist would be to passionately represent a position in the Sakai name and contribute to things moving forward. Identification of the "evangelists" might be a way to pull more people into the Sakai Foundation orbit. Volunteers for these positions will be solicited from the community.

Topic: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding

Chuck asked for review of the recent MOU in terms of form and language. The board indicated that he should continue to write MOUs as necessary, working with Lon and others as needed to get the language in place. Indiana University has requested that the MOU for Megan May be treated as a sponsored program. Lon, Chuck and Brad will continue to work on this issue.

Topic: SCP Charter Approval

The board unanimously approved the SCP Charter proposal submitted by Chris Coppola and the SCP group.

Topic: Future Sakai Accessibility Leadership

Mike Elledge has announced that he is leaving the University of Michigan to take a position at Michigan State University. He expressed concern about the interest in accessibility declining without an advocate. There has been some very helpful support provided by Indiana, MIT and UToronto in providing support and evaluation, but if there is not someone designated as a lead, preferably from those institutions, Sakai will not have the support needed going forward. Jutta was asked if there might be someone from UToronto who would be able to fill this role. She said this was a high priority area for UToronto and agreed to think about it for the next couple of weeks.

Topic: Other discussion

Chuck was asked to send the discussion on licensing practices to the Advocacy group for comment. The Apache model will be discussed at the next conference call, scheduled for February 2.

Joseph also noted that an advisory committee might be useful to the board. He suggested Brian Behlendorf and perhaps others that would meet with the board to discuss Sakai futures and strategic directions in general. This will be a topic for further discussion.

With no further business before the board, the call ended at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Miles