

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on September 19, 2017)

May 17, 2017

Location: New Leaf Venture Partners, 7 Times Square, Suite 3502, New York, New York 10036

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Jesse Ash, Michael Byc, Ben Fung, Shari Gruber, Gerald P. Halpern (*Honorary Director*), Dr. Malcolm G. Largmann, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberly Lo, Debra Michlewitz, Michael Rosen, Gary Mellow, Nily Rozic and Craig L. Slutzkin.

Guests: Monika Bialokur, Brian Condon (Principal), Kerri Rosen, Jamie Rosen and Franco Scardino.

- I. Co-President Craig L. Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM and welcomed the directors and other attendees. Attendees introduced themselves for the benefit of Brian Condon, the new fifth principal of the school. He is welcomed after a “long and interesting process.”
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the March 22, 2017 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Kimberly Lo and seconded by Michael Rosen. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- III. **Nominating Committee.** Noting that the by-laws state that the appointed principal of the high school serves as a member of the Board, Mr. Slutzkin introduced a motion to elect Brian Condon to the Board. Gerald P. Halpern moved that the board vote on the nomination, Dr. Largmann, seconded the motion, and the board passed the motion unanimously.
- IV. **By-law Amendment.** The text of the proposed amendment appears on page 22 of the Board Packet. We will vote on the amendment at the next meeting. It asserts that an elected official can be an honorary board member, as ex officio. Board member Nily Rozic who is an elected member of the NYS Assembly requested the amendment. Various recommendations and revisions of language were discussed briefly. Shari Gruber posited that we might in the future have someone who is an elected official who we don’t respect. Points of complication and clarification were shared. The board wouldn’t automatically elect an honorary member. We will add various provisos, such as “at the discretion of the board” and the requirement of a “super majority.” The question, “does it take a spot?” was fielded. By-laws do not state a number of board members and the board decides the number by super majority. The mere fact that someone is an elected official does not automatically set this process in motion. Essentially, the board is able to extend an invitation. .
- V. **Executive Committee Report.** Craig Slutzkin and Selina Lee reported the following activities and led several discussions.
 - A. **Principal Search.** Selina Lee opened her report by noting that “So much of the academic year” was devoted to our helping the school get the right principal. Since our last meeting in March, Mr. Brian Condon received the appointment. He was appointed on April 20th and began his tenure on May 1st. Mr. Condon has already met with Mr. Slutzkin and Dr. Lee. At that meeting, Mr. Slutzkin presented the principal with a copy of Bright Boys and a copy of our 1987 application for the National School for Excellence certification. The application clearly outlines the historical mission and philosophy of the school. Principal Condon has distributed it to the current APs and remarked to the board that he believes that current staff should know “where we’ve been” and that’s “how we can keep that [culture] alive.” Mr. Condon shared with the Board with his first thoughts on how the school is operated.

- B. **Professional Development and Staff Recognition.** To show appreciation for the faculty, the Executive Committee approved for the end of year dinner, THAA will sponsor a cake with fitting and proper inscription and a luncheon for a PD Day. Franco Scardino, the UFT chapter leader thanked the alumni association for their efforts and actions during this academic year.
- C. **Graduation.** Melinda Katz, the Queens Borough President will deliver the key note address at the graduation ceremony. Her energetic, sustained support of the school this year makes her an especially appropriate speaker. This year THAA's annual Founders Award will recognize the herculean efforts of the PTA throughout the history of the re-established school, noting Susan Karlic, the current PTA President, as well as other PTA Presidents and parents.
- D. **Projects.** So many projects have been deferred this year but we will hear more during Committee Reports. We will resume where we left off during the summer and fall.

VI. School Relations Reports.

- A. **School Report.** Principal Brian Condon reported.
 1. He recited a gratifying list of student participation and achievements and many first place wins, including Japan Bowl, Science Olympiad, Law Day Prize, Latin League Certamen Awards, History Day, and MIST Competition.
 2. The principal described a MIST meeting that he attended. He heard a deep discussion of Mental Health, analyzing the roles of faith vs science, discussing depression and the various ways depression is dealt with in community, often challenging the orthodoxy. He was impressed.
 3. Specific students have been awarded elite scholarships and recognition. This year we have a Milken Scholar. Milken Scholars provides financial assistance and access to a lifelong network of relationships to assist students as they move from college to grad school and the world of work. THHS students have been recognized by the Asian and Pacific Islanders American Scholarship Fund. We have two winners of the JP Morgan Smart Start scholarship.
 4. The school's phone and technology infrastructure has received a \$300,000 allocation from the DOE, a \$75000 increase over our last award, and technology support from Queens Borough President Melinda Katz's discretionary funds. The school is upgrading the phone system without disrupting classroom time. Internet service is going to 100MG. The school maintains a connection through Queens College to continue unblocked access for scholarly research.
 5. Various activities were described. Students received Archon awards with pizza immediately after school to accommodate their study schedules. The Freshman Class Trip was an outing to see the new film King Arthur. Principal Condon addressed the issue of trip forms. He sees NYC as classroom and wants teachers to add a task related to the trip that has a clear instructional purpose. He has found the staff open and cooperative on all points. SU Primaries took place on 5/17. SU Elections take place on 6/1. The next Principal's Breakfast is 6/7. About forty parents attended his first breakfast. Principal Condon finds the breakfast and other collations "Good for points of contact." The Principal left additional materials for our reading.
 6. The principal described his first days and first impressions and spoke of his plans to connect with both the faculty and students in the school.
- B. **PTA Report.** Michael Rosen reported and provided the PTA's perspective on issues that we've covered, thanking the THAA for the association's ongoing help. He welcomed Mr. Condon, saying "he's the real deal."

1. The last PTA meeting on April 6 featured Parent Advocate Daphne Manhart who spoke to parents about using non-academic time with students.
2. The PTA sponsored the College Fair on 4/24.
3. Fundraising efforts continued with a 3 week promotion with Modell's.
4. May 25th is this year's last meeting. PTA elections will take place.
5. The End-of-year Dinner will take place on June 15th at Donovan's
6. The PTA and SLT thank Selina Lee and Lara Traum for their efforts and time this year. Mr. Rosen expresses appreciation for Nily Rozic's activism which was meaningful and effective and Craig Slutzkin's invaluable participation.

VII. **Other Committee Reports.** Various members of the board presented.

A. **Events Committee Reports.** A summary with dates appears on page 11 of the board packet.

1. Dr. Lee talked about our upcoming Culture Vulture Series. Dates are set for a Metropolitan Museum of Art Tour, A Merchant's House Tour, a Walking Tour of Flushing Meadow Park.
2. Ms. Lo morphed the Baseball Game outings from Young Alum Events to completely inclusive events. This year's Subway Series game will feature better seats. Thirty seats are reserved. An alumnae led summer tour of the Intrepid is in the offing. Karen Curzio is arranging a Brooklyn Cyclones outing.
3. Various reunions are pending.
4. Lara Traum and Dr. Lee will deliver and present our graduation gift to the seniors at a Senior Meeting. It's a strategy to connect with these nascent alums.
5. We have members of the board scheduled to attend Baccalaureate, Kim Lo; the Athletic Dinner, Selina Lee and Debbie Michlewitz; PTA Dinner, Selina Lee; and Graduation, Craig Slutzkin and Selina Lee.

B. **Membership Committee Report.** Shari Gruber reported.

1. A draft of the letter requesting payment of dues is on page 12 of the board packet. It will be emailed and then a hardcopy will be mailed to alums who haven't paid their dues. It was suggested that we perhaps attach a link showcasing what THAA funds and/or what alumni do.
2. There again will be a class competition tied to payment of dues. By the end of the year the plaque commemorating last year's winning class, 1994, will be installed on the back of an auditorium chair. The text and limited space presented a challenge which delayed the installation.
3. Several methods for payment, including a new option, are offered including PayPal.
4. Reunion classes seem to do better as targets for dues payment. We are aiming for the modest rate of 20% per class.

C. **Mentoring Committee Report.** Gary Mellow reported that the survey to facilitate the mentoring process is ready for dissemination. There's a new thought to add a link.

D. **Social Media Committee.** Michael Byc reported on progress.

1. Different social media platforms will target different aspects of our diverse programs and projects.
2. Facebook will function as the conglomerate nexus for all the "posts."
3. Other outlets will be used (Instagram – nostalgia, Twitter – news).
4. Monika Bialokur established a Linked In page which is an effective contact forum for professional people and current parents.
5. Mr. Slutzkin thanked the committee for their efforts.

VIII. **Treasurer's Report.** Mr. Slutzkin reviewed the Treasurer's Report. There were few disbursements during April. With the new principal starting, there have been some requests for PD funding by teachers. Also we will be awarding our annual scholarships at graduation.

In terms of fundraising, we will have an action plan in the fall. Some alums of the re-established school are now in their 40s which is a prime time for giving.

IX. **Old Business.** Discussion of Compliance Policies was deferred to the next meeting when Lara Traum and Ethan Felder will be present.

X. **New Business.** None.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Halpern and seconded by Dr. Lee. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary