



The Sun City Tai Chi Club – Short and Long Term Plans

Objectives

The board and numerous committees have had a number of meetings to determine how to improve your learning process and strengthen the club. Our main objective is to take not only a short term look at these issues but to develop long term plans also. We want to do things that would allow our club to become stronger and to become independent. Anyway, I want to inform you of the directions we want to take.

Teacher – Short Term

Our immediate issue was how to continue our classes after Tao Sifu left. Linda Voorhees, one of our most advanced students, suggested that she would be willing to teach all of the classes through the summer until we could find a new teacher. Tao Sifu gave Linda special training to help her prepare for leading the classes. He was very enthused to see her taking this next step in her own growth process, and eagerly guided her. Linda is willing to take a huge commitment, and a real cut into her personal time, and very little pay. She is an exceptionally good leader, and we all owe her a huge debt for her investment in our club.

Finding a New Teacher - Interim

Our issue was to replace Tao Sifu with another teacher. We formed a committee to begin an immediate search for a new teacher. The problem is that any new teacher, even if they do the 108 Yang Style Tai Chi, will have a different form. After talking to various people, and looking at You-Tube, it appears each teacher develops their own form. There are basic similarities, but they rearrange the moves, and the execution of certain moves. We would have to start learning a new form all over if we hired any new teacher who had not trained under Tao Sifu. We figure most students would rather not start over, but would rather keep progressing. Tao Sifu Franklin Wood hand-picked one of his own long term students to work with us as a Teacher. Tammie Pinkerton has been a student of Tao Sifu for something like 10 years. However, Tammie has some commitments with her family throughout the summer. She would not be available to start helping us until this Fall. But she would allow us to have a teacher who had studied with Tao Sifu, and who could continue using the same form that we are currently use to.

Teacher – Long Term

But the club also has to face the fact that we will always be vulnerable with any outside teacher. We recognized a real need to seriously consider training people within our own classes who can eventually help us with the teaching needs of the club. We need our own students to at least lead the beginner's classes, and Tammie could lead the more advanced classes when she comes to teach next fall. As we get more teacher's trained from within our own group, we might be able to give them a more leading role in training our own students. We will need students who are serious about learning Tai Chi, and who are willing to assist the club. This would resolve the long term teaching needs of the club.

Class Fees

There was another issue about whether we should charge the normal class fees when our student leader is an advanced student. In the past if we did not have a teacher we gave practice sessions, and they were free. However, if we want the club to be able to function, and continue on, we need to be able to collect the class fees to cover our other expenses. So this became an issue of survival for the club. We also wanted to pay our student leaders as well as any new teachers, in recognition of their efforts and commitment. Even though they might not have the level of training that Tao Sifu had, they are making a huge commitment to the club, and need to be compensated for that. There are not too many people willing to step up to the plate and make this kind of commitment to the club.

Exceptions

Since the students in the Friday 12:45 class are at the same level as Linda V and she cannot teach them beyond their current level, this class will take turns leading the class and practicing what they currently know, until Tammie comes in the fall. Since their class will essentially be practice sessions, they will not be charged for their classes. The other classes will be able to continue learning with Linda V.

Special Events

The next issue facing our club, was that all of our Special Events have been led by Tao Sifu Franklin Wood, ie., Singing Bowls and lectures. The club has had problems with losing money with the classes during the summer and the Special Events became an important source of revenue for the club to help us survive the summers. The committee that had been created to look for new teachers had interviewed a number of people when we decided to use Tammie this fall. Therefore, we decided we could have this group switch their search to looking for people who can do special events instead of a new teacher.

Our current plan is to go out into the Tai Chi community and find people we can hire to do special events – theory, philosophy, meditations, etc. This plan will allow us to have a broader range of special events, which might attract different groups of people to our club. It will broaden our own knowledge. It will allow us to become more familiar with the rest of the Tai Chi community. And it allows them to

become familiar with us. This gives us another level of support as we will have already developed relationships with these people, if we should need to call on them for help.

Other

The board is also looking at ways to enhance the learning experience in classes and to help students who want to advance to make the transition to the next level. We are aware that advancement has been a problem in the past and we hope to address that issue and expedite the advancement process. So stay tuned for new announcements concerning this issue.

Summary

We are very excited about all of these changes which are coming to us. We feel confident that these changes will address any short term issues we might have and will strengthen us in the long term.

The board and numerous committees have worked hard on this and have seriously tried to find solutions that will strengthen the club in the long term. We appreciate your support and your willingness to work with us through this transition period.

So in summary:

1. Short Term – hire Linda Voorhees to be a student leader, to handle all of the classes during the summer (except the Fri 12:45 class), and to lead our beginner’s classes in the fall.
2. Interim – Hire Tammie Pinkerton in the fall to lead all of our advanced classes
3. Long-Term – Nurture and develop our own student leaders.
4. Class Fees – Leave them the same, no matter who is leading the classes to recompensate those who will be leading the classes for their time and commitment.
5. Special Events – Bring in people from the Tai Chi Community to broaden our knowledge about other practices, theory, meditation, and related subjects.
6. Advancements – we will develop a better process for advancements.

Now, we need you as members of this club to assist us by accommodating these changes. You can contribute to strengthen the club in the process. So please come this summer and support our classes..

Carolyn K. Filer, President
The Sun City Tai Chi Club