

From: Ann Beeson

Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 11:11 AM

To: #OSI US PROGRAMS

Subject: USP Board Memo, "Seize the Day" Fund, and Friday's USP All-Staff

Greetings, all. As you know, we're holding a USP Board meeting today and tomorrow. I am attaching my cover memo to the Board, which provides an overview of the agenda. We have put together two panels for the Board meeting that focus on the many ways that technology is being deployed to advance our work in U.S. Programs. Six experts will join us to demonstrate some of the tools and to discuss the opportunities and limitations of technology for organizing, government transparency and expanded citizen engagement. Special thanks to Lori McGlinchey, Laleh Ispahani, Erlin Ibreck and Bill Vandenberg for their work in developing the panels. Board advisors Ethan Zuckerman and Sherrilyn Ifill also worked closely with us to develop the panels, which they'll moderate. We are working to get copies of the power points and external links used in the technology demonstrations to distribute to the full staff. This work has a serious "wow" factor and I encourage all of you to learn more about it.

The Board cover memo also includes brief updates from each of USP's funds and campaigns. I encourage you to review the updates and to identify new connections to your own work. It is always awe-inspiring to see how much we are accomplishing in U.S. Programs. Congratulations and thanks to all of you for your terrific work.

Over the last two months, a group of staff have been working to develop a special funding strategy to "Seize this Transformational Moment in the United States." The final strategy memo is attached, and I am delighted to report that George Soros approved \$10 million last week for this special funding initiative. (Please do not circulate the memo outside of OSI.) We've taken to calling this effort the "Seize the Day" Fund, or affectionately, the "Carpe Diem" Fund. Bill Vandenberg and I took the lead in drafting the strategy memo, with essential drafting and visioning assistance from Laleh Ispahani, Raquiba LaBrie, and Lenny Noisette. We also received invaluable input from many other staff and from Steve Rickard, Deepak Bhargava, and Jonathan Soros. We are now developing a streamlined grantmaking process for the special fund so that we can get money out the door as quickly as possible. Bill will serve as convener of a staff working group that includes Laleh, Lenny, Raquiba, and me. (Diana Morris will also be developing proposals to advance the strategies in Baltimore.) Each director (with help from staff) will develop grant proposals to advance the strategies in the memo most connected to their fund's long-term goals, and I will make decisions about which proposals to forward to Aryeh for approval. Deepak Bhargava, Jonathan Soros, and Bryan Stevenson will serve as Board advisors on the effort. Directors will engage with staff and answer questions about the new initiative at upcoming regular Fund/Campaign staff meetings. I feel very privileged to be working at a Foundation that has the resources to advance change during this critical period, and with colleagues that have the vision to develop concrete plans for transformational change during this moment.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you all at this **Friday's monthly USP All-Staff Meeting, March 6th from 12:15 – 2:00 in 3AB**. Our agenda will include:

- **Overview of the new Foundation to Promote Open Society**
Ricardo Castro will explain and answer questions about our new sister foundation

- **Dialogue with the Global Fellows Program**
Sasha Post and crew are going to bring along some of the remarkable OSI Fellows and facilitate a conversation about how to expand connections between USP and GFP
- **Report back and discussion of USP Board Meeting**

As always, I am happy to answer any questions or just to chat about all the great work that's underway in U.S. Programs.

Best,

Ann

Ann Beeson
Executive Director, U.S. Programs
Open Society Institute
400 West 59th Street
New York, New York 10019
212-548-0350 (ph)
646-557-2515 (fax)
abeeson@sorosny.org