

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on January 19, 2003)
November 24, 2002
Location: Florence Nightingale Health Center

The following directors were present and constituted the quorum: Diego Alban, Thomas Cunningham, Irving Gerber, Melissa Gibilaro, Julius Graber, Eileen Gunn, Gerald P. Halpern, David Herszenhorn, Alicia Hughes, Marvin Leiner, Sam Malkin, Taniedra McFadden, Neil Manis, Gary Mellow, George Moutakis, Maurice Paprin, Charles Sigety, Sidney Silverman, Craig L. Slutzkin.

Guest in attendance: Susan Brustein
Craig L. Slutzkin acted as secretary of the meeting.

- I. David Herszenhorn called the meeting to order at 10:25 AM.
- II. Gerald Halpern introduced a motion to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2002 Board of Directors minutes. Maurice Paprin seconded this motion, which was passed unanimously.
- III. Executive Committee Report. Mr. Herszenhorn reported that the Executive Committee met the previous week to discuss several issues. Ted Peck and Eileen Gunn were also included in this meeting.
 - a. Current financial status of the Association and spending policies of the Board. Mr. Slutzkin had presented a current detail of the financial status and cash needs of the Association. During the past year, over \$4,000 had to be provided by the Association for reunions and the Hall of Fame event. The Executive Committee generally agreed that a need for fiscal conservatism was evident.
 - b. Scope of Association events. The Executive Committee discussed that events should be multigenerational and event committees should be striving to increase participation in both the event and the organization.
 - c. Director participation. There was been poor attendance at each of the past two Board meetings. The Executive Committee generally agreed that all directors must take on an active role on committees, as simple attendance is not enough to support the Association infrastructure. The Executive Committee also agreed to pursue the by-laws change which would give the Board the option of removing directors who have three consecutive, unexcused absences from Board meetings.
 - d. Staff Person. Mr. Herszenhorn briefed the committee on the search for a staff person. 16 resumes have been received to date. Mr. Herszenhorn, Ms. Odom, Mr. Slutzkin and Mr. Halpern will serve as a search committee.
 - e. High School Teacher Orientation Program. The Board had approved \$7,200 for this program, in principle; however, Mr. Cunningham and the program coordinators have yet to respond to our requests for additional information.
 - f. Postage and printing costs. There will be new rules and schedules in place as a result of "lessons learned" from the previous newsletter. There was discussion on roles of THAM versus the newsletter. There was a sense of an additional need for obituary coverage.

At the request of Messrs. Silverman and Halpern, Mr. Slutzkin agreed to provide an analysis of how the Association allocates a portion of contributions to administrative expenses, including a benchmark to other organizations.

- IV. Roundtable Discussion. At the request of Mr. Herszenhorn, Mr. Sigety led a roundtable discussion of the purpose of the Association, including what individual directors felt were the responsibilities and challenges facing the Association today. The following represented comments and sentiments expressed during the discussion:
 - a. There is a need for a mission statement, expanding on the current mission statement outlined in the By-Laws and tax filings

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- b. The organization should be supporting the high school, including financially, through recommending enhancements of the academic program, increasing the school's public relations and assisting in recruiting of junior high school students
- c. The organization should build alumni relations, including having networking activities and opportunities
- d. The organization should help with the counseling of the high school student body
- e. We should become guardians of the Townsend Harris traditions
- f. The Association allows alumni to stay connected through events, website, reunions, and mixers. It is important to start early, so as not to lose students right after their high school graduation.
- g. The Alumni should be the focus of the Association, not simply the high school. By focusing on the Alumni, the high school would be indirectly benefited.
- h. We should benchmark our activities versus other Alumni Associations. There was some debate over this, as high school alumni associations are somewhat rare, and most of the existing ones are not involved in the high school's activities.

Mr. Halpern noted that his participation on the Board and in the Association in general is a very important part of his life. He added that, even with a mission statement, the Board should be much more flexible in its activities as opposed to sticking strictly to its mission statement.

V. School Report. Thomas Cunningham reported the following:

- a. Mr. Cunningham's introduced Susan Brustein, Assistant Principal for Science.
- b. Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Brustein discussed the results of the Science Research program at the high school, which has over 100 participants (mostly sophomores). There were 22 Intel (formerly Westinghouse) contest submissions and 28 International Science Research Competition submissions.
- c. Mr. Cunningham provided an overview of the community service requirement.
- d. Founders' Day, held Friday, October 25th with the theme for this year's festivities as "Townsend Harris Makes a Difference". Over 20 alumni participated in the events, and Kelly Vilella '95 was be the keynote speaker.
- e. Several journalism awards were won by the student newspaper, *the Classic*, led by teacher advisor Ilsa Cowan.
- f. Retirements continue to be a major issue facing the high school administration. Several longtime teachers have announced their intention to retire.
- g. Several grants are being worked on for high school programs, including potential grants for the Imagination Workshop (previously funded by the Association), the Election Simulation program and the high school TV/Radio station.
- h. The status of Townsend Harris within the NYC Department of Education was discussed, as there is potential for change under the new chancellor.

VI. College Liaison Report. Dr. Leiner noted the following:

- a. The guidance department has been working closely with the college office to advise students on college courses.
- b. The dialogue of the Imagination (see above) has been expanded and funding opportunities are being explored.
- c. As a response to a question, Dr. Leiner noted that students currently take the college-level Humanities course and one additional college course.

VII. PTA Report. The Board agreed to have a joint PTA/Alumni Association meeting on March 23, 2003. This will be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

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- VIII. Treasurer's Report. Mr. Slutzkin presented the report of the treasurer from September 1, 2002 through October 31, 2002. He reported that the Investment Committee has been informally discussing how to manage the high level of cash currently held by the Association.
- IX. Communications Committee Report. Ms. Gunn reported the following:
- a. In response to a posed question, all mailings for a specific item, such as the THF! mailing, go out in one batch.
 - b. For THF!, the Association saved \$2,400 in postage by not using first class mailing.
 - c. There will be a better and more formalized procedure for publication schedules within the Association.
 - d. Ms. Gunn continues to look for additional members of the Communications Committee.
- Mr. Gerber raised the issue of the tone of the newsletter. He suggested that a committee be formed to review comments written for the newsletter. The Board decided to table until a further meeting.
- X. Webmaster Report. Mr. Alban presented his written report to the Board.
- XI. Gifts Distribution Committee Report. Mr. Slutzkin noted that there are no open requests.
- XII. Townsend Harris Forever! Report. Mr. Herszenhorn noted that a fundraiser in honor of Odile Garcia, a longtime Townsend Harris teacher, raised over \$600.

There being no other business, the Board adjourned at 1:05 P.M. Next meeting is Sunday, January 19, 2003 at 10 AM – Florence Nightingale Health Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Craig Slutzkin