



## Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) May 16-17, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

**Dates and Times of Meeting:** May 16 – 3:00 PM Eastern Time  
May 17 – 8:00 AM Eastern Time

**Location:** Bartlett Research Arboretum, Charlotte, North Carolina

**Board Members Attending:** Patrick Franklin - Chair  
Rachel Barker - Chair Elect  
David Gorden - Vice Chair  
Jacques Brunswick – Secretary/Treasurer  
Lori Brockelbank  
Beau Brodbeck  
Asia Downtin  
Dan Herms  
Jon Hicks  
Pete Smith  
Sam Van Maanen

**Board Members Absent:** De'Etra Young

**Also Attending:** Paul Putman – CEO/President  
Jonathan Cain – Communication and Engagement Manager  
Heath Hupke – Grants and Development Manager  
Suzette Guzman-Brown - Operations and Governance Coordinator

### Thursday, May 16

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 PM Central Time by Chair Patrick Franklin. Introductions of attendees were made.

### TREE Fund President Report – Dr. Paul Putman, CEO and President

- TREE Fund President/CEO Putman gave his update on highlights since the December 2023 Board meeting. He began by thanking the board and its leadership, specifically Jacques Brunswick as well as former President/CEO Eric Smith for their guidance and assistance.
- Dr. Putman reviewed the President's Dashboard, highlighting goals for 2024 including:
  - Implementation of new technologies
  - ISA Chapter visits



- Policy review and updates
- Checks and balances of operations
- Getting Development and Communications Committees up and running
- Dr. Putman reported that cybersecurity has improved significantly and is now at 98%. TREE Fund will continue to work to reach 100%.
- Total income for 2024 as of March is \$124,800.
- To date, Tour des Trees has signed up forty-six in-person riders and fifteen virtual riders, with a goal of one hundred each in-person and virtual.
- Also discussed were TREE Fund events supporting ISA's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:
  - Reception at ISA's Centennial Conference in Atlanta Sunday, August 11
  - Kick-off at Bartlett Arboretum (where ISA was founded 100 years ago) in Stamford, CT on Sunday, September 22

#### **Financial Report – Jacques Brunswick, Secretary/Treasurer**

- Jacques reviewed expenses and balances for January – April 2024.
- There was some discussion and clarification to help all board members understand differences between restricted and unrestricted funds.
- For the first time The Chicago Community Trust Endowment Fund has reached over \$5 million.

#### **Consent Agenda Approval**

Chair Elect Barker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following items. Seconded by Trustee Van Maanen. Motion carried.

- Minutes from December 7, 2023 Trustee Meeting
- Joint Trustee and Liaison Committee Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2023
- President/CEO's Report
- Executive and Governance Committee Report
- Treasurer's Report and Financials
- Research and Education Committee Report
- Development Committee Report
- Communications Committee Report
- Liaison Committee Report
- Nominations Ad-Hoc Committee Report

#### **Committee Goals**

All committee chairs were asked to share committee goals (including requests for support) for 2024 and beyond.



- Executive and Governance Committee (Patrick Franklin, Chair) – goals include creating a review and evaluation plan for the CEO/President, implementation of review process of policies and governing documents, a review of the Restated Declaration of Trust, beginning analysis of potential partners, review of proposal for physical office and storage space, creation of employee review cycle and procedures, exploration of grant pass through options with administrative fees, and implementation of a capital campaign for a reserve fund,
- Audit and Finance Committee (Jacques Brunswick, Secretary/Treasurer) – goals include creating an updated spreadsheet for restricted funds, getting a better understanding and recording of restricted funds, reviewing liability and other insurance coverages, implementing checks and balances of staff operations, investigation of longer-term options for endowment, implementation of a capital campaign for reserve fund, and a review of outside accounting procedure.
- Research and Education Committee (Dr. Dan Herms, Trustee) – goals for the committee are focused on the next three months, and include notifying applicants of award decisions, request and review of revised application for Ohio ISA Education Grant (pending Board approval), seeking agreement from ISA Illinois to award Larry Hall Memorial Scholarship, streamlining the grant application form, addition of a stipulation that grantees present a webinar as part of the application, expanding the pool of reviewers, review agreements regarding required reviewers, and hosting a webinar for potential grant applicants to educate them on the process.
- Development Committee (Sam Van Maanen, Trustee) – emphasis for 2024 placed on getting committee up-and-running, developing a fundraising plan, developing an annual calendar of fundraising activities, revisiting the campaign for Hyland Johns Endowment, and organizing the Heritage Oaks planned giving program.
- Communications Committee (Pete Smith, Trustee) – goals focused on conducting the first committee meeting, creating a communications calendar, reviewing a list of TREE Fund ideas and evaluating needs to help execute those ideas, and working with the Video Ad-Hoc committee on video productions, including promotional video for Tour des Trees, as well as working with Mr. Cain on communication cycles.
- Liaison Committee (Lori Brockelbank, Trustee) – goals for 2024 include defining the role of the co-chair, refining the liaison title, implementing a Teams channel, and filling open positions on the committee.
- Nominations Ad Hoc Committee (Patrick Franklin, Chair) – the goal is to add 3-4 new members to the board.

Co-Chair Barker made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Trustee Van Maanen. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 PM Eastern Time.



## **Friday, May 17**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM Eastern Time by Chair Patrick Franklin.

### **Webinar Update (Heath Hupke, Grants and Development Manager)**

- There are four webinars scheduled for 2024. Some of the challenges Mr. Hupke has run into include staff changes to organizations and the availability of potential presenters. He is looking at opportunities for 2025 and presented several options. Following brainstorming by the board, CEO/President Putman expressed some caution to ensure that TREE Fund does not compete with ISA.
- Mr. Hupke discussed the silent auction to benefit TREE Fund to be held at the August ISA Conference and encouraged board members to contact him regarding donations.
- Mr. Hupke also gave a briefing on the implementation of Raisers Edge NXT, TREE Fund's new database.

### **Tour des Trees Update (Jonathan Cain, Communications and Engagement Manager)**

- Mr. Cain presented a timeline of this year's Tour des Trees promotion, and an overview of events surrounding it.
- Mr. Cain also presented some possible dates for 2025 in August and September, which were voted on by the board.

Motion made by Secretary/Treasurer Brunswick to hold Tour des Trees in August 2025 sometime between 8<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Trustee Hicks. Motion carried.

### **Spring 2024 Grants and Scholarships**

Chair Franklin asked if there were any conflicts of interest regarding any of the grants and scholarship recommendations being presented. None were shared by the Board members present. There were also no conflicts of interest shared by members of the Scholarship and Grants Ad-Hoc Committees.

Dr. Herms led the discussion and vote on grants and scholarships. There were many great applicants, and the board moved to approve all awardees as listed except for 1) the Ohio Community Education Grant, and 2) the Larry Hall Memorial Scholarship, which designates a preference for recipients living or attending school in Illinois. The first exception is pending receipt of additional information by the committee. The second is pending approval by the Illinois ISA chapter.

Motion made by Mr. Gorden to approve slate of grant and scholarship recipients as listed, seconded by Dr. Herms. Motion carried.



## **Old Business**

Board Chair Franklin led a discussion on the demographic composition of the board.

1. Representation – the board discussed having a representative from the TCIA join the board. It was pointed out that there could be benefits to having both ISA and TCIA representation, as the ISA focuses on education, while the TCIA is more focused on the industry. This was further discussed during new business.
2. TCIA Foundation – Dr. Putman shared an overview of exploratory conversations held with TCIA regarding the TCIA Foundation and whether or not some type of strategic integration with TREE Fund might make sense. Board discussion was positive, and Dr. Putman was encouraged to continue conversations with TCIA.

Motion to move forward with continuing conversations with TCIA made by Co-Chair Barker, seconded by Trustee Brodbeck. Motion carried.

## **New Business**

1. Sustainability Fund – presently there is \$1200 in the fund. Following a discussion by the board, it was recommended that two funds be created: 1) an endowed Sustainability Fund without board access to the principal of the fund and 2) a Reserve Fund, with board access to the principal of the fund.

Motion to table until the December board meeting was brought by Trustee Brodbeck, seconded by Co-Chair Barker. Motion carried.

2. Standard Fee Schedule – Dr. Putman presented a fee schedule for hosting endowment funds.

Motion to adopt fee schedule as presented made by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Hicks. Motion carried.

3. Office Proposal – Dr. Putman presented a proposal to keep staff remote, and only have a physical storage space. Mr. Cain lives close to the storage space and can access it as needed. The space is to be purged of unwanted items.

Motion to accept the proposal was made by Co-Chair Barker, seconded by Trustee Hicks. Motion carried.

4. Research Appeal/Ethics Ad Hoc Committee – it was decided to change the word “Appeals” to “Grievance” to more closely reflect the committee’s purpose.



Motion made to adopt the process with change made by Secretary/Treasurer Brunswick, seconded by Trustee Brodbeck. Motion carried.

5. Executive Compensation Policy – Based upon a recommendation from the auditors, Dr. Putman had prepared a document codifying a process for gathering data and information to make a recommendation to the full board for the compensation of the CEO/President, to include salary and benefits. An amendment was recommended by the board to change “Compensation committee” to “Executive and Governance committee”

Motion to adopt policy with amendment made by Co-Chair Barker, seconded by Trustee Smith. Motion carried.

6. Policy/Board Handbook Review – Dr. Putman presented a timeline to review governance documents rotating to ensure they are kept up to date and in compliance with applicable laws.

7. Section I: Restated Declaration of Trust of TREE Research and Education Endowment Fund

Recommended updates are documented in the revision log. Language was updated to be gender-neutral and “ISA TREE Fund Chapter liaison committee” was updated to TREE Fund Liaison committee to be inclusive of liaisons other than ISA chapter representatives. Additionally, the role of Past Chair was added to the Executive and Governance Committee. There was discussion around the description of “liaison.” It was pointed out that the definition can be found on the TREE Fund website under the Liaison Toolbox. The Executive and Governance committee will revisit the definition to see if it still reflects the role or needs clarification.

Motion to adopt the changes presented to the Declaration of Trust (Section I of the Trustee Handbook) made by Co-Chair Barker, seconded by Trustee Smith. Motion carried.

8. Section II: Governance and Management – The Board agreed with the changes as presented and documented in the revision log. Of note, language seeking nominees from ISA and TCIA was added to the Trustee Recruitment Process. Two other changes were made: the addition of “If approved, nominees from ISA and TCIA” to the beginning of paragraph two under Trustee Recruitment Process, and the correction of the typographical error on page 79 (“Duty of Obedience”).

Motion to approve Section II with changes made by Trustee Brodbeck, seconded by Trustee Herms. Motion carried.

**Other Business: -**



- The Board passed a resolution to acknowledge longtime Audit and Finance Committee member John Signorini for his more than two decades of service to TREE Fund.
- Operations and Governance Coordinator Guzman-Brown presented an initial Request for Proposal for hosting future board meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM Eastern Time, and the board went into Executive Session.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 5 at 10:00 AM Central Time and will take place remotely.