

CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Location: Virtual Meeting

Thursday, March 18, 2021

Board attendance:

Allison Thompson, Chair
Jordan Hansen, Vice-Chair
Jim Brass
Ahsan Iqbal
Julia Kamenetzky
Jim Karner
Lauren Littlefield
Bianca Lyon
Rees Petersen
Ulrich Rassner
Olga Siggins
Tanasia Valdez

Kim Wilson

Board Absent:

Andrea Garavito-Martinez
Mike Hanson
Michelle Love-Day

Others Present:

Robin Chalhoub
Richard Cox
Tim Glenn
Lindsie Smith
Joe Stohel
Holly Yocom

- I. **STELLAR SHARE** – Board Chair Allison Thompson shared an inspiring story about Alyssa Carson, who, at the age of 3, decided she wanted to be an astronaut and go to Mars. After graduating from the advanced PoSSUM Academy, Alyssa Carson is now officially certified to go to space and be an astronaut trainee. Alyssa Carson believes that Mars is the “new moon” for the younger generation. Allison Thompson said that it is inspirational to see someone follow their dream and “knock it out of the park.” She noted that science has a stage right now, and she feels that Clark Planetarium is positioned to make a real impact with its mission to inspire excitement and awe about learning about science to our community. Lindsie Smith noted that Alyssa Carson would be a good presenter for the Planetarium’s upcoming Summer Lecture series.





- II. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME at 12:39 p.m. by Allison Thompson. She noted that a quorum was in attendance.
- III. Allison Thompson stated that the meeting is being held virtually and, as such, read a statement on why this decision was made to ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Acts. This statement was also included in the public notice that went out about today's meeting.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** were requested by Allison Thompson. None were brought to the attention of the Board.
- V. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**
 - a. The minutes of the February 2021 Board meeting were submitted for approval. Bianca Lyon moved that the Board adopt those minutes. Kim Wilson seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.
- VI. **CURRENT BUSINESS AND AN UPDATE ON THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION**
 - a. Allison Thompson said the Board was thrilled to have the Planetarium open. The Salt Lake County Council has appointed Councilmember Laurie Stringham to be the Council's representative on the Board. She will be officially welcomed and greeted at the April Board meeting.
 - b. The State legislative session is over. The Ogden Nature Center was moved into line item status, and the \$200,000 that was rescinded in last year's special session has been reinstated. Lindsie Smith said that the Planetarium appreciated the support of the Board in reaching out to their

Representatives and Senators in support of this outcome. Clark Planetarium will receive about \$40,000 of the reinstated funding. Allison Smith thanked Jayceen Craven Walker for her work with the Legislature and thanked the Board members for reaching out and working with Jayceen.

VII. PLANETARIUM REPORT

- a. Lindsie Smith discussed the Planetarium's financials.
 - i. The Planetarium was still closed in February. There was an uptick in ticket sales at the end of the month due to advanced tickets being sold for the Planetarium's reopening on March 2, 2021.
 - ii. The Planet Fun Store sales were slightly lower than usual due to a week and a half closure in which sound dampening panels were installed outside the Hansen Dome Theatre.
 - iii. In earned income, there were two exhibit sales to the Discovery Museum in Connecticut. Also, the Planetarium thanks Rees Petersen and Wells Fargo Bank for \$2500 in support for the Mars Perseverance event with Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman.
 - iv. Concessions will remain closed until the State moves into a low pandemic transmission rate. Rentals are also suspended.

VIII. REOPENING UPDATE

- a. The Planetarium is excited to be open again. It welcomed the community "Back2Space" on March 2, 2021.
- b. Exhibit reservations are consistently filling up.

- c. Show reservations are moving up, with weekends nearing capacity.
- d. Planet Fun Store sales are exceptionally strong. Per transaction averages are closer to holiday numbers than normal ones.
- e. Full-time staff are currently filling greeter and exhibit guide positions.
- f. Virtual programs continue, and attendance is steady.
- g. Allison Smith asked if there was an opportunity for Board members or community volunteers, if they so desire, to fill in volunteer shifts. Tim Glenn responded that yes, if anyone is interested, the Planetarium can certainly make that happen.

IX. STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION: REVIEW/DEBRIEF OF PEER ORGANIZATION

CONVERSATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- a. Lindsie Smith reviewed what has been done so far: the market research study by Mighty Penguin, a survey with the Planetarium staff about the Planetarium's mission and vision, requesting Board engagement, and soliciting brainstorming ideas from both the staff and the Board. Just recently, the Planetarium hosted two web visits with sister organizations, the Arizona Science Center and the Oregon Museum and Science and Industry, about their strategic planning process.
- b. Allison Thompson gave kudos to Lindsie Smith, Tim Glenn, and Duke Johnson for all their hard work and accomplishments on moving forward with the strategic plan despite having to do everything electronically due to

Covid. She encouraged Board members to stay engaged and to feel free to reach out at any time.

- c. Lindsie Smith said that the goal is to have the strategic plan completed, presented to, and adopted by the staff and Board by June 2021. This will allow the Planetarium's 2022 budget season in July to be guided by the new strategic plan.
- d. Key takeaways from the conversations with ASC and OMSI were the importance of communication, staff buy-in, plan structure, and Board engagement structure. Board members are the Planetarium's links to the community, and the Planetarium hopes that the Board will be able to help shape and deliver the strategic vision of the Planetarium.
- e. Ahsan Iqbal noticed that the other science centers were much, much bigger. Was there a plan to get the Planetarium to that point? Also, it was good to see that these institutions were able to leverage their Board to raise more money and to get their entire staff and personnel involved in the process.
- f. Julia Kamenetzky was struck by the importance that these institutions placed on staff involvement and buy-in. Otherwise, such a plan could end up being just an intellectual exercise. Also, these institutions raised the question of who is going to enact the strategic plan and put it into practice. She said she could see how that was important.
- g. Allison Thompson noted that ASC categorized strategic planning ideas as high margin versus low margin, as well as high mission versus low mission.

This is a good way to prioritize and evaluate potential ideas as they relate to fulfilling the mission statement of the Planetarium. She agreed with Board involvement and with how ASC broke planning down into individual people with individual tasks, then looping in Board members where their expertise or interest can shine. She also thought that OMSI's overlay of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on top of everything they do was huge. The Planetarium should keep in mind bringing in other voices and making sure that it is representing and serving all communities.

- h. Bianca Lyon noted that the Utah Office of Tourism, where she works, really lives and breathes its strategic plan. She said that she's glad that the Planetarium has already involved the staff and that staff involvement and buy-in are so important to making a strategic plan successful. She said that it is surprising how powerful a strong strategic plan can be, not only in supporting the organization but in what the organization does externally as well. The Utah Office of Tourism has had much success with its strategic plan.
- i. Allison Thompson said that, while the strategic vision is developed by the leadership and the Board, it really belongs to the staff and that they should feel that ownership.
- j. Lindsie Smith said that the next steps are to revisit our mission statement and add vision statements. She noted that mission statements speak to what we do and how we do it, and vision statements speak to why we do it.

Mission statements focus on the present; vision statements focus on the future.

- k. Lindsie Smith said that the current mission statement is verbose and could lead to multiple interpretations. She said it needs to be shortened and tightened up. She said it is critical to make sure everyone is interpreting the mission statement the same way.
- l. She noted that staff members are split between a mission statement of education and a mission statement of inspiration. One might think that the two are tied together, she said, but for the Planetarium, they're not. As an informal learning institution, the Planetarium's mission is to inspire and engage. Patrons and students should walk away thinking that the experience was so incredible that they want to learn more. Tightening up the mission statement will help the Planetarium align it to achieving that goal.
- m. Rees Petersen quoted Greek philosopher Plutarch; the mind is not a jar to be filled but kindling to be ignited.
- n. Julia Kamenetzky said it is important to foster confidence in patrons of their ability to engage in scientific learning. Science doesn't just belong to practicing scientists.
- o. Bianca Lyon agreed. While it's important to inspire children to go into STEM, the Planetarium should also inspire everyone in their regular lives. Inspiring is the operative word.

- p. Ulrich Rassner noted that it could be both. Inspiration could be the goal, but the Planetarium could go deeper for people who want to spend more time. He mentioned putting in QR codes at the exhibits that could give more detailed information.
- q. Ahsan Iqbal said that we are called “the Planetarium,” while the other institutions call themselves “Museums of Science and Industry.” Kim Wilson asked if it was possible to amend the name to Clark Planetarium and Science Center. Allison Thompson said that’s something that should be considered. She said that the Planetarium was created by State statute, and such a possibility will have to be investigated.
- r. Lindsie Smith asked the Board what their hopes were for Clark Planetarium. Allison Thompson responded tht she hopes the Planetarium can expand its field of engagement within the County. Based on the market research that has been done, and after hearing back from communities of color and various other groups, it was found that they like the Planetarium, but they don’t necessarily see themselves represented in the Planetarium. She would like to see the Planetarium’s influence and outspread arms welcoming all people from across the County and from all different walks of life and background.
- s. Allison Thompson said we should also talk about age. Clark Planetarium is seen as an institution that caters to children and parents. She would love to see Clark Planetarium have something engaging for single adults and young

adults—a small nightlife option for people to dabble in here or there. Rees

Petersen added that we run a risk of gearing the Planetarium too much

toward children. An important part of the taxpayer base is adults, and he

thinks that the Planetarium needs to have more that's geared for them.

- t. Bianca Lyon said that the Utah Office of Tourism is working with Governor Cox in declaring April a statewide dark skies month. Such a declaration would highlight the leadership of the many dark skies organizations within the State who have helped Utah become the number one dark sky certified area in the world. She said that they were looking to elevate Clark Planetarium's leadership role in this opportunity as well.

- X. CLOSING REMARKS** – Allison Thompson announced that the next Board meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2021. She then declared the meeting adjourned.