

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on January 5, 2022)
November 16, 2021 at 6:00 PM
Location: Teleconference

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Michael Byc, Principal Brian Condon, Karen Curzio, Jillissa Drayton, Yanique Fletcher, Shari Gruber, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberly Lo, Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Craig L. Slutzkin, Lara Traum, David Zarowin.

The following guests were in attendance: Veronica York, Chi Ma, Alysia O'Shea.

- I. Co-President Craig Slutzkin called this virtual meeting to order at 6:04 PM.
 - A. The Board took a moment of silence in memory of Founding Principal Malcolm G. Largmann.
 - B. Mr. Slutzkin introduced the new PTA liaison, Alysia O'Shea, whose son is currently a sophomore.

- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**. The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 27, 2021. There were no comments or corrections; therefore, the minutes are accepted as issued.

- III. **Board Calendar**. The Board reviewed the annual calendar of meetings and discussed various start times and in-person vs. virtual format.

- IV. **Executive Committee Reports**. Craig Slutzkin and Dr. Selina Lee reported.
 - A. The school has reopened successfully.
 - B. Dr. Lee updated the Board on SLT meetings.
 - a. During the last meeting, the SLT reviewed the school's goals, the CEP, the Comprehensive Educational Plan, which focuses on the Social/Emotional component of learning.
 - b. The SLT will set a date for the annual Legislative Breakfast, with this year's theme this year being the Bridge Year.
 - c. An SLT working group is focusing on Bridge Year financing. Alumni Association's members Debra Michlewitz, David Zarowin, Sumaita Hasan, and Mehrose Ahmad volunteered to be part of this group.
 - C. Mr. Slutzkin and Michael Byc discussed the website upgrade.
 - D. Dues will be solicited soon, hopefully through the new system. The Board discussed various challenges in dues collection, including out-of-date information and disinterest by numerous alumni.
 - E. Selina Lee updated the board about the Do Better Together Committee's initiative to fund the acquisition of eBooks that furthered the Diversity and Inclusion mission, with a focus on BIPOC authors, in consultation with Librarian Arlene LaVerde.
 - a. Dr. Lee, Debra Michlewitz, and Michelle Gan worked with the librarian to develop a two-tiered bibliography. The first tier has been funded and Librarian LaVerde reported the books were well received.
 - b. Craig Slutzkin and Debra Michlewitz funded a broader themed list that also addressed anti-Semitic, LBGTQ+, and AAPI themes.

- F. Mr. Slutzkin reported that Founders Day was celebrated on November 12, with the theme of “Rebirth.”
- G. Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Associations D&O insurance liability coverage was renewed.

V. **Treasurer’s Report.** Mr. Slutzkin reported.

- A. As of the end of the fiscal year (August 31), the Association has a balance of \$2.6 million in the accounts divided between cash, various mutual funds and a small amount of equities. It has earned a 12% return. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed the various disbursements for the year, including IT support, faculty professional development and administrative costs such as the audit.
- B. The IRS had erroneously rescinded our not-for-profit status. Mr. Slutzkin had documentation to substantiate this error.
- C. The 2021-2022 program budget was reviewed. Additional amounts were allocated for diversity and inclusion training.
 - a. A motion to accept the proposed budget was made by Debra Michlewitz, seconded by Lara Traum, and was passed unanimously.

VI. **Committee Reports**

A. Nominating Committee Report. Craig Slutzkin reported.

- 1. Irina Kimyagar is no longer the PTA liaison given her daughters have graduated. The Board noted appreciation for her service and collaboration.
 - a. Dr. Lee motioned for Alysa O’Shea to be elected to fill Ms. Kimyagar’s vacancy. Ms. Michlewitz seconded the motion; the Board voted unanimously in favor.
- 2. Kimberly Lo resigned earlier this year as Vice President but will be remaining as a Board member. The Board noted appreciation for her service and looks forward to continuing collaboration.
 - a. Lara Traum motioned for Michael Byc and Benedict Fung to fill the Vice President vacancy. Karen Curzio seconded the motion; the Board voted unanimously.

B. Events Committee Report. Karen Curzio and Selina Lee reported.

- 1. Reunions:
 - a. Reunions that were postponed due to pandemic concerns. After the success of a virtual reunion on Discord, she recommended that other classes use the platform but there were no takers.
 - b. The Board discussed various ideas about how to handle reunions over the next year, including virtual, in-person and hybrid.
 - c. We will send out another email to each effected class from 2021 and 2022 to gauge interest and solicit volunteers.
- 2. Other Events:
 - a. The Board discussed the Annual Meeting, which will be in-person in early 2022.
 - b. Other potential events include webinars, another online Met tour, a Zoom Holiday party, featuring an activity like a Scavenger Hunt with task such as find you yearbook, a magic show for alums’ children, ages 6-12; a science show, and a cooking show.

VII. **School Report.** Principal Brian Condon presented.

- A. Principal Condon described the successes of Founders Day. The musical presentations were praised.
- B. SING! will take place this weekend. The performance and the afterschool preparations testify to a gradual return to normalcy.
- C. Principal Condon discussed the return-to-school and noted that academics are generally going well. He feels that Freshmen and Sophomores are integrating successfully into a school routine, and sports/team events are going smoothly.
 - 1. Students are adapting to the mask mandate. COVID protocols have been confusing but the school is trying to work through them.
 - 2. The staff is 100% vaccinated.
- D. Assessments:
 - 1. There is an overassessment of students with a new protocol that mandates measurement of progress in Math and English three times a year.
 - 2. Only about 20 students opted out of a DOE social/emotional assessment tool.
- E. Plans for the Winter Concert are not solidified. An in-person event is still on the table.
- F. Funding the Bridge Program is an important item on the school's agenda. This year is funded due to successful efforts of Assemblyperson Nily Rozic, with the school's budget has been used to cover the balance, due to Ms Fee's budgeting expertise. As discussed, an SLT working group is focusing on future funding.
- G. Ms O'Shea shared that there is a desire for a JV Basketball team. Mr. Condon said that he would pursue this with PSAL.
- H. Other Items.
- I. Mr. Slutzkin inquired about admissions, specifically both admissions criteria and outreach to achieve improved diversity.
- J. Ms. York thanked the Alumni Association for its support of the program and curriculum developed with Richard Gallagher in order to help students develop better executive functions and strategies. This inclusion program has received regional and national recognition.
- K. A Writing Center is available to help students. This center is the work of English teacher Brian Sweeney, other English teachers, students, and alums. Students can get critical feedback on their writing including college application essays. Students maintain a portfolio.
- L. Dr. Lee cited the intention for a Do Better Together meeting; a formal call will be scheduled. Members of the Executive Board effusively praised Director Jillissa Drayton's extraordinary work producing a monthly alumni newsletter during the past year. She has interviewed many alums of color in order to better represent the diversity of our successful students. These Alumni Spotlights are one part of THAA initiatives to Do Better Together going forward.

VIII. **Committee Reports (continued)**.

A. **Do Better Committee Report.**

1. Dr. Lee cited the intention for a Do Better Together meeting; a formal call will be scheduled.
2. The Board praised Jillissa Drayton's extraordinary work producing a monthly alumni newsletter during the past year. She has interviewed many alums of color in order to better represent the diversity of our successful students. These Alumni Spotlights are one part of THAA initiatives to Do Better Together going forward.

IX. **Compliance.** The report was deferred but work will be completed in 2022 as compliance requires.

X. **New Business.** Selina Lee stated that a parent, Alan Stein, did a survey last year to evaluate college readiness. He's offered to survey the class of 2021. Dr. Lee suggested we should discuss the need for this survey and how it would be useful. Ms. O'Shea said she'd be happy to facilitate, continuing the work of her predecessor. Ms. Traum suggested that the SLT might be interested in the findings.

Craig Slutzkin closed the meeting. A motion to adjourn was made by Shari Gruber, was seconded by Lara Traum and the motion was passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary