Meeting to Explore Creating a New Board "Program Committee"

Minutes: 5-14-12

Attendance: Elizabeth Abraham, Carol Ammons, Marya Burke, Danielle Chynoweth, Chris Evens, Tom Garza, Barbara Kessel, Austin McCann, Don McClure, Gary Storm, Janet Wesse

1. Gary Storm chaired the meeting and began by showing charts to provide relevant background for the meeting (attached). These included lists of the major organizational components of the UCIMC, current Working Groups, and Board of Director members and standing committees.

2. Storm briefly reviewed the email which outlined a rationale for creating a new Board standing committee (“Program Committee”) to replace the old Steering Group and identified some of the initial goals and activities the new committee might pursue.

3. Discussion focused extensively on how the new committee, as described in the email, would both resemble and differ from the existing Steering Group and why it would have a greater chance of succeeding.

a. Like the Steering Group, the proposed Program Committee would be made up of at least one (1) officially appointed representative from each of the Working Groups who would serve as an information conduit back and forth from the committee to the Working Group and have authority to speak and/or vote for the WG.

Several present at the meeting emphasized the need for the WG representative to be a steady and consistent representative of the WG over an extended period; a perceived weakness of the Steering Group was that there was no steady and consistent representation from the WGs.

b. The Program Committee, as a standing committee of the Board of Directors, would provide an organic connection between the Working Groups and the Board. This connection would be enhanced by the committee being co-chaired by a Board member and a Working Group member selected by the Working Group members on the committee. The co-chairs would make regular reports and program-related policy recommendations to the Board (see below). No such organic connection existed between Steering and the Board in the past, largely because the latter did not exist as an active administrative and fiscal body within the UCIMC.

Several present thought that the Program Committee’s status as a standing committee of the Board would position it better than the existing Steering Group to expect and obtain administrative and fiscal support for program-related recommendations that it made.

Several present also thought that the Program Committee’s status as a standing committee of the Board would put constructive pressure on its members to meet regularly, keep good records of its meetings, and share these records through minutes circulated widely to the UCIMC membership as a whole. These Program Committee responsibilities would be assumed by the co-chairs.

The UCIMC Operations Manager would also serve on the Program Committee and thereby guarantee better communication among Working Groups, the UCIMC staff and the Board.

4. Discussion next focused on the possible goals and activities of a new Program Committee. It was agreed that the committee should be the primary place where the broad mission and goals (“vision”) of the UCIMC as a whole are periodically reviewed and updated, but also, more regularly, a place where Working Group members learn about what one another are doing and how they might support one another or collaborate on cross-WG activities. There was a sense that as WG needs or new initiatives are identified, the committee would be in a good position to work with other standing committees of the Board (especially Fundraising, Finance and Building/Facilities) to move forward to address or realize them successfully.

5. In terms of “next steps” to be taken, those present at the meeting thought it would be appropriate for Storm to contact active members associated with Working Groups not represented at the meeting to share what had been accomplished there and to try to get a commitment from each WG to send a representative to monthly (or perhaps bi-monthly) meetings over the next six months on a trial basis. Each WG represented at the meeting (Books-to-Prisoners, Print and WRFU) had at least one person willing to make such a commitment (Barbara Kessel/Liz Abraham, Myra Burke, and Don McClure/Tom Garza respectively). Storm agreed to try to identify at least one representative from each WG willing to participate and, once individuals were identified, to establish a time and place for an initial meeting where broad goals would be determined and co-chairs selected.

6. The meeting lasted exactly one hour, setting a good precedent for efficient but productive sessions.