

ExCom Committee Meeting  
**Saturday, September 11, 2010**  
 SOUTHEASTERN THEATRE CONFERENCE, INC.  
**Minutes**  
 Ballroom, Westin Hotel, Atlanta

ExCom Members in attendance: President, Alan Litsey; President-Elect, Steve Bayless; Administrative Vice-President, Jack Benjamin; Secretary, Mark Charney; Treasurer, Chris Rich; State Representative Rep, Leslie Dellinger; Community Theatre Rep, Lynn Nelson; Past President, Beth Harvey

Also in Attendance: Executive Director, Betsey Baun; Design/Tech Chair, Jennifer Matthews; N C State Rep., David Schram; GA State Rep and President of GA Theatre Conference, Bill Murray; Ex Director, Georgia Theatre Conference, Mary Norman; FL State Rep., Donna White; AL State Rep., Michael Howley; FinCom, David Wohl; Chair of History/Theory/Criticism/Literature, Dawn Larsen; MS State Rep., Tom Booth; Chair of Theatre for Youth, John Spiegel; Chair of C/U Director, Lesley Preston; Stage Management Chair, Patricia Crotty; Design; WV State Representative, Greg Mach; By-Laws and Long Range Planning, Dennis Wemm; Chair of Publications Committee, Sam Sparks; Chair of Exhibits and on KEAP Counsel of Endowment, Ginger Willis; Past Secretary and Task Force, Tiza Garland; Chair of By-Laws, David Thompson; KY State Rep., Kathi Ellis; Chair of College and University Theatre, Pat Gagliano; Professional Division Chair, Dewey Scott-Wiley; Playwriting Chair, Steven Burch; VA State Rep, Mike Hudson; Chair of Film and TV, Jeff Green; Vice Chair Community Theatre, Lyle Tate; Chair of K-12, Elaine Malone; Chair of Auditions, Mike Murray; TN State Rep, Darren Michael; Editor of Theatre Symposium and Chair of Religion and Theatre, Bert Wallace; Chair of College and University, Leslie Preston; Vice Chair C/U Division, Karen Brewster; Secondary Division Chair/Wilson Award Chair; Auditions Com, Long Range Planning, Herb Parker; Stage Movement Committee, Cara Rawlings; Chair of Nominations Committee and Halbach Scholarship Committee, Glen Gourley; Endowment, Duke Guthrie

1. Alan Litsey called the meeting to order 9:10 a.m.
2. Beth Harvey agreed to serve as Parliamentarian
3. Announcement of Taping (Secretary: *Mark Charney*)
4. Floor given to Glen Gourley, "Noble" Chair of the Nominations Committee
  - a. Distributed the Suzanne Davis Award Nomination Sheet.
  - b. Gathered Straw Ballot for Officers and Suzanne Davis Award Nominations.
5. Introductions
6. Task Force: shared information: Tiza Garland; Beth Harvey; Betsey Baun; Alan Litsey; David Wohl; Tom Booth. Alan described the history of the Task Force and asked the committee to explain the reasons for the charge.
  - a. Reading and Discussion of proposed Mission: "Connecting you to opportunities in Theatre." **Motion and second to discuss the Mission.** Leslie Preston wondered about the capitalization of Theatre. **Friendly amendment to not capitalize Theatre. MOTION: All those in favor of the Mission Statement as noted with the Friendly Amendment; none opposed. Final Mission Statement: "Connecting you to opportunities in theatre."**

b. Alan Litsey read the proposed **Vision Statement. MOTION and second to accept.** Leslie Preston made a grammatical friendly amendment and Leslie Dellinger accepted. Chris Rich raised the question whether our influence was particularly American. Beth Harvey reminded us that the vision statement is fluid. Friendly straw vote: who approves of original voting (not a majority). Dawn suggested we strike American.

**MOTION on the floor: Small T for American theatre and new sentence after “theatre practitioners of US. We provide...” Approved unanimously with the changes noted.**

The final revision of the Vision Statement was, “SETC is the strongest and broadest network of theatre practitioners in the United States. We provide extensive resources and year-round opportunities for our constituents. Our services, publications, and products contribute significantly to the careers of emerging artists, seasoned professionals, and academicians. SETC energizes the practical, intellectual, and creative profile of theatre in America.”

7. Broke out into six groups, each led by a person from the Task Force. Alan explained that the task force isn’t submitting the document for approval, but as a basis for discussion. Alan read through the document and threw the floor open for questions and small groups (see attached). Tom Booth reminded us that this is a “start,” and Beth suggested this is about the “what,” not HOW things are going to happen. Groups looked at three questions with recorder appointed to share responses: *What seems to be clear and appropriate? What can be clearer? What do we need to add?* And any other comment that we need to share. Focus on the responsibilities and charges. Groups divided up for 30 minutes. Highlights below:

1. Dawn Larsen for Group 1: “Oversight”: strike “right” and add “positive.” Bullet 2: “Clarify” unclear: Identify and Communicate balance between the governance model and programmatic model to the membership and leadership of the organization. Bullet 3: “Fiscal understanding not comprehension. Legal responsibility/ramifications. 4: SETC Endowment fund; add participation to “oversight.” Didn’t understand Education and Training. Develop and Share Best P—Education and Training is required.
2. Duke Guthrie for Group 2: Programming falls more under the ED, as leader of the organization (if the ED is an ex officio member of that board). Needs to be checked and balanced with programming—board’s knowledge of programming would not solely exist with the ED. Request for visual representation to clarify. Training and orientation involves task of what to do and when to do it. Task and nature of organization shifts with membership. Wants checklist of what to do and when to do it for board and ED. Understands that policy need to be flexible for organization to change. ED fills in the blanks when things fall apart in those areas and must delegate.
3. Pat Gagliano for Group 3: Three questions: Clear and appropriate? What could be clearer—who has final authority? Someone has to be for programmatic and organizational components. Under assumptions/premise, suggest the word “shared” instead of collegial. Order of outline somewhat confusing—consider order of duties on the page. What do we need to add? Because the ED reports to the Board, this should be stated clearly. How can we build more accountability in the states organizations so state reps have more responsibility to participate in the shared governance? Do state reps understand that they represent the

stakeholders that join us? State reps are also stakeholders, and they need to understand the board and the organization. Who makes up the Board that is going to promote and support the vision statement? Define the board.

4. Bert Wallace for Group 4: Discussion about statement that the relationship between the board and the ED is collegial, not hierarchical. Must be hierarchical. Acknowledges that some items and challenges are both programmatic and operational. Practice should follow policy, is fluid. Stresses necessity of training to understand policy. Accountability: confused about “constituencies that have gaps.” Some Board positions are non-elected, and they should also have ownership/responsibility; they also need training (whether elected or appointed). Too much operational minutiae in the by-laws. Discussion of how to remove someone from a job—unclear who has the authority. Clarify and be more explicit in the documents about the legal responsibilities of the board. The organization is truly hierarchical. Board ultimately/legally responsible. Final point: Membership development listed as role of ED, but could be Board as well.
5. Darren Michael for Group 5: Talked about the spirit of the document. Clarify the idea of balance. Accountability talked about the most. Confused about the reference to “gap.” What does this mean? Future of SETC—very little talk or thought about whether we are Southeast in name only. Board membership has to balance state responsibilities. What is our role? How does that mesh? Concerned that accountability intimates just state reps, but others are important to identify. More people in the room than just the voting memberships. On ED roles—membership development. Already implied? Clarify what that means? What it entails? Liked the concentration on assessment. Needs some sort of acknowledgement that it is a volunteer Board.
6. Chris Rich for Group Six: Discussed what needs clarification: Looking for clarification between relationship between state reps to the Board and the ED. State Reps nebulous and want to clarify relationship. Gaps between state and SETC boards—needs clarification.
8. Alan asked for comments. Steve Bayless: believed we need to look how we relate as an organization, especially state reps. Glen: No clear definition of what we want from the states and what they want from us. Dennis Wemm: realities built into SETC that we ignore. Auditions do not have representation on the board currently, as an example. As we are thinking about any issues? If so, we must take into account governance, programming, representation. Big third element to the organization that doesn’t exist in governance structure as well. John Spiegel: Theatre for Youth, odd grouping, as is Auditions—college, youth, pro division, secondary, etc. etc. Proposed that Auditions are handled through five divisions. Steve Bayless: Ex Com level looked at committee structure, etc. Committees feel they need a stronger input than Administrative VP can handle. Sam Sparks: Wondered about the value of the Board being comprised differently—best way we collaborate together.
9. More discussion of the document: Jack Benjamin: First need to define Board. Glen: Until we define where the buck stops, how can we define how the buck gets to where it stops. Howley—reminds us of the whole idea of streamlining. Patricia Crotty: believes the finances are moving in the “right” direction—likes the word RIGHT as being in line. Document updates to reflect conversations. Ginger Willis: Through the SETC website, is there a place for a discussion forum? Google Wave? Evolving document could be

available to everyone that way. Jeff Green: Is there a way to minimize the necessity of committees and empower individuals to take charge?

10. Policy section: Six major areas where we want to define policies: Financial, Conflict of Interest, Code of Ethics, Organization Board Training and Development, ED Evaluation, and Ends Policy. Proposed that we think of policy over lunch and then discuss this.

Adjourned for lunch—back at 1:00.

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Reconvened at 1:17

1. **Convention Planning.** Two Keynote Speakers: Pearl Cleage and Ashley Brown. Others still being considered. New Workshops. Listed other visitors. Possibly need to add money to the budget to experiment.
2. Robin Carr: **Discussed process of inviting artists**, balancing the needs of the artists with our needs, travel, accommodations, reception, goals, etc. Robin Carr and Betsey Baun worked with Steve Bayless and Quiana Clark-Roland to develop the process and set the priorities for the first Featured Guest Artist. Funds from Master Classes help offset costs for Guest Speakers. Only the Keynote presentations shut down the entire conference. Will not offer too many as we would cancel out the workshop attendance.
3. Quiana Clark-Roland: **Master Classes and Convention Planning:** Told us about other Master classes. Also talked about specifics of proposal approvals. Also will create. View Only segment on the website for Committee Chairs. Steve will get that out for us. Hoping to have TV anchors and calling it “Live from Atlanta,” especially the critic, TV personalities, and lobby information. Betsey encouraged us to solicit new material reminding us that we’re only as good as what we present.
4. Quiana: **Dream Team and Volunteers:** Discussed volunteers and their importance to the organization. Students and interns can get college credit. World opened up to them that week, especially in terms of graduate school. Looking for folks who love behind the scenes who can put in 24/7. Dream team: Small stipend, shared room, travel (after several years), part of the crew that’s running the convention—and a lot of food when they are feeding people: great for people in SM, arts management—hands dirty, full time folks. Website has formal process outlines for Dream Team and Volunteers.
5. **Baun: Executive Director Report—** Information passed out to show membership data over a period of time. Fewer companies—economic realities, not because of move from Charlotte. Really taking care of companies that join us. Fall Graduate Auditions: From 15 schools to 12, down from 2007. Economy plays a role. Not out recruiting as much. Actors: hold steady at 50. Grad Design/Tech Interviews are not growing. Wondered

about moving dates on grad auditions /board meetings. Graduate school auditions are difficult, especially because our deadlines/calendar asks for students to sign up soon after they return to school.

Central Office Staff: Claire Wisniewski has joined full time; Admin Asst. Mark Snyder full time, working with office management and finances, endowment folks. BUDGET REQUEST PROCESS—handed out. We're starting to solicit requests for 2011-12 year. Just finished 2009-10 beginning 10-11. Opportunities to request funds for our planning. Betsey looks at these in November. Pie charts of Exhibitors in and out of region; theatre companies in and out of regions; Institutions in and out of regions. Student participation up. Increase in out of region workshop leaders.

6. Alan thanked the Board and the Task Force for all their work.

7. **Approval of May Minutes: Motion: Leslie and Beth. All approved.**

8. **ACTION ITEMS:**

i. AVP: Jack thanked everyone for submitting semi-annual reports by the deadline.

The report was changed to align with our patterns of Action, Items for Discussion, etc. Will send the SETC NEWS items to Deanna Thompson.

b. **Move to accept Item 1:** Replace President-Elect with Programming VP in Rule II.1. Approved.

▪ **Move to accept Item 2:** Replace word immediate with phrase Elected Past President in Rule II.14: Approved.

▪ **Move to accept Item 3:** Replace President-Elect with Programming VP: No discussion in Rule III.3 Approved.

▪ **Move to accept Item 4:** Replace President-Elect with Programming VP in Rule III.8 Approved.

▪ **Move to accept all manuals in the consistent format by the AVP.** Approved.

▪ **Move to accept Name Change from Secondary School Auditions to Undergraduate/Transfer Auditions.** Approved.

▪ **Endowment Committee requested change in Rule III.7 to add,** "Individuals purchasing Life Memberships may specify which fund their Life Membership Income will benefit. Approved.

b. Chris Rich: two action items:

▪ **Audit:** Recommendation that ExCom accept the FYE annual audit. **MOTION:** Approved.

▪ **Draft Budget (projections for next year):** Budget adjustments with justifications presented, based on operational needs of the organization. **MOTION: To accept budget as amended:** Approved.

**MOTION: To transfer 5,000 dollars into the Halbach fund to help bring the award amount more in alignment with the other graduate awards.** Approved. (h.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

a. **President:**

## Strategic Planning

Policies Concept: 1. Financial/Fiduciary; 2. Conflict Interest; 3. Code of Ethics; 4. Organizational Board Training and Development; 5. ED Evaluation; 6. Ends Policy; 7. Executive Limitations Policy

Goal: To have this completed by end of December meeting: Strong draft regarding Board Roles, ED Roles, and policy priorities.

March meeting a good time to express ideas that come out of December meetings. Dependent on Board and Long Range planning guidance on time-line. Discussion: Organizational scan, SWOT analysis—validating what we’re doing and find gaps of what we need to do. Policy list reflects current best practices. On line discussion opportunity for some of these strategic planning rubrics.

### **b. AVP:**

Refer to Page 5 of Jack’s Semi Annual Reports. (attached)

- By-Laws: Use of terms ex officio in various roles: We are asking to some times use non members of SETC as ex officio? Should we alter this in some way shape or fashion? Or somehow change ex officio member to consultant or resource artist. *How should Bylaws Committee and the organization address this inconsistency between policy and practice? Should we make an exception for Central Office staff? Should we simply replace “ex officio member” with another term such as “consultant” or “resource”?* Should we clarify the distinction between those who vote and those who meet with a committee by terming members as “voting” members? Deferred until more development in the strategic plan. Additional discussion of compensation and profiting from SETC.
- Define the duties of the Past President—there are presently no formal guideline, only historical practice.
- Difficult in getting nomination for officers this year. Glen received only two this year. Processes being worked on to elicit better response.
- Ad Hoc SM Committee created a manual and must wait another year to be a fully recognized committee. Will be bringing their request to be a standing committee next year.
- Design/Tech discussion of better alignment of convention scheduling.
- Conversation about Auditions—interest group to discuss auditions to find ways to improve the process, even moving to regional auditions. Alan wants to get Mike’s guidance on this. Alan will support Committee needs with those appointments.
- KCACTF thanks everyone for support.
- Film and TV: Is it time to move Ad Hoc committee to a permanent one? Discussion of transition.
- Community Theatre Festival: There will be a shuttle to the festival. Can do nothing about availability of food since they will meet at Spelman.

### **c. States Rep:**

Previous action asked ten-states region to delineate the specific person to take over prior to the September meeting. States concerned that adhering to this means by-law changes for some of them. They understand the reasoning for consistency and training, but are not sure how they can make it happen. Supportive but needs to go back to their states and discuss. Voted to postpone.

ExCom accepts that discussion is needed to consider providing all Board members with reasonable travel support since we have asked Board to be more involved. Guidance from FinCom needed. States differ in who supports travel. Betsey charged with seeing how much compensation is necessary for all Board, Division, and ExCom members by December.

**d. Divisions Rep:**

\*Community Theatre: Dedication to communicate more efficiently to prevent problems in the past.

\*Secondary Division is in the talking stages considering a name change to High School Division.

\*Pro Division: Discussion of numbers being down.

\*Universities and College: push for workshops

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**

**a. President:**

December 17 and 18<sup>th</sup> are dates of meeting. Will resend information. At Atlanta Hilton Airport. Begin early on Friday about out by 4:00 on Saturday. All Board Voting Members invited. b: Programming VP: none

**b. AVP:**

\*Endowment Committee: thanks Jack Pentz for stewardship of SETC Endowment. Amount the same. Scholarships go begging. Please find folks to apply.

\*Voice and Speech Committee: features guest Patsy Rodenberg to speak and teach workshops

\*Auditions: State screening auditionees have been approached to discuss ideas and potential changes

\* Two submissions for Young Scholars from Dawn Larsen from History/Lit/Crit

\*Broaden scope for Sarah Spenser award. Needs more nominees—folks influencing theatre for youth

\*Playwriting Competition: Todd Ristau will direct winning play and information updates.

\*Long Range planning: Anticipate heartily the results of the task force and ExCom's deliberations.

\*Deadline for Polly Holiday Award set.

\*AACT International Festival will be held in Venice, Florida in four years, following a successful one in June.

\*Smith Award—wording on website changed to give to a candidate who shows great promise as a costume designer.

\*Halbach award—first year offered will be 2012.

\*KEAP award: Chris Rich stepping down.

\*Small Theatre Program: New two tiered sessions.

\*Ginger Willis and Exhibitions: Full to rafters and more want to come. Possible new third tier of exhibitors for those who do not need technology. May increase number to 92. Good reaction to colleges and universities about reduced cost.

\*Will forward items for SETC NEWS.

**c. States Rep:**

\*Sell luncheon a bit more especially using the website.

\*Discussion about lack of applicants for scholarships and awards. Leslie Dellinger made a more concise pamphlet organized around high school, college and universities, etc. Will distribute on line.

\*State reps—emailed contact list, scholarship information, to KEAP and Secondary Scholarship committees—wanted state rep contact list. \*Created a flyer for SC screening auditions.

Steve Bayless's state wants to establish a senior division (Florida).

Betsey asked for feedback about Westin in Atlanta vs. Charlotte.

No other items of interest.

Adjourned at 3:43.