

Morningstar Mystery School Board of Directors November Meeting Minutes

11/9/2019

Present: Ealasaid, Laura, Katie, Sandra, Tony (for T&C pillar)

Facilitator: Katie

Called to Order at 10:04am Pacific

- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together and reciting the Holy Mother prayer
- Pillar and other standing reports
 - ◆ Research & Alumni Pillar (Katie)
 - There's a blog post up now!
 - ◆ Teaching & Curriculum Pillar (Tony)
 - Moving forward, trying to build enough autonomy to not need Laura. Put out a call for volunteers.
 - A few things he wanted to bring to us. One: they're revising the external teaching criteria/vetting process. Historically a very contentious topic in the pillar. They're not changing much in terms of the application process. Draft: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jvqIy9CX_e3esfLJXnB9u89UTZnfW8CZ
 - They are getting rid of the letters of recommendation. Hoping for our blessing on that.
 - General agreement.
 - Much discussion around dealing with problems, importance of seeing problems and having a process to respond to them. Mistakes/bad classes are inevitable.
 - Tony: There's no process way to avoid emotional conflict. We need to be prepared for that.
 - Another thing: they're talking about doing an Elements class in Feb. Who's in charge of marketing? Social media? Who's responsible for promoting the classes? Who's responsible for administering them? His local group was doing a thing where once a month they'd be at a pagan shop and hold a discussion around queer magic and spirituality, has helped people invest in the community. What if Mstar had a semi-regular public zoom chat with rotating leadership where it's not

necessarily teaching core material, but like "I'm going to talk about working with sticky one" - but who'd be in charge of making that happen?

- Sandra: the structure of the school is not set up to be silos, but we've started to do that. Everything is everybody's responsibility. T&T has a huge list of things they do, and most of the pillar is also on the board – not a coincidence. All of these things need to be a collaboration! The blog is a collab between T&T, who make sure the space is there and working, and R&A, who gather the posts and do the posting and curate the info. For marketing, similar situation. We need somebody who is really good at social media and doesn't get emotionally overwhelmed by it. Not sure we have that person right now. There has to be a collaboration. The monthly ?Zoom idea is a perfect example of collab – T&T for the tech side, teaching for the teachers and curating the information. Promotion at this point is, we have to ask the whole school to be our promoters. We need one person to coordinate that, not sure who that is. Maybe at the retreat someone will be there who can do it?
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- Tony: likes this idea. We're still building momentum and will probably be doing small groups stuff for a while.
- Katie: finished elements with just two people, and it wasn't a bad thing.
- Sandra: Small groups means things can be aimed well at who's there.
- Tony: small groups can be great, 5-8 people is great for this kind of teaching.
- Laura: will set up email and talk to people at the retreat
- Sandra: won't be at retreat but can be available at their convenience if it'd be helpful.
- E: this discussion at retreat, maybe talk about how we can cultivate people of color as students. MStar is super white.
- A bunch of good discussion.
- Laura: The whiteness class this year was really helpful, it'd be good if we did it again and had more people do it, it's work we need to do.
- Sandra: We need POC in our leadership, we need to be genuinely inclusive. Something we need to work on with racial diversity and physical diversity. When she got pregnant, realized how ablist the work is.
- Katie: Yeah! For example, she can't see herself in a mirror.
- Sandra: YES. Best bet is getting people who aren't exactly like us in our leadership. Can't reach out without being a klutz.
- Laura: This is a discussion it'd be good to have as a board. One of the issues with white folks is that we don't talk about race and our own complicity.

Talking about where we are now, in our own local communities. To make a space in which people of color are supported in leadership. This is big and complicated.

- Sandra: we can't do this by ourselves, though. We need allies among people who're different from us who can say "hey this thing you do is weird or off putting" and then we can find other ways of doing things. We don't want to say come join as long as you can be just like us.
- ◆ Temple & Tech Pillar (Laura)
 - Laura: timeline for next newsletter (content due friday 12/6), talking about Facebook admin cleanup Sandra did. Talking about electronic resources we use, like Google Drive, Gmail, etc. Because free, privacy isn't great. Found pricing for a pro Gsuite that we might want to get. Will come up with proposal for changing things.
 - Also Astral Temple stuff, Tomb of Birth.
- ◆ Retreat Committee (Laura)
 - last meeting happened. We have a late joiner who can make it to the retreat and have to do some last minute wrangling of rides. A FAQ is going to go out about where we'll be in NM, other things.
 - Will have an after-retreat meeting for lessons learned, etc.
- ◆ IRS Stuff
 - E: our annual report is due in March. Letter about it came.
 - Sandra: yeah, everything is due in March cos our fiscal year ended.
- Treasurer report
 - ◆ John: Preliminary report for fiscal year combined where we are now. Overall, we have a clear bal 8507.16. Paypal 437.60, savings has #30. Bank balance is a little off because some people haven't deposited their checks. Deposit your checks, people. Also sent check to retreat venue but it's not cashed. A bunch of stuff deposited for retreat.
 - ◆ Laura: retreat may have leftover money, can either refund people or use for next retreat's scholarship fund.
 - ◆ FY we took in 2835 in tuition. This year we initially got \$7k from Solar Cross, refunded \$2060.04 (2k plus fees).
 - ◆ Spent money on website, zoom, etc. Will get deets from John later.
 - ◆ For fed taxes we don't pay anything, Oregon we will have to pay like \$50/yr going forward.
 - ◆ Discussion around a past retreat scholarship that was accepted and then not used. We need a written policy about what's refundable both ways, how scholarships work. If we give someone money toward plane tickets, we probably aren't going to get it back. Sandra's inclination is to write it off – it's been over a year, we aren't getting that money back. Let's move forward with more discipline and structure/process around scholarship.

- ◆ Laura: something to revisit later. Less about conflict and more about clarity around expectations. OK with writing it off since it was before we incorporated, as long as we set things up to prevent reoccurrence.
- ◆ Sandra: Let's write off outstanding scholarship debt and put a temporary hiatus on future scholarships pending adoption of a process for making decisions around who gets what monies and what will happen if the recipient doesn't follow through with the class/retreat they got the funds for.
- ◆ Sandra: Should we create a subcommittee to look at this? Is a bit concerned about how we word things for potential future audits. Difference between waiving tuition and giving a check for something. Wording is important.
- ◆ Katie: where she works they give scholarships but call them awards for just this reason.
- ◆ Sandra: we might need to create a separate entity to give out funds.
- ◆ Laura: this is a two parter. The board needs to identify some questions, propose folks for a subcommittee. Maybe open to the whole school so we can get more people. Proposes that by our next meetig we all have one or two questions around this and think about who (or which parts of school) should be on committee.
- Approve minutes from previous meeting
- Updates on action items from the previous meeting
 - ◆ Laura got most done, but got no feedback on practice board and isn't sure if it's okay to leave in testing mode until after retreat.
 - Get Ken on/off appropriate groups - done
 - Talk to Jenn - tomb as topic for all school chat (board election footnote), include Sandra in email chain - done
 - Make tomb forum for testing – done.
 - Draft post calling for board members and send around – hasn't done this
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 - Needs language for top of forum, Sandra will draft.
 - ◆ Sandra
 - Continue examining the bylaws. Create list/chart of roles and authorities – started, saved in Drive in working groups > Roles and Responsibilities. Also started a doc\ more about identifying the roles and tasks for pillars.
 - We need more people who give a couple hours to Mstar a month outside of classwork
 - Join maintainers spaces - done
 - Instruct treasurer to refund \$2000 to Solar Cross before end of year - done
- New Business/Held over from last time
 - ◆ Katie: We need to schedule the annual meeting and announce it.
 - Discussion. January all-school chat? Agreed.

- Sandra: We need to ask for volunteers for election. Timeline?
 - Laura looked up: announced 12/16, deadline to volunteern 12/23. Election was for a full month.
 - Let's use the same schedule.
 - Laura to email call/announcement to Sandra
 - Sandra to draft bylaws amendment for term limits.
- ◆ Discuss next time: How do we post policies, retain them, and make sure they're being followed? Larger question around how policies are being stored and shared.
- Approved minutes unanimously.
- Action Items
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 - ◆ E: scan annual report letter and form, send around.
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 - ◆ Sandra: continue roles and responsibilities listing
 - ◆ Laura: send call for volunteers to sandra for edit
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- Confirm next month's call - December 14, 2019 10am Pacific
- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together and reciting the Holy Mother prayer.

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https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jvqIy9CX_e3esfLJXnB9u89UTZnfW8CZ
 - They are getting rid of the letters of recommendation. Hoping for our blessing on that.
 - E in favor. We all know each other. We can change it later if we have like 200 members.
 - Sandra agrees. IF it's a barrier, it's worth removing it. We need to remove barriers right now. Does want to bring up how accountable teachers are to the school – if they're teaching under our name, we are liable. How can we support them and the students if/when problems arrive.
 - Laura: concerns about whether if someone who's not good to teach there's enough in the questionnaire to make it clear. If pillar feels like they can point to things in the person's answers to explain why they're not ready to teach.
 - Katie: not much input. Has had terrible pagan teachers who got where they are because they have friends. We need to make sure we don't just okay people because they're members.

- Tony: these are good questions, doesn't have answers today. We aren't really going to know how it will go until we start. We need to give ourselves permission to say no, which is really scary. Fear of conflict, of being "superior," etc. Accountability, trust, and not knowing are hard. Has known folks he'd think would be good teachers who don't follow through and has had people he thought were creepy who turned out to be good teachers just not his style.
- Tony will bring questions to the pillar for discussion. There's no process way to avoid emotional conflict! We need to be prepared for that.
- Laura: teachers are going to make mistakes and have bad classes, wants there to be a way for them to get feedback and do better, not just keep doing poorly.
- Sandra: this is really important, teachers are the face of the school and are in a position of trust. Works with foster kids. Predators get through the cracks, even with things like letters of rec – they can help, but we need process to deal with problems when they arise. But in her group, it's people outside the group coming in rather than our case of people in the group facing out. Letters might not be the best tool.
- Tony: it's something we need to keep thinking about. As we expand and become more complex, we'll have to change. But if we have someone in our group who's a predator, we should deal with that as a group, not wait until they apply to teach!
- Sandra: dealing with predators is complex because they're not just that, they're whole people. We need to make a decision – so long as no harm is happening from a person, even if I can see there's something up, they're coming to our school for healing. Am I going to deny that because they're a dangerous person and not fit to teach? It's a balancing act and probably the hardest thing the teaching pillar has to deal with.
- Tony: not an advocate of kicking people out of groups because they have issues. In these conversations, someone will say "well who are you worried about?" and then everybody freezes and changes the subject. We're not talking about something on purpose, which hinders the ability to have these conversations. Something to keep in mind. Accountability doesn't mean you're bad and can't do X anymore, accountability is about support and how we can help and a person can do better. Not hands-off sink-or-swim. Feedback isn't about punishments, it's about concerns.
- Another thing: they're talking about doing an elements class in Feb. Who's in charge of marketing? Social media? Who's responsible for promoting the classes? Who's responsible for administering them? His local group was doing a thing where once a month they'd be at a pagan shop and hold a discussion around queer magic and spirituality, has helped people invest in the community. What if Mstar had a semi-regular public zoom chat with rotating leadership where it's not

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