

Apereo Board Meeting Minutes:

19 November 2019

Officers:

Chair: Anne-Marie Scott

Vice Chair: Lucy Appert

Treasurer: Tim Carrol

Secretary: Francois Campbell

Executive Director: Ian Dolphin

Called to Order: 11:02 EST

Adjourned: 12:04 EST

ATTENDING

Ian Dolphin (nv)
Mathilde Guerin
Jim Helwig
Anne-Marie Scott
Francois Campbell
Salvador Pellicer
Tim Carrol (nv)
Jeremy Rosenberg
Laura McCord
Thierry Koscielniak
Matthew Rascoff

Absent w/o notice:

Determination of a Quorum (N=6):⁹ Quorum is achieved.

1. Apologies: Boeta Pretorius, Lucy Appert (Jury duty), Laura Gekeler unable to attend due to prior commitments.

2. Minutes of the October Board call and matters arising. The Sakai historical accounting document is to be added as an appendix to the October Minutes.
 - a. **Moved:** Jim Helwig
 - b. **Seconded:** Matthew Rascoff
 - c. AOB
 - i. Board financial reports request had been made to accountants.
 - d. MOU AXIES
 - i. Good progress has been made
 - ii. Review of updated document is required by the board
 - iii. A vote of email is to be done to confirm the MoU and Dr Chuck to be authorised to sign this document on behalf of Apereo Board if required.
 - e. Anne-Marie
 - i. Has a document on stakeholder analysis ready, will share shortly.
 - f. Reformatting of minutes to closer resemble a journal.
 - i. To be finalised via email board list.
3. Discussion: re-orientation of aspects of Apereo activity. ID has drafted a paper at

[ED Notes for November 2019 Apereo Board Call](#)

This contains 8 discussion points for the call.

Board members should feel free to comment on these in advance of the call, or to raise other issues they feel are important to the Board list, or by editing the document.

1. Review: some founding principles. Subsidiarity
2. Major role is managing collective Intellectual property. Periodic review required
 - a. A small group of board members to discuss and bring proposals back to the board
 - b. Licensing group may need to become a little more proactive, list traffic is low.
 - c. Create a more formal process, including documentation.
 - d. Other working groups may require closer review.
 - e. Andrew Petro is Chair of licensing group, with six other group members
 - i. This group may be increased by appeals to members of newer Apereo software communities
 - ii. Board members should consider direct appeals for participation among their institutional or other contacts
3. Working partnerships and the role of the board
 - a. Board members play multiple roles: active in Apereo software communities and also a variety of external networks.
 - b. Focus being on external board members to increase influence and partnerships for Apereo

- c. Facilitating connections with other organisations in terms of geographic and thematic
- d. Board members to discuss this role and desire to change this understanding.
 - i. Thierry has indicated a willingness to continue this practice.
 - ii. What would board members need from Apereo to do this more effectively
 - 1. Access to material regarding Licensing and practices in varying languages
 - 2. Thierry happy to share notes on the previous organization, regarding issues facing the broader themes and trends affecting them.
 - 3. Support for meeting or adding this topic to the agenda on a regular basis to review and assist in these communities
 - 4. Create a document to track these trends and discussion. Informed by the board list.
 - 5. Document to be shared internally for now, but to be reviewed periodically.
 - 6. Concern about partnership updates negatively affecting Board Meeting, Updates to be shared and discussed on the list.
 - 7. Suggesting topics for board calls to be made in advance to meetings so as not to consume too much time.
 - iii. Advocacy and Messaging
 - 1. Success stories are useful. The “vignettes” we have gathered have been useful, but are in need of continuous refreshment.
 - a. Discussion around how successful we are at gathering these stories
 - b. Board members could play a role in identifying success stories and help surface them via their networks. Encouraged to engage on this level for minimum effort and maximum impact.
 - c. Vignettes currently surfaced via the apereo website. A location that the board can input directly would be useful.
 - d. Several lines of approach,
 - i. Vignettes currently gathered by direct appeal to Software Communities, or to presenters at Apereo or external events..
 - ii. Discussion underway with UCT about possible ways to help gather these stories

- e. Possibility of offering awards? BC Campus puts forward an award for open education and publishes this on their website and provides recognition for contributors on a monthly basis.
- f. ATLAS and Fellows awards are similar awards within Apereo. Leverage for vignettes?
- g. Community highlight is essentially a profile blog or surfacing the contributions and fostering community and cohesion. Apereo Projects in Action , it would expose individual success stories as well as the existing awards would show institutional success stories.
- h. Build up a list of a half dozen of these lists
 - i. Nominations to surface these individuals and editing by the board
 - ii. Decision needs to be made so some potential overhead.
 - iii. A volunteer to coordinate and facilitate the discussion further.

e. Sustainability

1. Networking shorter and longer success stories
 2. Advocacy for Open Source - general and in edu
 3. Investment at institutional level
 4. Losing institutional skill and knowledge
 5. Clearer sense of open source objectives
 - a. Matthew R: Find a moderate space in between Absolutely open and absolutely commercial. Capitalising on this balance in terms of what is infrastructure and what is not is key. Elaborated in more detail in presentation to Sakai Virtual Conference
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sfanE9wYaQ>
 - b. A-M S: ESUP-Portai is an excellent example of what the blend is in the ecosystem
 - c. On the issue of Heuristics. There are not many other communities who can give this issue focus, an opportunity to co-author a report on this more mature conception of open source heuristics Board to return to this issue at a future meeting.
- ii. Aligning Apereo goals with the UN sustainable development goals?
1. Particular emphasis on sub-saharan and African countries?

2. African continent and how we go about addressing these sustainability goals will be difficult to achieve based on segmentation and cross border institutional communication.

3. Are the UN SD goals significant in US/North America?

Example

https://observatory.tec.mx/edu-news/tec-collaborates-with-the-united-nations-on-a-global-pact-for-sustainability?utm_source=Observatory+of+Educational+Innovation&utm_campaign=4d184be8a7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_15_ENG_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_19f9b6b30c-4d184be8a7-236615341

4. Edinburgh has aligned itself with UN SD goals. Quite specific to this context and promoting this

5. Ian D & A-MS to discuss this in more detail and draft short position paper. #ACTION

iii. **Discussion point 5**

1. How relevant are the sustainable development goals to open source software in general, and to Apereo specifically?

a. Can we go about spreading the advocacy load geographically in order to avoid long-haul travel.

b. What sort of conversations are happening in the sector around travel to conferences and other events?

i. Travel in US institutions curtailed post 2008 crisis for largely fiscal, rather than environmental reasons. Fiscal prudence was a strong theme in the US

ii. EU/UK green agenda appears to have a higher profile in HE.

iii. Different modes of transportation: we should select most environmentally viable

c. Modelling: How does Apereo model behaviour and promote this agenda?

d. We have both financial and environmental reasons to curtail travel. May be a need to emphasise each in different contexts. Changes in format of Open Apereo driven by many factors highlighted in community feedback, including environmental

e. Environment and fiscal prudence are linked problems, and not mutually exclusive.

2. Should we explore the relationship between open source software and sustainability further?

f. Points 7 & 8 to be handled off list

4. Any Other Business

- a. A community member had requested the audited financials for 2018
- b. Finance Group should oversee publication of unaudited accounts for 2018, the audit process, together with the publication of narrative detailing actions taken to remedy historic errors in Sakai accounting and remediation undertaken by the Board. The board empowers the finance group to execute this on the board's behalf.
- c. Audited accounts should be published as soon as possible. Date to be set in audit RfP and confirmed when RfP complete
- d. Finance Group should set rapid and realistic target dates and deadlines
- e. Negotiate early date for 2019 account publication with accountants. Should be as early in 2019 as feasible, and reported to the Board when negotiated

Motion to Adjourn: Jim

Seconded: Mathilde

Approved *Nem con.*

Adjournment: 1205 hrs (EST)

Action Items:

Date	Item	Target Completion	Responsible
19 November 2019	Share notes on the previous organization, regarding issues facing the broader themes and trends affecting them.	February 2020	Thierry
19 February 2019	Create a document to	February 2020	Board

	track these trends and discussion. Informed by the board list.		
--	--	--	--

Executive Director's Notes

Apereo Re-orientation: Some Notes

These notes are offered as an opening to what I hope will be an extended board conversation around direction and orientation for Apereo. As always, they are framed around the central question, "How do we use our slender resources to most effectively create the conditions where our software communities survive and thrive?" I have structured the document around areas of work and approaches I observe as currently important, and that are drawn from day-to-day conversations with members of our broad community, and those we work with. I'm sure Board members can suggest others. Please feel free to add, subtract or modify (as "suggestions" please) - it was my intention to use these as a discussion starter, not as a last word.

ID 11 Nov 19

1 Founding Principles

A Subsidiarity

As the Foundation was created a key principle of governance was adopted: the principle of **subsidiarity**. 'Subsidiarity is a principle of social organization that holds that social and political issues should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level that is consistent with their resolution' [1]. In its application to Apereo, subsidiarity holds that the Foundation should only undertake activities which could not be better undertaken by other constituencies closer to the problem space in question, such as higher education institutions or software communities themselves. In other words, activity undertaken by the Foundation should bring identifiable and *unique* added value. The Board has an important determining role in forming judgements around this principle.

[Discussion Point 1] As we proceed to develop, the principle and practice of subsidiarity should be revisited, reviewed and enriched with the benefit of experience.

B Collective management of intellectual property.

Apereo aims to reduce the friction associated with institutional collaboration by managing intellectual property collectively. This is a major aspect of the specific value of Apereo brings to higher education. How we manage this has not been reviewed since we were founded. A review is due.

[Discussion Point 2] The mechanisms by which we manage intellectual property can be improved. Review and improvement should be prioritized.

C Networking & Partnerships: The Role of the Board

Realizing our mission means both winning members and growing our influence through networking. Apereo should be considered as a network in itself, but is also a key node in an emergent broader network of organizations with aligned missions around openness in education.

Maintaining connections within a broader network is important in terms of our founding principles; knowing where we add specific and unique value is in part about knowing who else is working in a space already. Understanding when it makes sense to join forces or hand off to another organisation is a strategic decision. Having strong connection within a wider network also helps amplify our message and reach.

Apereo continues to develop and sustain multi-dimensional alliances. This takes effort. Our alliances tend to fall into two broad types -

Regional and congruent with our mission: ESUP-Portail, AXIES, South Africa

Aligned but not entirely congruent – ALT, Femedtech OER. Collaboration with the latter type is often thematic - eg the current discussion with ALT around data privacy and the growth of what has been termed the “surveillance society”.

We should help build sustainability for open source communities and projects by offering our expertise or signposting existing resources e.g.

<https://www.linuxfoundation.org/resources/open-source-guides/building-leadership-in-an-open-source-community/>

[Discussion point 3] What is the role of the Board, and of Board members, in exploring and developing effective partnerships? How might we make this more systematic? What information does the Board need on a regular basis to proceed effectively?

2 Broader Advocacy: Three Aspects of Sustainability

Our existing advocacy work has largely focused on arguments for the *adoption* of open source software in education. This approach is insufficient in isolation and should be broadened. This broadening might include emphasis around -

- Resource pooling through contribution – contributing to *software sustainability*

- To articulate further how investment in innovation at an institutional level contributes to institutional capacity and hence *institutional sustainability*
- To articulate the role of open source software in relation to the *global sustainable development* agenda.

The first two of these bullet points can be largely addressed by conventional advocacy work accompanied by a willingness to share success stories. The third requires further elaboration and consideration.

[Discussion Point 4] How do we make gathering success stories more systematic and effective? What role do Board members play in advocacy work in general?

3 Global Sustainability and Open Source Software

A Sustainability Goals

The United Nations has set out seventeen related [sustainable development goals](#). Higher Education institutions in several parts of the world are beginning to engage with this agenda. The goals range from those we could seek to contextualize potential contributions of open source software around, such as 'Quality Education' (Goal 4), to those where, as an organisation, we could seek to model behaviour. These goals include 'Gender Equality' (Goal 5) and 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' (Goal 11).

Contextualising the contribution of open source software to Goal 4 speaks to a different emphasis in aspects of our advocacy work, perhaps re-emphasizing the role of open source in the (less financially rich) Global South. This goes beyond simply framing a narrative or context. It also has more tangible and direct consequences; for example paying closer attention, as part of our incubation process, to issues surrounding software internationalization, and considering specific targeting of our Diversity Scholarships.

[Discussion point 5] How relevant are the sustainable development goals to open source software in general, and to Apereo specifically? Should we explore the relationship between open source software and sustainability further?

B A Green Agenda

If higher education is to meet the challenge of the sustainable development agenda its practice - and our own - needs to change in several significant respects. We are what we do. As an organization rooted in educational technology, we should meet the green agenda by carefully elaborating and practising a reduction of general travel spend and carbon footprint

- Alternatives to travel for collaboration wherever possible
- New approaches to events, including remote participation

Exploration of the relationship between open source and environmental sustainability goes beyond lowering travel related emissions. We should encourage broader exploration of environmental impact including, for example, power consumption as a measure of software quality.

[Discussion Point 6] How important is meeting the green agenda to Apereo? What impact will this have on advocacy? How might the Board and Officers more rationally plan coverage of significant events?

4 Broadening Advocacy: Big Data and Privacy

Privacy has become a significant issue for higher education IT. This has been accompanied by increased awareness of the monetization (actual or intended) of big data harvested by major commercial entities (Microsoft, Google, Facebook) and education specific commercial proprietary vendors (Instructure, Turnitin). Data ownership is increasingly slipping from the grasp of institutions.

[Discussion Point 7] What should our response be? Developing the case for algorithmic accountability (open source code can be audited and interrogated)? Deepening awareness of extractive commercial data gathering practices ([Ben Williamson WonkHE article](#))? Networking information about alternatives to commercial-proprietary cloud hosting, such as those provided by ESUP-Portail?

5 Advocacy: Always Positive?

Apereo advocacy work has generally focused around two principal benefits of open source software in education –

- Elimination of licensing cost
- Investment of licensing cost savings in innovation to meet the developing needs of the academic mission

We have tended to focus on positive messaging, emphasising the benefits of open source, rather than criticizing commercial proprietary approaches.

[Discussion Point 8] To what extent should advocacy emphasize the rent-seeking and significant license fees of commercial-proprietary solutions, set against the context of overwhelming (and rising) student debt in many parts of the world? How far should we seek to communicate alternative approaches to adopting open source; for example running open source on IaaS or PaaS offerings in the cloud; commercial companies for services and support etc?

“There is such a thing as a free lunch”

(Title of an article by an institutional IT leader after the adoption of Sakai, 2007)

Advocacy around cost savings and investment in innovation should be firmly accompanied by an explanation of *why* our software isn't accompanied by a license cost and *how* it continues to develop. Methods of contribution should be detailed ie, material contribution (labor, artefacts produced by labor) or financial contribution (subscription, one-off feature build project funding). Above all the point needs to be driven home that freedom to adapt and innovate is not free from spend, but that cost is directly associated with supporting the academic mission, rather than 77% of it being spent on sales and admin [2].

Freedom to adapt and innovate is also the freedom to shape and build an institutionally owned future, not merely predict. Running open source on services such as AWS or Azure offers the ability to innovate with cutting edge technologies such as machine learning and AI, instead of waiting for a vendor to deliver, ensuring that institutional values are built in from the start.

[1] <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiarity>

[2] Figure drawn from financial materials relating to the Instructure IPO.