

Morningstar Mystery School

Board of Directors

December Meeting

Minutes

12/14/19

Present: Ealasaïd, Laura, Katie, Ken, Sandra

Facilitator: Ken

Called to Order at 10:05am

- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together and reciting the Holy Mother prayer
- Pillar and other standing reports
 - ◆ Research & Alumni Pillar
 - Jennifer is doing a draft of a piece about Elements
 - Concerns about board-pillar communication, overfunctioning; Katie is hoping to have other people from pillar act as liaison.
 - ◆ Teaching & Curriculum Pillar
 - Tony emailed Sandra, T&C will not have a rep this month, but they do have someone set to appear Jan & Feb. They're sorting out having an Elements course start at the Vernal Equinox, want input on what to charge for Elements.
 - Discussion around how fees operate within Mstar, are Elements students Mstars? We need to sort out, are they members of the corporation? Then dues are \$25. Do we need to create a new version of membership for external students?
 - Discussion
 - Bylaws don't have provisions for students or teachers; right now, everyone is a member and gets to vote on the Board and use the forum. If we have external students paying tuition, then we have income that isn't dues-based. That'll have to get sorted, will complicate the accounting. Need to figure out how to classify this, then re-examine the bylaws.
 - Laura: We can probably work backwards – if we come up with a fee for the class, we can sort the other stuff.
 - Sandra: What is the relationship of the teacher to Mstar?
 - Discussion
 - Sandra: If Mstar pays teachers, that creates an employee situation, which gets complicated.

- We could have a thing where MStar charges the teacher, then the teacher charges the students. More like local classes.
- Sandra: For this first round, this is brand new. Teachers are performing more for the school than vice versa; could do this as essentially free. Later, we could sort out what the teachers would pay for Mstar logistical and tech support. We could offer payment processing, potentially. Doesn't feel comfortable saying we're going to charge if the students aren't really mstar students, if they're really students of the teacher(s).
- Discussion.
- Ken: we could come up with some suggestions and send to Pillar. e.g., no money at all, set fee, (Katie) suggested donation to the school (that doesn't make them members).
- Sandra: If there are four teachers for the class, that's \$100/mo cost to the school
- Laura: thinks it's not four at once, there's going to be a hand-off; they were looking at the time commitment.
- Ken: We could add this as a thing to do in the coming year, solving this more satisfactorily.
- Pillar did ask for a number.
- Sandra: likes Katie's idea of suggested donation.
- Katie: last elements class started around \$120, then when Thorn left went down to \$60. not totally sure about frequency. Checked, was \$300-\$450/quarter.
- Sandra: we should do research and look at what other online schools are charging. If we charge more than current membership dues, would personally like to understand exactly what each teacher is committing to before we start charging students that much.
- Laura: the pillar probably wants a number for advertising purposes
- Sandra: they can advertise without a number, and handle questions as they come in. It's in the bylaws that nobody is turned away for lack of funds. There's discomfort around them being members of Mstar, but it would provide them with the protections and responsibilities. But if they're members they probably still shouldn't have access to all the forums.
- Ken: has some "that's how we've always done it" leanings, that's how it's been.
- Laura: her elements class had a significant dropoff, and having to finish elements first gave a structure when interacting with the school.
- Sandra: having to finish elements means they've demonstrated commitment, and have some shared norms.
- Laura dropped from the meeting.
- Ealasa: doesn't want semi-random people coming onto the forum where I talk about vulnerable shit. I think about where I was before Elements and I don't want that person on the forum. I want someone who's run Iron and Pearl and is working on their shit.

- Discussion
- Ken: we aren't an initiatory tradition, but Elements serves as a sort of gatekeeping process similar to what initiation does. Thinks we should have a separation of some sort.
- Sandra: really likes the suggested donation, we could make a suggestion to the teacher that the suggested donation should be X, then the teacher could add a surcharge for their own stuff, and that's between the teacher/Pillar/students. Board shouldn't police teachers unless there's an ethical breach.
- Sandra will reply to Tony's email.
- Approve minutes from previous meeting?
 - ◆ Laura moves to approve. No objections, unanimous.
- Updates on action items from the previous meeting
 - ◆ Laura: working group (about Pillars and responsibilities) email
 - Katie, Tony, Laura group. Met, have stuff planned to do/hammer out.
 - ◆ Laura: send call for volunteers to sandra for edit
 - Yep.
 - ◆ E: scan annual report letter and form, send around.
 - Nope.
 - ◆ All: by our next meeting we all have one or two questions around this and think about who (or which parts of school) should be on committee.
 - E: this is about scholarships (eg for retreat), we need someone to hammer this out.
 - Laura: money is really sticky for us.
 - General agreement.
 - Sandra: the big qs are: What are scholarships for? Who gets them? Who decides? How do people apply, etc. Logistical questions but also overarching questions – if we have a scholarship fund, who administrates it? How does that work? What about external students (like for Elements)? Is it really more of a grant/stipend?
 - Discussion.
 - Laura: we need to sort out these things, maybe have a working group. There's a larger conversation here.
 - Sandra: should we do a general call for volunteers for scholarship committee? But then, thinking about overfunctioning (what does it even mean?). If it's about making things overly bureaucratic, maybe another committee isn't the right call.
 - Laura: there's a diff between meetings for its own sake and asking people for input around this to avoid the Board just handing down fiats. Posting an ask is useful. We can see who responds, and they can take ownership of how they show up. Laura will draft an ask (calling for volunteers for a scholarship subcommittee) and write up an outline for us to discuss.
 - Sandra: let's maybe take a breath and see if we have guidance from Lux, egregore, etc. Are we creating too many committees? Are we making things

overly complicated? Are we in line with our mission? Has a feeling we should ask ourselves, how do we make this simple?

- Ken: similarly, if we make it simple, will it also be good? We could have a very simple policy that if someone asks for support we give it, that's very low-structure but feels a little careless. The "sure, we can make that work" model of budgeting is how he handles his life but it feels irresponsible to handle the org's finances that way.
 - Laura: duality of getting things done and encouraging collaboration, we need to look at how we tackle it as a board. Maybe have a meeting structure that's half working group, post drafts for feedback. If people have a lot of feedback, they can offer it, or form their own working group to hash things out.
 - Sandra: we often get derailed during pillar reports, maybe we should ask pillars for written reports? Like, what are you up to, and do you have questions? Then we could incorporate the qs into the agenda. We end up trying to do the Pillar work rather than our own.
 - Laura: likes it. Ken also
 - Sandra: will require amending the bylaws. Is working on one already. Bylaws are sometimes amended retroactively to reflect how the school is working, this is normal. We could add the bit about the report in, offer them a template. Sandra will create the template for pillar reports and send around.
 - Ken: realized he also skipped the treasurer report. Sandra will check in with John.
 - Laura: has a hard stop at 2:30.
- Treasurer report
 - ◆ John: what do we want to hear?
 - Laura; we do want to hear if people aren't paying dues, how behind are they.
 - ◆ John: also realized he owes us the annual report. We have a good amount of cash on hand, has money in Paypal to transfer. We have about \$4k in the bank. Has to do final rollup of retreat stuff.
 - ◆ Laura: has everyone send in everything?
 - ◆ John: needs receipts from some folks
 - ◆ Ken: have we reimbursed people?
 - ◆ John: yes, and we made a small profit! What do we do around that?
 - ◆ Laura: scholarship fund! Also if we know how much extra, we can adjust when planning the next retreat.
 - Back to action items
 - ◆ Sandra: draft language for Tomb Forum. Done and posted
 - ◆ Sandra: continue roles and responsibilities listing – yep, picking away at it.
 - ◆ Sandra to draft bylaws amendment for term limits – yes.
 - Current bylaws don't mention that the term is a year, they indicate that it's voted on every year. Had the thought to amend it to say board members are elected for a two year term and we have elections every year (so we don't roll over to a new

board all at once). Even if nobody's term is up, can add directors. Everybody would be a member at large, we don't have formal roles for directors. Does need to fix wording for what if we have nine board members, none of whose term is expiring, what happens?

■ Discussion.

- We are out of time.
- Next meeting is our annual "what's coming"? Meeting. First one!
- Sandra: Everyone think of an action item looking at what our personal goals are for Mstar – identifying arcs, we'll discuss.
- Confirm next month's call – 1/11/20 10am Pacific; Laura to facilitate
- We don't have volunteers for Board, we need to decide if we want to extend volunteer period. Yes, we will. Unanimous.
- Sandra to post on forum and FB about it, Laura will pass to Lyssa for newsletter.
- Laura to draft request for funds from T&T.
- Back to pillar reports
 - ◆ Temple & Tech Pillar
 - ◆ Retreat Committee
 - ◆ IRS Stuff
- New Business
 - ◆ Our next meeting is a special meeting to look at what we want to accomplish over the next few years. (after summer solstice, we look at what we've accomplished)
 - ◆ Discuss scholarship / repayment issues
 - ◆ How do we post policies, retain them, and make sure they're being followed? Larger question around how policies are being stored and shared.
- Action Items
 - ◆ Sandra
 - Will create the template for pillar reports and send around.
 - Post on forum and FB about needing volunteers for Board, Laura will pass to Lyssa for newsletter
 - Reply to Tony's email
 - ◆ Laura: Draft an ask (calling for volunteers for a scholarship subcommittee) and write up an outline for us to discuss.
 - ◆ Ealasaid: scan the annual report letter and send around.
- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together and reciting the Holy Mother prayer.