

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on November 25, 2008)
October 8, 2008**

Location: New Leaf Venture Partners, New York, NY

The following directors were present and constituted the quorum: Julie Chan, Susan Getting, Shari Gruber, David Herszenhorn (by phone), Gerald P. Halpern, Marvin Leiner, Donna Manion, Norman Merino, Tanya M. Odom and Craig Slutzkin

Guests: Kenneth Bonamo, Karen Chang, Rishona Fleishman, Betty Merino, Ida Messana, Margherita Wischerth and Vincent Yuen.

- I. Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. and welcomed the directors and the newcomers.
- II. Mr. Slutzkin stated that the reading and approval of the minutes from the June 3 meeting would be deferred until the next Board meeting.
- III. Executive Committee Report. Mr. Slutzkin and Tanya M. Odom reported on the following:
 - a. Principal. Mr. Slutzkin introduced Ken Bonamo, the new principal of the high school. Mr. Slutzkin explained that Mr. Bonamo spent this past summer transitioning with outgoing principal Tom Cunningham. Mr. Slutzkin stated that the Board is very much in sync with Mr. Bonamo's plans for the school.
 - b. Dues. The dues statements will be going out in a few weeks.
 - c. Scholarships. Mr. Slutzkin is working out the details for a scholarship which would target a Townsend Harris senior who continues his or her studies at Queens College. A recent graduate came up with this idea.
 - d. Alumni / Faculty Breakfast. Ms. Odom and Mr. Slutzkin went to the school to meet with teachers and students. This visit reinforced the notion that the alumni association needs more communication to the students. The question was raised as to how we could make our database of alums available to teachers.
 - e. Founders' Day. Founders' Day will be held on October 24. For the format, the school will be going back to a model for the day that was used several years ago.
 - f. Student Relations. We should go to the Freshman class and speak to them about the relevancy of the history of the school .
 - g. Alumni Outreach. Announcements are being posted on Facebook and LinkedIn. We are trying to move into that space. Both Ms. Odom and Julie Chan have been organizing this.
 - h. School Staffing. Namita Dwarka, Assistant Principal of Organization, was excessed due to budget cuts. Ellen Fee, Assistant Principal of Mathematics, has once again agreed to do double duty and serve as both Assistant Principal of Mathematics and Assistant Principal of Organization.

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October 8, 2008 (continued)**

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i. Events:

1. Ms. Chan is interested in planning an event before Thanksgiving.
2. Reunions. The five, ten and fifteen year reunions were successfully held at the Knitting Factory. The air conditioning at the Knitting Factory was not working during the reunions, but it should be fixed next year. The class of '88 held its 20th year reunion at Café Centro; Ms. Odom stated that it was reasonably successful. Ms. Chan added that different people came to this event. Ms. Odom said that members of the class are planning mini-reunions on their own.
3. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting will be held on October 18 at Hunter College. Ms. Odom gave a brief history of the Annual Meetings for the benefit of the newcomers. This year the Board will be bringing current high school seniors to the meeting to showcase the Election Simulation. DVDs that were produced in the TV studio will also be shown. The introduction of Mr. Bonamo will also be a highlight.
4. Freshman Breakfast. Ms. Chan attended the Freshman Breakfast. She enjoyed the event.

IV. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Slutzkin gave a brief history of our fundraising. He explained the two main fundraising campaigns: THETA and the *Townsend Harris Forever!* campaign.

- a. Sue Getting stated that Mr. Polonsky has shown interest in donating funds towards a Mandarin program.
- b. Gerald Halpern suggested that the Association gets the Winston Foundation involved to bolster the relationship.
- c. Mr. Slutzkin stated that all of the annual scholarship recipients -- except one -- have received their money.

Ms. Odom made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Mr. Halpern and it passed unanimously.

V. Nominating Committee Report: The Nominating Committee will present its report at the Annual Meeting at Hunter College. All business will be covered as required by the Association's by-laws.

- a. Mr. Halpern is looking for a third person to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- b. Mr. Slutzkin called a vote to accept the amended Nominating Committee Report which passed unanimously. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes.
- c. Mr. Halpern suggested that we send letters of appreciation to all the departing members of the Board.

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- VI. School Report: Mr. Bonamo was formally introduced and shared his thoughts on the future of the school with the group.
- a. School Curriculum. Mr. Bonamo said the school should strengthen its interdisciplinary connections and advanced reading comprehension.
 - b. School Budget. Mr. Bonamo said that the school is facing a 2.5% budget cut this year and a 5% budget cut next year. Additional state cuts are expected.
 - c. Principal Search. David Herszenhorn asked how Mr. Bonamo became aware of the Principal search. Mr. Bonamo said that he would not have been aware of the search had there not been an email sent out about the position. (This was the email that the joint Alumni/Faculty/PTA Committee disseminated to select individuals out about the position.)
 - d. Diversity. Mr. Bonamo noted that he was planning to look into why minority males in Math B are not doing well. Ms. Odom said that the partnership piece is there, and we can work together on this issue. Shari Gruber stated that this would be a good time to focus on diversity issues and outreach. Black and Latino students are adversely affected if you go to a system where entrance to the school is determined by one standardized test.
 - e. Data Analysis. Sue Getting has agreed to take on the role of data specialist. Though she is highly skilled and quite gracious to do this, this is not optimal because it would be preferable to have her be on the Election Simulation.
 - f. School Applications. Applications are due in November to apply for admission next year. Discussion ensued about minority outreach. Mr. Herszenhorn noted that the Department of Education is pushing the preparatory programs for the standardized test. This creates a numbers game where you need to compete at the moment of Round One of admissions.
- VII. Website. Ms. Chan and Mr. Slutzkin are working on the website.
- VIII. New Business.
- a. Board meeting venues for future meetings was discussed.
 - b. An invitation was extended to Mr. Bonamo for him to attend the Florida meeting.

There being no other business the Board adjourned at 9:00 P.M.. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for November 25, 2008 at 7 P.M. at New Leaf Venture Partners.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Manion