



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sheldon Epps, President
Mark Brokaw, VP & Secretary
Ethan McSweeney, Treasurer
Linda Hartzell
Anne Kauffman
Mark Lamos
Laura Penn

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, May 13, 2019 at 12:00p.m. Eastern

PRESENT:

Mark Brokaw
Anne Kauffman
Laura Penn

ON THE PHONE:

Sheldon Epps
Ethan McSweeney
Linda Hartzell

ABSENT:

Mark Lamos

GUEST:

Christine O'Connor

STAFF PRESENT:

Rebecca Hewett
Executive Director
Sarah Bierstock
Interim Program Manager
Cole Bonenberger
SDCF Program Associate

I. CALL TO ORDER/PRESIDENTS REPORT

President Sheldon Epps called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

A. Welcome

The meeting started with Vice President Mark Brokaw presenting flowers to Executive Director Rebecca Hewett for her first day with SDCF. Mr. Epps welcomed Ms. Hewett stating he was looking forward to working together and mentioned it is important to give Ms. Hewett time to get situated and learn who the Trustees and the players are before Trustees begin making requests.

B. Program Review

Program Director Sarah Bierstock started a review of programming beginning with Observerships. Ms. Bierstock was involved for approximately the last nine, and they have included many good opportunities. SDC Executive Director Laura Penn noted that Raja Feather Kelly's opportunity was cancelled, and Ms. Bierstock noted that recent opportunities had been receiving fewer applicants than normal. It was suggested that this may be due to less time to prepare, but more likely people have booked employment for this time frame. Mr. Kelly had one applicant whose letter was not to the usual standards. Mr. Kelly met with him and decided not to offer him this Observership. Since the Foundation has plenty of other opportunities for this FY, there wasn't excessive concern. For the FY20 opportunities, we have several opportunities, particularly in NY State, in an effort to reestablish previous NYSCA grant levels. Some of the other mentors, like Sam Gold, are interested in an observer but not yet sure on which project.

The Choreography Symposium currently has 14 applicants, and we were expecting 70 to 75. The Foundation will do another push but may need to delay the application deadline. There was a discussion of some added contributors to the symposium and of some offers

that were made but declined. Anne Kauffman asked how the symposiums were being advertised. Ms. Bierstock explained outreach was mainly through MyEmma email blasts to Members and Associates as well as a press release. Ms. Hewett suggested reaching out to Dance/NYC for added push, and a brief discussion of other options followed, including Broadway Dance and Steps.

Ms. Penn mentioned that regarding Christopher Gattelli's Closing Event and the idea of "who creates choreography", we should carefully consider who moderates. Ms. Kauffman asked why directors were moderating choreographers. It was explained that choreographers interested in the symposium would be better used as part of the panel. Ms. Bierstock suggested Susan Stroman interviewing Mr. Gattelli would be an interesting idea. The deadline for the symposium is Wednesday, so evaluators would have a week to assess, and participants would have two weeks to prepare. This allows for some flexibility regarding the date of the deadline in order to expand the number of applicants. Ms. Penn mentioned the application fee and reminded everyone of an Observership Class idea of waiving the fee for an early deadline and having a fee for a later deadline. Then SDCF would know if there was a price point that makes a difference in the number of applications received.

Ms. Bierstock noted there is a Davidson meeting scheduled for May 24, 2019 to start the conversation of who will receive the award this year and that Ms. Kauffman and Bob Moss are recording this Friday for a Masters of the Stage podcast. Robert O'Hara is interested in participating in Mr. Epps's podcast, and Ms. Bierstock will follow up with him later this afternoon. Linda has a One-on-One Conversation next Monday with Marcia Milgrom Dodge, Mr. Brokaw, and Timothy Allen McDonald. About 10 people are currently committed, and the Foundation will do another posting in the next couple of days.

It was noted that the Artistic Leadership Group scheduled for this Friday had been postponed. Mr. Brokaw requested an email from Ms. Hartzell with more specifics on the One-on-One Conversation, and Ms. Hartzell said she will call.

Ms. Penn gave an overview of the Fichandler Award timeline.

II. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes, April 15, 2019

Mr. Brokaw asked Trustees for additions or corrections to the minutes.

MS. KAUFFMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM APRIL 15, 2019 AND MS. HARTZELL SECONDED. THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS AND MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. FINANCE REPORT

A. FY19 Year-end projection

Ms. Penn reviewed financials prepared by Director of Finance Cole Jordan but noted they would be consistent with numbers from the last report.

B. FY20 Goals and budget assumptions

Treasurer Ethan McSweeney stated we need to come up with a budget and work with Ms. Hewett. Ms. Penn gave an overview of goals and budget assumptions. The draft goals are to build off the last FY19 “Mr. Abbott” success, individual giving, and balances the future potential. This includes corporate and foundation support strategies. The budget needs to include internal systems and infrastructure to support fundraising. The third goal is to use SDC Executive Board Members and Trustees to promote programming while cultivating donors and Members who are advocates of SDCF, i.e. Thomas Kail, Doug Hughes, etc. SDCF has a collaboration with SDC for the research project “Empowering Stage Directors”. The two sources of funding for the project are NYSCA and NYC’s Mayor’s Office for Media and Entertainment, and the purpose is to map director-choreographer development. Mr. McSweeney mentioned how important the research is to giving us the ability to think further into the future. NYSCA invited us to apply for more funding, so the Foundation applied to tour the results of the research to other organizations in NY State. The Mayor’s Office is also very engaged in programming for directors.

Other goals are to produce the “Mr. Abbott” Award celebrating Joe Mantello and to support Ms. Hewett’s entry into SDCF. Mr. Epps mentioned that support for Ms. Hewett is a necessity rather than a goal, stating that this is a partnership and collaboration, and Trustees need to continue their work.

Ms. Penn reviewed income assumptions of fellowships, and government grants, including NEA, NYSCA, the research project, and DCA. Ms. Hewett noted that the minimum for the DCA grant will be \$15,000, because the Foundation has grown to a higher budget category. Ms. Hewett thinks this is a positive outcome and stated that the DCA panel is currently meeting to consider SDCF.

The net for the “Mr. Abbott” Award was \$125,000 and Ms. Penn will have a meeting with Event Manager Jen O’Connor and Event Producer Alex Felicetti, who have been contracted for next year’s “Mr. Abbott” Award.

The Trustees approved the goals and assumptions presented, so Ms. Penn and Mr. Jordan will begin work on an actual budget.

The Trustees has a discussion about observers’ weekly stipends and asked if an increase from \$300 was possible.

Ms. Penn reviewed Fellowships and the need to identify good projects for the Okrent, Gielgud, Traube, Charles Abbott, and Kurt Weill Fellowships. It was noted that the Weill is not guaranteed, but The Kurt Weill Foundation seemed pleased with the last project. It was also noted that there are funds for the George Wolfe Fellowship, but it is currently on hold. The Guest Artist Initiative could be reinstated, and the Foundation could consider a request to the SDC Board for additional funding.

Ms. Penn reviewed goals for programing including to develop a formalized structure for Artistic Leadership Group and to conduct one New York City-based and one national. SDCF needs to develop clear goals for Masters of the Stage podcasts and to possibly suspend SDCF’s relationship with TDF. Christine O’Connor and Ms. Hartzell suggested using podcast to leverage giving. Ms. Penn noted that some of the programming has budget implications

and some do not. Ms. Hartzell asked if symposiums could be broadcast at discounted price, and Ms. Penn said we could although we usually don't except for individual segments of the event.

The overview for Administration and Infrastructure included strengthening fundraising protocols, including solicitation materials, acknowledgement policies, managing donor benefits and gift acceptance, as well as a review of investments and disbursement policy, and to develop SDCF's brand through an increased presence in stakeholder communities, communications planning, social media strategy, and a revised website that is currently in process.

The Foundation will begin to put numbers to this programming. Mr. McSweeney thanked Ms. Penn for this work.

IV. FUNDRAISING REPORT

A. Recap of Prospect Activity in FY2019

Ms. O'Connor gave an overview of gifts by solicitor and noted an increase in giving due to SDC Board and Leadership giving over last summer. Looking at the solicitor report, there were some extraordinary responses at the \$5,000 level and above. Going forward, the Trustees should discuss if this is the right level. SDCF's prospect pool is thinner than the Foundation would like. It was noted that this year Ms. Hartzell gave a pitch to a prospect, didn't get the \$5,000 requested but did receive a \$500 gift, so this donor would stay on the Leadership list. It was also noted that the cumulative giving came in at \$70,000 but does not include trustee gifts.

Ms. O'Connor gave an overview of the Leadership Gifts and asked if the solicitors should continue to be the point of contact or is the relationship strong enough that others could make contact. It was noted that because SDCF received a gift once, the Foundation may not get it again, and these relationships should be considered as long term.

B. Preliminary list of Prospects for FY2020

Ms. O'Connor noted that Warner Shook was added to this list, because Elizabeth Diamond mentioned that they had a good conversation about the "Mr. Abbott" Award. There are other added prospects to this list for similar reasons. Some may be only "Mr. Abbott" Award prospects, but they should be considered for general Foundation gifts and to decide who should solicit and for which campaign. It was asked when to include Ms. Hewett and where involvement could be postponed. Mr. Brokaw asked if his gift was coded correctly as Leadership, and Ms. O'Connor explained that the coding is a choice the Foundation must decide. Mr. McSweeney mentioned that there is confusion when he is soliciting for the "Mr. Abbott" Award and when is he soliciting for SDCF and noted that the "Mr. Abbott" Award is easier to sell. Ms. O'Connor looked at the combined giving and noticed some donors think of giving to both the Abbott and the Annual Fund as giving to the Foundation.

Ms. Hartzell mentioned that she hopes that we can take past conversations to identify how outreach can get donors connected to the Foundation in a more meaningful way. Ms. Kauffman mentioned we need to show donors what their contributions have paid for. Ms. Penn asked if Artistic Director Bill Rauch had been solicited. Mr. Epps stated he was the solicitor, and given his new position, he hoped to sustain the relationship. Ms. Penn also mentioned the idea of an Artistic Director Circle and noted that some are on the Prospect List and some aren't. There was a discussion of which Trustees should solicit and at what level.

C. Next steps and Opportunities in Cultivation Process

For cumulative giving, Ms. Penn thinks Mark Bruni is a good example of an Abbott donor who could be cultivated to an Annual Fund donor with the perk of an Abbott ticket. Ms. O'Connor mentioned the need to address the different donor perks for Annual Fund vs. Abbott donations. It was decided to work on cumulative giving that would begin July 1, 2019. Ms. Penn noticed that the December request, bundling the Annual Fund and the Abbott, caused confusion about what the donations were for. Ms. O'Connor suggested creating a plan at the beginning of the year to reduce confusion about what the different campaigns are doing.

There was a discussion regarding the Raise the Paddle section of the "Mr. Abbott" Award and whether SDCF is that type of organization, and it would be nice if the Foundation didn't need it because those donations had previously been made. The idea of a Matching Gift Envelope at the table was mentioned. Mr. Epps suggested that this needs further discussion and that we shouldn't vote on this issue today.

Ms. O'Connor asked if the Trustees wanted to discuss expanding the board or adding a committee. Ms. Hewett asked if there was a document of board prospects. Ms. O'Connor mentioned coming up with a list.

V. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Epps informed the Trustees that Mark Lamos will step down as a Trustee at the end of this year and requested thoughts on a possible replacement.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next Trustees Meeting will be Monday June 10, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. in Ms. Penn's office.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Epps adjourned the meeting at 1:52 p.m.