

**Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on June 7, 2011)**

**March 18, 2011**

**Location: New Leaf Venture Partners, 7 Times Square, New York, NY 10036**

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Kenneth Bonamo, Sydney Butts, Susan Getting, Melissa Gibilaro, Shari Gruber, Gerald P. Halpern, David Herszenhorn (by phone), Selina Lee, Donna Manion, Tanya Odom, Craig L. Slutzkin, Dr. Malcolm G. Largmann, Jordan Leeds, Karen Wu, and Vincent Yuen (by phone).

Karen Wu acted as Secretary of the meeting.

- I. Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:10pm and welcomed the directors.
- II. Mr. Slutzkin opened the meeting by requesting that the board have a moment of silence in honor of the passing of Joseph Flom '40. Mr. Slutzkin noted that Mr. Flom continues to support student college scholarships given through THAA.
- III. **Nominating Committee Report.** The Nominating Committee recommended the election of Karen Wu as Secretary. Dr. Largmann motioned to accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee; Gerald Halperin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously elected Ms. Wu as Secretary as per the recommendation of the Nominating Committee. Mr. Slutzkin also simultaneously accepted the resignation of David Herszenhorn as Secretary and thanked him for his service.

IV. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.**

- A. Mr. Slutzkin asked the Board for any questions or comments regarding the December 7, 2010 board meeting minutes. Melissa Gibilaro moved to accept the December 7<sup>th</sup> board meeting minutes; Sidney Butts seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes. Gerald Halperin and Karen Wu abstained, having been absent from the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - B. Mr. Slutzkin stated that approval of the minutes of the May 19, 2010 board meeting minutes were not completed and hoped to receive them from Mr. Herszenorn prior to the next board meeting.
- V. **Executive Committee Report.** The Executive Committee highlighted a few topics of interest to the Board.

- A. **Alumni Book Corner.** Mr. Slutzkin noted that there is still room for more publications written by THHS alumni, and that the board is actively trying to add more books to this section of the school library.
- B. **Succession planning.** The executive committee continues to consider the importance of succession planning, particularly as Ms. Odom and Ms. Slutzkin have held positions as President for many years. Steps include adding more diverse board members to the Executive Committee, which was recently done. They are also looking for more people to become involved in different committees to run events and lead other activities.

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- C. Staffing. The Executive Committee is continuing to evaluate whether THAA has the right resources available to accomplish all of the tasks needed to support the Board. They acknowledged that Marguerita Wischerth has taken a greater role in organizing several recent events, and has been a great help with them.

**VI. Events Committee Report**. Selina Lee reported on a number of different events that recently took place or that are coming up soon.

- A. D.C. Mixer. The mixer, organized by Jin Pak, was a success. Various THHS alumni classes were represented, and many expressed interested in doing other events besides a Happy Hour, such as a family event.
- B. Florida reunion. It was reported that the reunion went well.
- C. Philanthropy and Public Service Networking Event. Ms. Wu and Ms. Gruber, who co-organized the event, reported that the turnout was excellent, between 30 - 40 individuals came out. The crowd was very diverse, and lots of networking occurred. Mr. Scardino was credited for bringing out a lot of the younger alumni. One attendee suggested doing a volunteer event that would allow alumni and students to get to know one another as well. The board discussed how to engage individuals who expressed interest in being more active in THAA, including responding to THAA emails soliciting volunteers, offering ideas, and attending THAA board meetings.
- D. Class Reunions. Vincent Yuen reported that the '06 five year reunion and the '01 10 year reunion would be rolled up into a single event held on June 25<sup>th</sup>. So far, a member of the Class of 2001 has not yet volunteered to help coordinate the reunion. Mr. Yuen noted that certain members of the Class of 1996 have taken a more active role in planning their reunion, and were aiming to hold a separate event in September. Concerns were raised about the ability of teachers to turn out for multiple separate reunion events.
- E. Possible networking event. Mr. Yuen also noted that a wine tasting event could be held on April 18<sup>th</sup> as a networking event, and would be \$45 per person.
- F. Family baseball game event. Mr. Yuen also looked into coordinating a minor league baseball game event for families, either a Brooklyn Cyclones or Staten Island Yankees game sometime in the summer. Mr. Yuen will follow up on details and options.

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- G. Respect For All Event. Ms. Odom reported that this event was extremely successful at the school. Two assembly sessions were held including panels of speakers sharing about their experiences with bullying in school. Follow-up meetings were held in the library afterwards. Ms. Odom reported that many alumni expressed how proud they were that their alma mater had put together such an event. Students also told Mr. Bonamo how glad they were to have such a program. A follow-up video project is in the works for this summer. There were also discussions about a possible YouTube Channel where videos could be uploaded. Concerns were raised about whether we would be required to monitor/filter the page if it were linked to our THAA website.
- H. Family Event. Selina Lee reported that the family event was rescheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup> due to inclement weather on the initially scheduled date. Everything is ready to go.
- I. Healthapalooza. Ms. Lee reported that Gia Malka is leading this event. Selina Lee, Gia Malka, Christina Juva, and Lina Lam are part of the organizing committee. There will be various activities and health stations, and information will be available that benefits persons of a broad age range, including faculty, family members of alumni, and others. Sue Getting suggested that student's research work would be appropriate to include in the Health Fair. We are also looking to make this a fundraising event to benefit THHS athletics.
- J. Homecoming. A 70 year anniversary homecoming event is being developed for all members of the original school. All members of the original school will be invited back to the new school on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Paper invitations are being disseminated. A video project about the original Townsend Harris and its reopening is underway. Videographer alum Jesse Ashe is helping guide that project and will help videotape some of the alumni at this event using the TV studio at the school.
- K. Career Day. This is coming up on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**VII. Treasurer's Report.**

- A. Craig Slutzkin reported on changes in the organization's assets, amounts collected in membership dues, and recent expenditures. The investment portfolio has increased significantly since the beginning of the fiscal year.
- B. Mr. Slutzkin also reported that many students have used the new website to pay their membership dues, and encouraged all the board members to do the same.

**VIII. School Report. Principal Bonamo reported on various recent events.**

- A. Mr. Bonamo reported that there were gas leaks at the school in December. During the second reported incident, the school had to be evacuated. The evacuation exercise was successful, due to an excellent building response team. The leak was found outside the school, and has been fixed.

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- B. Mr. Bonamo reported that uniform finals are being implemented in all courses. Every course gives the same final regardless of the teacher. Teachers collaborate to write up the exams. The tests are aligned with the respective Regents or AP exams.
- C. The library is a highly used resource and Mr. Bonamo thanked the THAA board for helping to fund the opening of the library for an extra hour Mondays through Thursdays. He noted that the students have been taking advantage of the extra hour.
- D. Mr. Bonamo noted that the benches in the lobby and the new entry desk have made the lobby a much more welcoming area, thanks to the Class of 1991 and other classes that helped fund the benches.
- E. The Open House for recently admitted students was very successful. It allows us to compete better with the specialized schools. We invited fewer students, and more attended this year. The school has benefited from a lot of positive press in the last couple of years. The PTA was very supportive of this event.
- F. Susan Getting reported on numerous competitions that our students have participated in, and have won numerous awards and acknowledgments. She noted that there is great excitement about the upcoming student play, a modern treatment of Much Ado About Nothing. She acknowledged THAA's support of the AP latin competition.
- G. Mr. Bonamo noted that he expects further budget cuts next year, and that the school is making various efforts to minimize the impact by using special techniques to obtain funding sources to close the gaps.
- H. Mr. Bonamo noted the school's efforts to increase opportunities for students to take more AP courses. He noted that informal reviews have shown that the number of students doing well in AP courses stays steady as the number of students participating in AP courses rises,.
- I. The school entered the Race to the Top Commencement Challenge by entering a video demonstrating why our school should have the honor of having President Obama come to speak at commencement.

**IX. PTA Report.**

- A. The PTA is continuing its work. Administrative issues include comparing their new bylaws with the A660 education department regulations. Fundraising efforts continue. They PTA has raised nearly \$75,000 to support the school.

**X. Other business.**

- A. David Herszenhorn reported that the New York Times will be sending him to Moscow in the near future to cover issues in Eurasia.

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- B. Mr. Bonamo reported that Janet Solomen would be retiring soon, and that the school was looking for a successor.
  
- C. Craig Slutzkin moved to formally express the Board's support to Mr. Bonamo's tenure as Principal of Townsend Harris; the motion was seconded by Mr. Halperin, and was unanimously agreed to.

XI. The next meeting will be held on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

XII. The board meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wu