

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (approved)
December 16, 2009
Location: Telephonic

The following directors were present and constituted the quorum: Sydney Butts, Ken Bonamo, Julie Chan (by phone), Karen Chang, Shari Gruber, Gerald Halpern, David Herszenhorn (by phone), Malcolm Largmann, Selina Lee (by phone), Jordan Leeds, Marvin Leiner, Donna Manion, Tanya Odom, Craig Slutzkin and Vincent Yuen.

Guest: Peter Silverman

- I. Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:20 P.M. and welcomed the directors. He also thanked Vincent Yuen for hosting the meeting.
- II. Mr. Slutzkin asked the directors to review the minutes from the November 10, 2009 meeting. He entered a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and accept them as submitted, which carried unanimously.
- III. Executive Committee Report. Mr. Slutzkin reported on the following:
 - a. Dues statements have been mailed.
 - b. Students may lose their Metrocards due to budget cuts.
 - c. Charles Sigety promised the Association \$10,000 for the development of the College Office if we can match it. We have collected \$3,000 so far. The Association is continuing its fundraising efforts.
 - d. The Annual Meeting went very well. Mr. Slutzkin thanked Tanya Odom and Margherita Wischerth for all of their work organizing the event.
 - e. We are looking for a new Secretary. Donna Manion explained that it is a great way to get involved with the Executive Committee.
 - f. The new Slate of Officers was submitted for review to the Board by Mr. Slutzkin. Gerald Halpern made a motion to accept, which was seconded by Karen Chang. The motion passed unanimously.
 - g. An event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the re-opening of the school is being planned. Many ideas were discussed, including:
 1. What sort of event are we looking to provide? Formal or informal? Buffet or sit-down dinner? Expensive or inexpensive? In Manhattan, at the School, or elsewhere?
 2. Are we going to provide an event that is family/child friendly? There is a thought to have some sort of event at the school with activities for kids. It was suggested that we could work with Archon to plan such an event.
 3. Malcolm Largmann shared that his impression is that everything we do this year should involve celebrating the 25th anniversary. Dr. Largmann expressed that the school has a responsibility to capture the imagination of the faculty and the students, and should provide opportunities for this important anniversary to be celebrated.
 4. The Board discussed how we could create a woven, consistent message at the school about the anniversary. Sydney Butts suggested that we could create an oral history, perhaps on video, to capture some of the history of the school.
 5. Tanya Odom suggested that we keep talking about this in the coming weeks.

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- IV. Events Committee Report.
 - a. An event for business professionals will be held in January or February.
 - b. A cultural event will be held at the New York Historical Society on February 26th in the evening.
 - c. Vincent Yuen is working on coordinating the reunions.

- V. Treasurer's Report.
 - a. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed the report. He asked us to keep in mind that we are looking for potential funders.
 - b. Shari Gruber suggested that we revisit the idea of putting together fundraising materials.
 - d. Ken Bonamo asked if we could work with the Queens College grant writer in preparing such materials. Marvin Leiner said he would look in to this.
 - e. It was suggested that we hold an event where we bring together folks who are involved in grant writing.

- VI. School Report: Delivered by Principal Ken Bonamo.
 - a. Mr. Bonamo added his congratulations to the Board for a wonderful Annual Meeting.
 - b. The school is facing additional budget cuts. There is a pending citywide cut of 1.5% and the Governor is holding back money.
 - c. If there is a cut of more than \$21,000, then Mr. Bonamo needs to look at staff cuts. However, the UFT has a no lay-off clause, so he is stuck between a hard and a hard place.
 - d. The school moved up to number 33 in the US News rankings. Mr. Bonamo explained that while he is very proud of this, the ranking system is complex, and we may or may not come out similarly situated next year.
 - 1. It seems to be a good thing to be on the list -- and high on it -- with regard to our communication to the 19,000 students in the 8th grade who may be considering THHS.
 - 2. Pete Silverman asked if colleges look at the rankings and then determine how many students from each school they wish to accept. Mr. Bonamo said the college counselor would know this, and he would get back to us.
 - 3. The Association sends teachers to AP training classes, and this helps us with our ranking. Mr. Bonamo thanked us for that.
 - 4. Mr. Bonamo is going to have all of the students take the AP English exam because it is a no penalty exam, and his hypothesis is that the students will do well -- boosting our ranking.
 - e. The Russian Literature class is going very well.
 - f. A student trivia night program is taking place next week, and Mr. Bonamo is participating.
 - g. Mr. Bonamo reported that creating a diverse class is still a priority, and difficult to do. Students have more choices of where to go. There are thoughts of doing targeted recruitment in order to be competitive in the market. However, it would cost \$10,000 to send teachers to school fairs at night to do this type of recruitment, and he does not have the money.

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1. Mr. Bonamo commented that our admissions process has served us well, and we are not looking to move towards the specialized High School exam system.
 2. David Herszenhorn made the point that it is Queens students who make the most use of the public schools.
 3. Sydney Butts mentioned Prep for Prep programs, and asked how they identify students?
- h. Mr. Bonamo visited the new Frank Sinatra High School, and is happy that schools are sharing ideas.
1. This led to a suggestion from Gerald Halpern; he would like to take students to classical music concerts.

VII. PTA report.

- a. Jordan Leeds reposted that the PTA is on a very straight track to be back where it should be, especially in terms of fundraising. The PTA raised \$37,000 during the recent phone-a-thon (the goal had been \$40,000).
- b. Princeton and Kaplan Test Prep programs will be present in the School, and offering courses at a reduced rate.
- c. The PTA is looking for more parents to be involved.

VIII. Other Business. There was no other business.

There being no other business the Board adjourned at 9:30 P.M. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for March 4th, 2010 at 7 P.M. at New Leaf Venture Partners.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Manion