

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved January 26, 2016)

December 2, 2015

Location: New Leaf Partners, 7 Times Square, New York, New York 10036

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Anthony Barbetta, Jomaire A. Crawford, Ethan Felder, Shari Gruber, Dr. Malcolm Largmann, Kimberly Lo, Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Kimberly Eaton, Michael L. Rosen, Craig L. Slutzkin, Lara Traum, Vincent Yuen. Also in attendance were Michael Byc, Aquib Yacoob. Franco Scardino, Ben Fung.

- I. Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM and welcomed the directors and other attendees. Because we had new people in attendance, brief introductions were shared.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the September 29, 2015 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Anthony Barbetta and seconded by Vincent Yuen. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Nomination Committee Report.**
 - A. The following directors were nominated for Executive Board positions.
 1. Co-Presidents: Selina W. Lee and Craig L. Slutzkin
 2. Vice Presidents: Kimberly Lo and Ethan Felder
 3. Secretary: Debra Michlewitz
 4. Treasurer: Craig L. Slutzkin
 - B. A motion was made by Craig Slutzkin to accept the nominations and was seconded by Vincent Yuen. Motion was passed unanimously.
- IV. **Brief Notes about the Annual Meeting.**
 - A. There are changes in the Board of Directors. Rishona Fleishmann just had a baby and stepped down from the board for the near future. Jonathan Kamler's work responsibilities led him to step down. Tanya M. Odom, who served since 1988, most of those years as an officer, also stepped aside though she is available to advise and consult. Jordan Leeds, the former PTA Liaison, left the board after his second daughter was graduated in June.
 - B. Michael Rosen joined us as PTA Liaison; Ben Fung will be joining us on an ongoing basis.
- V. **Executive Committee Report.** Craig Slutzkin reviewed the following activities. A summary was distributed.
 - A. The Dues Collection cycle has begun. We hope to eclipse the collections of last year. Paper bills follow the online bills which have not been paid.
 - B. Video Project continues. Three original faculty members are still unrecorded: Odile Garcia, Valerie Billy, and Arthur Boulanger.
 - C. The combination of administrators Margherita Wischerth and Gia Malka is successfully working.
 - D. We remedied the glitches in the website and only one person had difficulty paying dues online. Difficulty stemmed from our commitment to our members' privacy.
 - E. The development of a formal THAA Mentoring Process and Program will be spearheaded by VP Ethan Felder. This addresses suggestions made at our last meeting by Michael Benjamin and Gail Goldspiel. A special effort will be made to connect with students during their college years.

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- F. Parents can also enter the THHA database to pay dues. It was noted that former PTA President Rita Joseph still pays her dues. Dr. Largmann spoke about the Josephs and their enormous contribution to our efforts to get our building constructed in the 1990s.
- G. Our Queens College / DOE contract is up for renewal. Queens College wants to meet with the THAA to enlist our help in the process. Queens College officials invited our board president to a meeting about details of the new contract.
- H. Craig Slutzkin will be taking a leave of absence from the board because he will be a new father this Spring.

VI. **School Report Principal.** Principal Anthony Barbetta reviewed a variety of issues and activities.

- A. The application process for the renewal of the Queens College / DOE contract has motivated negotiations about significant details. Process is about 90% complete.
 - 1. QC wants greater compensation from the DOE for the 1.2 million dollars that they forgive for THHS students' tuition, actually doubling the DOE contribution. There is a new cast of players on both sides with tough financial agendas. There is a new DOE position of grant manager specifically assigned to our negotiation. There is a new Provost. The principal has had good dialogue Dean Michael.
 - 2. Strategic suggestions were offered. Board Members cited the need to acquaint the new provost with the history of the collaboration and its many outstanding successes. Enlisting the help of retired Queens College President and THHS alumnus Saul Cohen was considered. There is a place and possibility for PTA involvement
 - 3. Contract deals with the complete and partial funding of tuition, a part time music teacher, the school play, school publications, a writing fellow, the election simulation, et al.
 - 4. Several questions were posed. How many THHS students stay at CUNY? At Queens College? The HS has certainly been a benefit for CUNY and those facts should be part of our case to maintain funding at the current level. The QC Office of Honors and Scholarship can document that THHS alums attend and succeed and benefit the Queens College profile.
 - 5. Historically, the renewal process has been similarly tense but ultimately successful.
- B. 3600 students attended our Open House. We'll know how many students accepted THHS in a couple of months. This is a record number.
- C. The College Tour Trip was led by Mr. Scardino and garnered \$3500 profit for the PTA. Students visited 6 schools in 2 ½ days.

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- D. Other key moments have marked the school calendar. The Election Simulation ended with Clinton and Bush nominations. 10th grade Certamen Team finished in 10th place and the 11th grade finished in 9th place. Science Olympiad team is preparing for February competition. Robotics, as demonstrated at the Annual meeting, is well on its way to compete this year. 200 alumni returned the day before Thanksgiving. Business Insider named THHS the #25 school in the USA though their criteria seems a bit shaky. Questbridge, which awards a fully funded 4 year college education based on need, selected 3 THHS students. Students will be attending Columbia and Princeton.
- E. Dr. Largmann suggested counseling and preparation for our students who will experience activist college environments.
- F. In the context of the Principal's Report, Ethan Felder asked Franco Scardino, the school's UFT chapter leader, about teachers' concerns about budget issues, staffing decisions, and the school course of study. Mr. Scardino cited the plan to continue to discuss with the principal, for the peace of mind of staff, departed staff who haven't been replaced as cost saving strategies. Teachers want to preserve the traditions of the school including offering classical languages, clubs and enrichment activities, and a rich research course of study. College representatives who met with students on the College Tour, unanimously said that elite schools look for students who have done research in HS. Teachers want to be part of solutions.
- G. This year's group of Special Needs Students are doing well, better than last year's group. One is struggling. They work hard. Six remain from last year. For next year, the DOE requested 30 admissions. The Principal tries to select students who can succeed, an argument he recurrently makes to the DOE.
- H. The DOE funds our Japanese program. The Japanese teacher, Ms. Sato, has three classes and also teaches music. The Music program has expanded to include Mr. Lustig's Band program and Mr. Jason Lee's new Strings Program.

VII. PTA Report. PTA Liaison Michael Rosen reviewed PTA activities and goals.

- A. Fund raising continues to be a challenge. By last PTA meeting, \$29,000, 49% of goal, was raised. The PTA sponsored the College Tour as a fundraiser. Brochures are created and distributed at events to raise the PTA's profile. Phonathan is on its way. The PTA markets THHS Products such as magnets, pens, and t-shirts. PTA Presidents attended a "best practices" in PTA Fundraising workshop provided by the Borough President.
- B. As part of a broader strategy to attract new participants, the PTA seeks to bolster attendance at meeting. Guest Speakers have been successful in augmenting attendance. Topics have been Disaster Preparedness and College Readiness. The next meeting 12/17
- C. The PTA gratefully acknowledges Selina Lee's participation in the SLT and the alumnae who spoke at Founders Day.

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VIII. Development Committee

- A. Kimberly Eaton maintains that effective fund raising requires a group effort not just a committee.
- B. We spent a significant amount of time in groups with assigned brainstorming goals. One listed 5 to 10 things that the school needs now in a \$2,000 - \$50,000 range. Others listed alums who have expertise in publicity, marketing, newsletter publishing and those who can contribute. A third category considered alums with possible access to a wealthy community.
- C. The process requires small steps. After names were offered, Ms Eaton asked us to try to call and make contact with any prospective contributors of time or funding.
- D. Ms. Eaton will summarize everyone's "next steps".

IX. Events Committee Report

- A. Vincent Yuen reported that the 1990 reunion occurred during the past weekend and referenced the upcoming 1995 reunion.
- B. The Committee hopes to repeat the successful Doctor Networking event encouraged by Dr. Reiter.
- C. A Chinese New Year event is in the planning stage.
- D. The committee continues to seek to design events would attract young alumni. The list includes Happy Hours and Mentoring opportunities. Kim Lo and Selina Lee are planning a Volunteer Event, in the spirit of last year's Soup Kitchen event, at the New York Botanical Gardens. They are connecting with Sara Oberlander at the school who is the current Archon advisor. Other ideas are welcome.

- X. Young Alumni Events.** Kimberly Lo continued the conversation begun during the Events Committee discussion. It's necessary to be mindful that recent grads are not over 21 precluding their attending bar events. A Bowling Event was suggested.

- XI. Membership Committee.** Shari Gruber noted that the work is now moving forward.

- XII. Treasurer's Report.** Craig Slutzkin reviewed the report, offering details and annotations.

- A. Contributions include proceeds from the dues cycle which commenced during the summer with the automatic contribution of 2015 graduates and the annual \$25000 Nias Scholarship.
- B. Expenditures include the Principal's Discretionary Fund. THAA funds the Principal's Legislative Breakfast and Parents Breakfast.
- C. Printed Dues statements are only sent to alumni who have not paid online, saving on Postage Costs.
- D. Dues are not tax deductible but additional contributions are. We will highlight this in the future. Targeted fundraising campaigns might be piggybacked on the email's database.

- XIII. New Business.** Michael Byc's suggestion of our marketing a School Tie prompted a discussion about the design of other possible items.

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There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz,
Secretary