

**Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on May 9, 2007)**

**December 5, 2006**

**Location: New Leaf Venture Partners**

The following directors were present and constituted the quorum: Craig L. Slutzkin, Maria Becce, Thomas Cunningham, Susan Getting, Gerald P. Halpern, David Herszenhorn, Alicia Hughes and Marvin Leiner.

Guests: Moira Carey and Karen Chang.  
Alicia Hughes acted as secretary of the meeting.

**I.** Craig L. Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. and welcomed the directors.

**II. Minutes.**

Gerald P. Halpern noted a typo in the minutes of the October 18, 2006 meeting. The Executive Committee report will be amended accordingly. There was a motion to waive the formal reading of the minutes. The motion was accepted and carried. The formal vote to accept the minutes was postponed pending quorum. David Herszenhorn made motion to accept the minutes when quorum was reached. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**III. Executive Committee Report.**

a. Staffperson - Mr. Slutzkin reported that the staff person position is still available. Gia Malka is continuing to work toward filling the position. She planned to contact department heads at Queens College in addition to placing ads in local newspapers. Further, Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Board sent an e-mail position announcement to THHS classes of 2005 and 2006 and Queens College; however, there were no responses. The position would entail coordinating dues collections, events/ reunions, website maintenance and related clerical duties. The full job description is posted on the THAA website. The salary is commensurate with experience. The hours are flexible – recommended 15-20 hours per week. Mr. Slutzkin requested recommendations from the Board regarding individuals and/or ideas for filling the position. The Executive Committee is continuing to complete the clerical tasks in the interim.

b. Board Composition - Mr. Slutzkin reported that Lani Muller, (Class of 1989), resigned from the Board effective December 6, 2006. Ms. Muller responded to an e-mail message from Mr. Slutzkin, which yielded a response that she was resigning due to other commitments.

c. Hall of Fame - Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Hall of Fame event was a success. Over 110 people attend and 109 paid. Ticket sales did not recoup overall costs; however, contributions brought the total “profit” to over \$4,000. Mr. Halpern commented that he enjoyed the Hall of Fame and student pictures from the event. Other Board members commented on the success of the event.

d. Admissions/ Student Outreach - Mr. Slutzkin reported that the school open house was held on Monday, November 20. Tanya Odom attended. Mr. Slutzkin was unable to attend. Ms. Odom also visited two junior high schools to help in the school’s recruitment efforts.

e. Website -Mr. Slutzkin reported that the THAA website maintenance will be discussed at the next Board meeting. Currently, Mamoud Rashid maintains the site in India. Recently, he has not been as responsive as desired. The time zone difference also contributes to communication delays.

f. Dues statements were mailed recently. Susan Getting stated that she received her dues statement. Mr. Slutzkin inquired if other Board members received their statements. No one responded affirmatively.

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g. Annual Meeting – Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Executive Committee recommends holding the 2007 Annual Meeting in November instead of June, considering the poor attendance at the June 2006 meeting. David Herszenhorn stated that the Board bylaws mandate that the Annual Meeting is held in June. Mr. Halpern advised the Board that changing the bylaws requires a notification, (example: at the next meeting), regarding the recommended vote to change the Annual Meeting month. Donna Manion plans to coordinate the meeting.

h. Strategy / Long Term Planning – Mr. Slutzkin welcomed Karen Chang (Class of 1994). Ms. Chang works at the law firm of Perlman & Perlman LLP, a national practice which advises not-for-profit organizations. The firm's client list includes the World Trade Center Fund. Ms. Chang reviewed the THAA Board bylaws at the THAA Executive Board's request. Mr. Herszenhorn stated that succession planning would involve recruiting THHS alumni from a resource perspective. Examples include: investment bankers and attorneys to update and tweak bylaws. Designated alumni would not necessarily be elected Board members nor attend meetings; rather the Board would request their assistance as needed – and facilitate discrete arrangements without building around unsustainable arrangements. Mr. Herszenhorn is preparing a planning document, which will invite discussion regarding Board meeting space. Example: Board meetings were formerly held in a nursing home, which worked in prior years. Discussions regarding meeting space would include rotating the location.

**IV. Treasurer's Report. – Craig Slutzkin**

a. Investment Income - Mr. Slutzkin reviewed the highlights from the Treasurer's Report. The fiscal year ended August 31, 2006. Between September 1, 2006 and November 30, 2006, the Association earned \$111,000 of investment income gains from the Alpine Dynamic Balanced Fund, representing an 8.5% gain. In comparison, certificates of deposits averaged a 5% gain.

b. Contributions, Dues and Other Receipts – Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Association received \$20,000 from the Bernstein Philanthropic Foundation for the Hebrew class and \$35,000 from the Nias Foundation for annual scholarships. Mr. Halpern commented on the generous contributions from the Nias Foundation.

c. Expenditures – Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Association had a total of \$43,411 in expenditures during the three month period. The largest expenses included: the Hebrew class, Ted Peck's financial compensation, the quarterly Murray Nathan annuity distribution, the annual contribution to the school's principal's discretionary fund and annual scholarship payouts. Further, Mr. Slutzkin reported the Board's contributions to the school's technology, which included a television studio upgrade and Apple computers.

d. Assets totaled \$1,713,338 as at November 30, 2006.

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e. Allocation of Fund Balances – Mr. Slutzkin inquired if Board members had questions and/or comments regarding the Treasurer’s Report and informed the members that the Finance Committee, (Mr. Merino, Mr. Sigety and Mr. Slutzkin) planned to convene in one to two months to review the Board’s financials. Mr. Herszenhorn inquired when the Board changed to the Alpine Fund. Mr. Cunningham responded that the Alpine change occurred approximately three years ago. Mr. Halpern inquired how much money was invested in certificates of deposit (CDs). Mr. Slutzkin informed the directors that \$150,000 is invested in CDs. Further, Mr. Halpern inquired why the fund allocation was changed to Alpine. Mr. Slutzkin informed the members that concerns regarding the war and a goal of receiving 5%

or more in annual returns, combined with a more aggressive investment strategy influenced the Alpine decision. Mr. Halpern asked Mr. Slutzkin about his thoughts in respect to investing in money market accounts with a 5% return. Mr. Slutzkin responded that the investment strategy aligns a bit of a spread, rather than locking funds for six months. The Alpine fund option is preferred for liquidity/mobility at this time. A 5% return is a real 5% as the Board is not taxed on capital gains.

**V. Events Committee Report. – Craig Slutzkin**

a. Mr. Slutzkin reported that Gia Malka is beginning to coordinate the 2007 reunions. During the past three years, the reunions were held at the same venue (Connolly’s) on the same day. This plan worked in some ways and did not work in others. Further, Mr. Slutzkin reported that Connolly’s expressed some objectives to the current reunion set-up.

b. A bowling event is scheduled at Harlem Lanes on January 5, 2007. Electronic invitations were sent on December 5, 2006. The price is \$35 at the door and \$30 in advance.

c. Eileen Gunn plans to host an alumni-sponsored event related to careers, in connection with the release of her recently published book *Your Career is an Extreme Sport*. She is organizing a career panel. The event location is to be determined and is tentatively scheduled for Monday evening, January 22.

d. Mr. Herszenhorn commented that Donna Manion is coordinating the next lawyers event, which was very successful last time. He continued by stating that the prior event was held at the law office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom LLP, generously hosted by THHS alum, Mr. Joseph Flom. The Board may hold the next lawyers event at the law firm and hopes that Mr. Flom’s schedule will permit him to attend. Mr. Flom was not able to attend the previous event; however, he provided the venue at no cost to the Alumni Association. Mr. Slutzkin stated that lawyers are the most prevalent profession among THHS alumni.

e. Mr. Slutzkin informed the Board and guests of the following [additional] upcoming events: THHS Art Show (January 8, 2007); THHS Winter Concert (January 11, 2007); Career Event (January 22, 2007) and THHS SING! Competition (February 1, 2 and 3, 2007).

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**VI. School Relations Reports**

**School Report – Mr. Cunningham**

a. Mr. Cunningham requested the Board's financial support for the school's lighting and sound upgrade. He reported that the main lights do not work properly and the system was manufactured in England with no obligation for repair. A dealer in California quoted \$7,000 to \$10,000 to replace the malfunctioning equipment. Mr. Cunningham requested approval to fix the problem with the Alumni Association's funds. The approval was granted.

b. The Winter Concert date changed to January 11, 2007. Mr. Slutzkin responded that the date change is already reflected in the Board package school calendar.

c. SING! will be held on February 1, 2 and 3, 2007, a change from the previously anticipated January event. THHS alumni are always invited to participate as judges.

d. School Quality Review – Mr. Cunningham reported that every school is undergoing a quality review. He presented the school's review report to the members and read highlights, including expectations and recommendations. Mr. Cunningham will provide a copy of the report for the Board's review. Mr. Halpern inquired what the acronym CEP represented. Mr. Cunningham responded that CEP represents Comprehensive Education Plan, which every school is required to produce every year.

e. Queens College Contract – The school finally has the Queens College Contract approved for the next five years. The contract includes free college credits; two per semester including the humanities seminar.

f. Festival of Nations – Mr. Cunningham reported that the Festival of Nations is underway. One culture teaches another culture about their traditions. The festival is scheduled for two nights this year.

g. Regents Statistics – Mr. Cunningham reported that the Regents Statistics were received from New York State. Quality review limitations include the fact that the highest achievable score is 100 percent. English Language Arts exam results: 93 to 94% of THHS students scored between 85 to 100 points. Mr. Cunningham reported that students are thriving and meeting goals. Further, he reported that most students are also happy.

h. Open House – Mr. Slutzkin inquired regarding the number of attendees at the high school's open house. Mr. Cunningham reported that 1,500 people attended. Mr. Halpern inquired how the attendance compared to last year's open house. Mr. Cunningham responded that the school had an informal count last year and parents helped with coordinating the event.

i. Applications – Mr. Cunningham reported that the school received greater than 3,500 applications and expects to receive a total of 7,000. The application deadline is December 2006.

**School Report – Susan Getting**

a. Ms. Getting reported that the school is "one of community" this year. The Humanities Department is involved in the moot court; they are working on mock trial and the debate team earned first place in a competition with Brooklyn Polytechnic Preparatory – a private school.

b. Pre-Thanksgiving Vacation School Visit – The school usually welcomes 25 recent visiting alumni the day before the Thanksgiving vacation. However, in November 2006, Ms. Getting estimated that more than 40 alumni visited that day. The school security and Mr. Cunningham confirmed that 110 alumni visited. Some visitors were college freshman; others graduated two to three years ago; one student graduated six years ago and alum is a third year medical student at Columbia Medical School. The November visit was very successful. Mr. Cunningham responded that a mentor program is underway for current students.

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c. Mr. Herszenhorn commented that the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is traditionally the school's yearbook distribution date. Given the high response, he recommended an organized event on that day expanded to an after school get-together. Ms. Casey commented that that Wednesday is also a time for Juniors and Seniors to talk with first and second year college students. Mr. Cunningham commented that the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is also a travel day for many people. Mr. Halpern inquired regarding the possibility of planning an organized event on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, rather than Wednesday.

d. Production Studio - The school is in better shape than they thought they were, regarding the studio upgrade program. The school has a quality piece of equipment and a studio service company informed the school that some things are okay. Example: three cameras are working. The school needs a second bid to proceed with some of the necessary work. The studio is used in part for history days - documentaries.

e. New Computers - The new Apple Macintosh computers in the school make editing easier. Students are very happy with the computer screen and the new technology.

f. West Side Story Play - The school is preparing for a fully staged production of West Side Story. Mr. Halpern commented regarding the contract signing for the rights to West Side Story. Ms. Getting confirmed that everything is done, including royalty arrangements and a signed contract. The play is scheduled for performances in April, though the actual dates are to be determined.

**PTA Report - Maria Becce**

a. Ms. Becce introduced Moira Casey as the new PTA co-representative to the Board. Ms. Casey's daughter is a freshman at THHS. Ms. Becce commented that her son is a senior and she is assisting Ms. Casey during the transition period. Further, she reported that the PTA is strong this year and all positions are filled. The next PTA Board meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2006.

b. Phone-a-thon - Ms. Getting commented that the PTA did a "perfect job" with the phone-a-thon. Ms. Becce informed the Board that the PTA will present more concrete information regarding actual verses projected numbers at the next Board meeting.

c. Hall of Fame - Ms. Becce commented that she had a "wonderful time" at the Hall of Fame, and wanted to express her appreciation to the Board. Ms. Casey also commented that she and her mother enjoyed the Hall of Fame event, and they did not know the distinguished history until they read the list of Hall of Fame members. Mr. Halpern, (2006 Hall of Fame inductee), commented that he attended Townsend Harris for one year before it closed and his father was also a Townsend Harris graduate.

d. DNA Lab Funding - Mr. Cunningham commented that the PTA sponsored \$15,000 toward the funding of a sophisticated DNA lab.

e. PTA Brunch - Mr. Slutzkin commented regarding the PTA brunches held in the past, and inquired if the PTA planned to have the brunch during this academic year. Ms. Becce responded that the brunch is a possibility. Mr. Slutzkin commented regarding the challenge of getting people to attend the brunch. Mr. Cunningham stated that Advanced Placement (AP) examinations and SAT examination periods have lower attendance for school sponsored events. Ms. Becce inquired if the Board was open to suggestions. Mr. Slutzkin confirmed that the Board is open to suggestions for improving the event.

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**VII. New Business – Craig Slutzkin**

a. Ted Peck – Mr. Slutzkin reported that the Board needs to discuss next steps regarding Mr. Peck's active coordination of Board events, fundraising, his long term goals and his current stipend. Mr. Peck reached out to Mr. Herszenhorn, Ms. Odom and Mr. Slutzkin, and proposed a retirement party in his honor in approximately one year. Currently, Mr. Peck receives a \$12,000 stipend for his contributions to the Board's events and fundraising. Examples include: The Hall of Fame, Centennial and the Townsend Harris Forever! Fund. Mr. Peck inquired if a fundraiser and/or donations are a possibility for partial funding for his retirement celebration. There is a dilemma regarding hosting a closing/retirement party for Mr. Peck and asking for assistance from donors. Further, Mr. Slutzkin and Mr. Herszenhorn raised the question of what actions to take, if any, regarding Mr. Peck's stipend, which he has received for 13 years. The issue was further discussed and tabled.

There being no other business, the Board adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alicia Hughes



## Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

149-11 Melbourne Avenue Flushing, New York 11367

Voice Mailbox: 718-793-0441 Home Page: [www.thaa.org](http://www.thaa.org)

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Executive Committee has had several informal discussions. Among the topics discussed were:

- I. Admin/Staffing. David Herszenhorn, Tayna Odom and Craig Slutzkin interviewed five faculty members at the high school who applied for the staffperson position for the Association. Among the interviewees were two alumni who are now science teachers at the high school. We believe we have narrowed down the field to one person and will discuss further at the Board meeting.
- II. Board Composition. At the recent Lawyer's Professional Networking Event, we identified several individuals who expressed interest in becoming more involved in the Association's activities. Though they were unable to come to the March board meeting, we are hopeful that they will come to future meetings.
- III. Website. Craig Slutzkin and Julie Chan have been exploring web design companies in order to have a re-tooling of the Association's database and website. The Executive Committee has been looking at various companies that Mr. Slutzkin and Ms. Chan have found. The goal is to make a decision over the next few weeks and immediately start work, with the hope of having a new website during the middle of the year.
- IV. Grand Reunion. Ted Peck is coordinating a reunion for Friday, May 25 for any member of the original school. The event will be a breakfast and will be held at Baruch.
- V. Annual Meeting. In light of the poor attendance at the 2006 annual meeting, we would like to start the planning for this years' meeting in the Fall. Donna Manion is coordinating.
- VI. Florida. Tanya Odom and Donna Manion attended the annual luncheon in Boca in January which is held by the Florida Chapter. They were well received by the membership there. They are hoping to have an event in April in Florida as well (see Events Committee report).



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## EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

The following events have recently occurred:

- Career Planning Event (Eileen Gunn)
- Lawyer's Professional Networking Event

The following events have been scheduled:

- Class of 1988 Gathering/Florida Brunch – Saturday/Sunday, April 28-29
- Original THHS Reunion – Friday, May 25
- Classes of 1992, 1997 and 2002 Reunion – Saturday, June 9

The following events are in planning but have not been scheduled:

- FIRE Professionals Networking Event
- Educators' Event
- Annual Meeting