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Sakai Foundation Board of Directors Meeting  
Austin, Texas  
December 6, 2005

This document contains minutes from the meeting of the Sakai Foundation Board of Directors held on December 6, 2005. Corrections, suggestions should be sent to Joseph Hardin and Mary Miles.

These minutes capture both the discussion and formal resolutions of the board. Simply because something was discussed does not mean that it is the agreed-upon position of the board. When the board makes a formal resolution to approve an item, it will be noted as such in the minutes. If there is no such notation, readers should assume that the minutes are simply the notes of the board discussions.

Board members present: Joseph Hardin, Brad Wheeler, Ian Dolphin (via telephone), Babi Mitra (retiring Board member), Chris Coppola, Jutta Treviranus, Lois Brooks, Jeff Merriman (retiring Board member), Mara Hancock, Vivie Sinou, Jim Farmer (staff), John Norman, Chuck Severance, Mary Miles (staff)

Topic: New Board Members

The Sakai foundation welcomed three newly elected board members: Charles Severance, Chris Coppola, and John Norman. They are beginning a three-year term and are replacing outgoing board members Jeff Merriman, Babi Mitra, and Carl Jacobson.

Topic: Strategic Direction

This discussion addressed the relationship with other open source communities. It is timely, for instance, as the project phase with uPortal comes to an end. This board should determine its relationships with other organizations like JASIG and JISC. It was felt that there was value in having a formal board relationship with these groups. John Norman tended to value the idea of getting together but sees it primarily as a community building exercise with everyone sharing a sustainability problem. The strategic goals for each group need to be defined. To facilitate this relationship, a full-day meeting of the two boards (Sakai/Jasig) will be scheduled for January or February. Mary will work to find a time that is best for all.

Topic: JISC

Ian Dolphin noted that a draft of the associate partnership agreement is being circulated. This is a tentative step and the Sakai Board should be aware of what JISC is (a quasi-government agency) and the limitations to that. Ian will be meeting next week with JISC members. He noted that choosing to be more JISC-friendly could be seen as a diversion of resources. Joseph Hardin encouraged Ian to go forward with this approach as there are a number of organizations that are working with JISC. A formal relationship with the

parent organization would be an enabler. The board voted unanimously that this should proceed.

#### Topic: Flexible UI

Jutta Treviranus commented that the DG is moving toward flexible UI model and/or an alternative to the style guide. A number of sessions around this topic are planned for the conference, with the goal being to publish a white paper on a default style that would replace the one currently being used. The DG has started to edit the existing style guide, looking at it more as a UI design guide. She continued that UToronto just got major funding (\$5M) from the Canadian government and from Sun to set up a server system for a style repository and a metadata referatory for learning objects that live elsewhere. This repository would provide service to the entire Sakai community. When a user request is received, it will be referred to this service, the learners specific set of preferences reviewed, sending back a style sheet that meets those needs. It will also provide appropriate restyling of the guide to adapt to each person. This repository will also allow for co-construction of the tools we have at the moment, making this a way to modularize tool pieces and replace existing things to accommodate user needs as well as departmental needs. Such a large system is needed because there are massive numbers of institutions that may use this at any one time. To determine that number, they used the existing Sakai membership, calculated the number of instances possible, the number of individual requests and used that to identify bandwidth. If someone is visually impaired, they call your service and it enables them to develop a preference profile. This will eventually be a Sakai tool, fully integrated with Sakai by March. The entire infrastructure will take another year to complete.

Brad Wheeler spoke briefly about the Kualu Project and where it appears to be going. An agenda item will be added to all future board meetings to discuss other community and open source projects that are working in similar spaces. This will enable the Sakai Foundation to determine how it will work with other entities and manage that relationship, which is critical in determining the different classifications of relationships. One item on the table for future discussion is the status of a Sakai associate partner designation, which implies co-recognition of projects, and no formal voting rights. Joseph noted that with the new board election, OKI and uPortal are no longer represented on the Sakai Foundation board and that by creating the associate partner status, this would maintain a line of communication. The JA-SIG board selected Bill Thompson as the liaison for uPortal and he will answer directly to their board on these issues. This issue needs further discussion, but some of the issues to be discussed are as follows:

- This is a line of communication only
- This is meant to enable and support, not replace, existing communications at the personal and technical level
- Having a specific time limit
- Must have a written document associated with it
- Status assigned (e.g., associate partner)

Brad stated that the commercial affiliate's agreement needs to be re-worked to encourage the affiliates to bring their products into Sakai. So far, this has been a relationship structure with bi-lateral conversations. Chris Coppola has attempted to begin a few conversations but they are not going very far. It appears that the affiliates' common interest is in being a partner with Sakai and not working with each other, although some affiliates are now interested in moving forward which may result in a

better definition of the development process for everyone. John Norman added that since the foundation has been formed, we should be working with the affiliates in terms of the revenue stream that they might be planning to spend and on their deployment plans. Joseph added that we need to determine our relationship with this group and assign someone to work more closely with them.

Joseph continued that the revenue stream is at the top of the foundation responsibilities and as a group the board needs to determine what they are comfortable with. Examples of revenue models like Firefox, and Mozilla need to be examined. Marratech has indicated that they want to be a partner but are interested in contributing software in lieu of their fee. They have a fairly full suite of synchronous application tools and have suggested that the board start using their software. In return, they would pay a designated sum for every Sakai lead that turns into a purchase, setting up some simple models for sales commission business. The board already has cases of competing commercial and open sources choices (e.g., Melete). Chuck expressed a concern that they (Marratech) need to be incubated. He suggested that they become a commercial affiliate, become a success on their own, and then invest Sakai resources in them.

The question before the board is whether to take in-kind contributions in lieu of cash. Joseph stated that the board is struggling with the monitorization of what we charge the developing countries. To date we have maintained that we need money, not in-kind contributions, but the board needs the flexibility to make some careful judgment calls. A future agenda item should be some discussion of the strategy and advocacy on how this should be done. A community discussion on this issue is critical.

The case of Google was discussed – As a hypothetical example, mapping onto the Firefox case, suppose they would give you a set sum of money every time someone hits their site from a Sakai installation, with no strings attached. This would support the open source efforts. It was agreed that examples like this should be investigated, carefully, and that a community discussion around such models be engaged.

Action item: John Norman will initiate a community discussion on this issue.

Topic: Financial Overview

Lon Raley joined the board to discuss the types of services the foundation needs to think about. He presented a list of items related to hosting an external organization that is used at the UofMichigan to guide some of the discussion. The list is as follows:

Space and Rent

- A. Does HOSTED ORGANIZATION pay rent?
- B. If rent is paid, is this paid directly or indirectly?
- C. For what space? Office Space? Machine room space? Storage space?
- D. How are rates set?
- E. How does HOSTED ORGANIZATION obtain additional space when needed?
- F. Who determines what space HOSTED ORGANIZATION may use?

What services are provided to HOSTED ORGANIZATION?

- A. Financials
- B. Administration (e.g. DRDA)
- C. Purchasing
- D. Personnel (e.g. hiring benefits management , grievances, unemployment services,

employee assistance programs)

E. Legal

F. Library

G. Recreational

H. Parking

Who provides insurance?

A. Equipment/Personnel

B. Actions of Hosted Organization board.

There are a number of topics which must be reviewed with the hosting organization. The University of Michigan would like for Sakai to present a proposal of what they would like provided. Their position is that Sakai should ask for what it wants and then the University will review the requests. The University of Michigan is interested in having this be very successful and is willing to put resources behind it. The intellectual Property issue is already resolved, and there is a history of a relationship of a foundation to the university. Other questions to be answered are: Would the employees be eligible for university benefits? In terms of reporting, who reports, is there a president? Who does that president report to inside the university? Joseph sent a document to all of the board for review and comment.

Along these lines, there has been some discussion regarding Lon's work for Sakai. This is on track to make his time available in a greater capacity than formally provided. Whether or not Sakai is a hosted organization is a general question. The Sakai Foundation is an independent organization so this is a university's term, not a foundation's term. The Sakai Board prefers independence and considers that an important issue. A hosted organization designation and terminology would only apply within the university channels when you are trying to set something up. There is no intent for it to be Sakai, brought to you by the University of Michigan. John Norman noted that the terminology seems familiar and he has no problem with it as it's the model at Cambridge.

It was agreed that there should be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Sakai and the University of Michigan for the services the University will be providing. These are the same kind of things we have to develop for other services as well. If Sakai will have staff, and even if only one, there will be overhead costs associated. As a result, the board needs to fully understand the cost of having "real" employees of the foundation. One way to resolve this issue is to have employees paid by their home organization who will bear the overhead costs and then be reimbursed. There are currently two kinds of relationships: consultants and university staff. The board tasked Lon to go through this and make a presentation at the next meeting (January 5).

There are other questions that need to be resolved, one of which is how to work with the existing partners, which now number over 100. Lon and his staff track the number by completion of paperwork and payment of dues. Mary, however, tracks the number of applications signed and entered into the system. This tracking needs to be formalized and synchronized. In general, Sakai membership buys two things: (1) a vote; (2) participation in maintaining the process and determining priorities. Community source is not just a matter of opening up the code, it's also a matter of sustainability. Lon was asked to begin a regular cycle of financial reporting to the board. This should start in January and continue with full-quarterly reports.

Topic: Sun Center of Excellence on Scholarly Things

Charlie Leonhardt, principle technologist at Georgetown University made a brief presentation to the board on the Sun Center of Excellence on Scholarly Things. Scholarly systems are defined as those having an impact on teaching and learning, and in this effort, have been working on a vendor interoperability lab to provide true testing of new items. Charlie came to the board to ask Sakai to consider becoming a partner in the Sun Center even though there is no formal proposal. Becoming a partner would simply mean that Sakai would be a part of the center. Jutta asked how their products relate to other existing standards that may exist. Charlie responded that discussions are ongoing with other groups, including IMS.

The Sakai board expressed interest in discussing working with the Sun Center. The time frame is not defined, but it is hoped that the Center will be functional within the first 6 months of 2006. Charlie was asked to define the deliverables and provide additional feedback on what they expect from Sakai so that the board can get a clear idea of what it would mean to have the Sun Center as an associate partner. Lois agreed to serve as the point of contact for the Sakai board and will interface with Charlie to obtain more information.

Topic: Unicon Presentation

Because advance proprietary information was to be presented, Chris Coppola chose to leave the room for this presentation. Guests from Unicon were: Jim Layne, VP for Marketing and Sales, and Jason Lacy Director of Sales. The discussion centered on the question of how a commercial affiliate can help the Sakai board. They presented their new concept which can be found at [www.SakaiTestDrive.com](http://www.SakaiTestDrive.com).

Briefly, if someone puts their information up as a pilot, Unicon will help move them to an installation by integrating some services from the schools into the installation. There is a Portal front end, and uses some Unicon tools and customization as needed. Purpose of this overview is to get Sakai input on whether or not this is realistic. The board suggested that Scott Siddell would be a great resource for Unicon to talk to.

Unicon is becoming an expert on Sakai. Why is this in our mutual interest....

- a. Monitor sakai performance under real-world load
- b. Discover technical glitches, fix, and return to the community
- c. How to run a successful pilot
- d. Best practices of setting up sakai sites for learning
- e. Track events
- f. Discover what schools want reported.

Unicon is expecting to release the ASP model in the first quarter of 2006. Unicon asked the board how they felt about the use of the Sakai name in the product. The board responded that Unicon was not asking for an endorsement in any way and that they would be happy to work with Unicon on a press release, but the board does not endorse anything.

The board applauded the efforts of Unicon here.

Topic: Development Document from Duffy Gillman

The board reviewed the document and recognized it as a great document that raises a

lot of good points. The board felt obligated to respond and felt that a paragraph of reaction should be sent back to Duffy. In its current form, it is not suitable for adoption, but the BOF on Thursday will discuss this document further. Duffy is currently only seeking recognition of how we are going to go forward. The requirements DG needs to know and understand the process by which the recommended process is sanctioned and sent forward. The Requirements DG has defined the scope, developed a document and is now soliciting feedback. The question is how you move this from a project to an implementation. Does it get a feasibility review, some sort of design and development process, of other reviews? How does that happen?

Chris Coppola questioned the assumptions as to how resources are mobilized to do this sort of work. Until those things are determined, it's hard to interpret a document like this. The question was also raised as to how much of this is Board level decisions, and what is the difference between tools and framework.

It was determined that if you build a tool, it may or may not be constrained. If you volunteer to work on a tool, it can be developed by individual parts of the community. Jutta reported that at U Toronto the first cut is priority. Everyone interested votes on various tools that are proposed. This is followed by a call for financial support. If the tool finds support, it gets built. If you volunteer to work on the framework, you are constrained by the rules of the entire community. There are priority items which the team does as funding is available.

The board agreed that there needs to be a clear process which allows people to identify requirements and expectations. These are guiding expectations but not necessarily an absolute. The bigger effort is on building an effective community – painting the big picture of how we expect to work is the most important thing the board can do.

In order to define the next release an “all-hands” meeting is needed to define the requirements. The board needs to put a stake in the ground to help spark a discussion on how to go forward. In order to begin this discussion, the board developed a list of the items they all agree on. It is listed below:

1. There's acceptance that contribution to the code and contribution to the project will be provided in a variety of ways. That is encouraged and made as easy as possible.
2. The only way to positively affect the outcome of Sakai is to contribute to the tangible product.
3. The focus of centralized activities will be to maximize the effectiveness of the community, making the large number of resources as effective as they can be.
4. The Sakai Foundation central staff will be light weight and push much of the work back on the community, acting often in coordinating capacities.
5. All the processes and activities in the Sakai community should strive for as much transparency and syndication of its activities as possible in recipient friendly format.
6. The processes need to be clear and well-known and well-publicized so that anybody in the community knows how to participate to make something happen.
7. We should ensure the guiding principles of the foundation vision are clear to the community.
8. Sakai is on a trajectory and will continue to evolve in various areas, with some things being more or less mature.

The mechanism for the conversation for going forward is a board sponsored activity. The board needs to comment to the requirements DQ that we don't know what the structure will be. The board agreed to establish a sub-committee for setting up a mechanism for this discussion. In this effort, a work group was formed (Sakai Community Processes – SCP WG), which will be chaired by Chris and Mara. Other members of the board are expected to participate. This WG will recruit participants and ask for volunteers to participate with them.

Topic: Election of Officers

By unanimous vote, Joseph Hardin was elected Chairman of the Board, and Brad Wheeler was elected Vice Chairman.

Topic: Staff (Continuing discussion)

At a previous board meeting, the Sakai Foundation was considering a budget of around \$850K and discussed an executive director, a tech support person, a qa person, and an admin asst. There was a recognition of the need for an Executive Director, a high powered position that would cost a lot of money, but would also take over a lot of the day to day activities, figuring out how to manage some of the communication channels we have now, etc.

Joseph announced the following decisions that had been made: Mark Norton will be supported that to be ¼ time for the entire year. It was agreed that 6-months support would be budgeted for Anthony, and it was also agreed that \$40,000 would be dedicated to QA. The board also agreed on the continuation of support for an administrative assistant, a webmaster, and other small positions that will continue.

Joseph was tasked by the board to develop a job description for the executive director position. He recruited John and Vivie to assist him in developing the job description which will then be circulated to the rest of the board for review and discussion.

Chris noted that the foundation seems to be missing a product manager, someone focused on holding onto the vision for the product and organizing volunteer resources around that. This is a crucial role. Where Sakai needs to develop is a question for the board. It was suggested that the structure be similar to that of the Apache foundation – a volunteer association. It was suggested that someone who had been in a similar position should be on the interview committee. People named were Ed Walker, Mitchell Baker, and Brian Behlendorf. The goal for the January meeting is to have either one or all of these people on the call to advise us.

We will try to schedule the next face-to-face board meeting for the end of February, in NYC.

With no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Miles