

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on January 10, 2018)

November 8, 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: Karen Curzio (by phone), Shari Gruber, Dr. Malcolm G. Largmann, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberly Lo (by phone), Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Michael Rosen, Hon. Nily Rozic, Craig L. Slutzkin, Aquib Yacoob

Also in attendance were Gerald P. Halpern, David Zarowin, and Principal Brian Condon.

- I. Co-President Selina Lee called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM and welcomed the directors and other attendees.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the September 19, 2017 meeting. Two corrections were made. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Craig Slutzkin and seconded by Debbie Michlewitz. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- III. **Executive Committee Report.** Craig Slutzkin and Selina Lee reported the following activities and led several discussions.
 - A. **School Relations.** A summary appears on page 8 of the Board Packet.
 1. Co-President Selina Lee and Director Lara Traum have attended two SLT meetings this year. There has been constructive discussion of the Comprehensive Educational Plan and there is better collaboration this year. There is significant pro-active student participation best exemplified by the students' survey of student body in terms of a specific educational objective. Students applied concepts that the SLT has discussed.
 2. Co-Presidents Lee and Slutzkin attended this year's Founders Day program on Friday, October 27, 2017. They felt that the Senior Skits, the Roll Call, and the musical presentations, including Science Teacher Mr. Stern's and a student's rap, proudly continued Founders Day tradition. Kevin Kim, class of 1988, delivered an effective keynote address. Mr. Kim announced that he will fund a scholarship for a THHS student who chooses to attend CUNY.
 - B. **Projects.**
 1. The Videography Project moves toward completion. We are looking for dates, perhaps the first or second weekend of December, to interview and tape Librarian Valerie Billy, Math and Physical Education Chair Harry Rattien, Archon Advisor and Science Teacher Odile Garcia and Humanities Teacher Debbie Michlewitz. Ms Garcia is in Europe for the next few months and Jesse Ash, our videography project person, has a demanding schedule.
 3. Selina Lee shared the preliminary work that she is doing to advance the Alumni Store. She distributed pictures of suggested merchandise. She has found a new vendor, Red Bubble, which will produce and ship products as they are ordered. Some other points were fielded. Shari Gruber suggested the creation of Reunion Shirts. Craig Slutzkin noted that these products are marketing tools, not produced to do fundraising. He will create a link on our website to the vendor. He recruited younger alumni to work on this, including David Zarowin and Aquib Yacoob. Karen Curzio volunteered to help as well.

4. A brief "Projects Deferred" discussion cited the intention to produce an electronic newsletter, hopefully in the Spring, and foreshadowed a longer discussion about fundraising.

VI. School Relations Reports.

- A. School Report. Principal Brian Condon reported.
 1. Principal Condon spoke about Dr. Largmann's visit in early October. The visit included a visit to a senior class seminar on Queens College campus. Dr. Largmann noted that he and Mr. Condon are pedagogically "on the same wavelength." Principal Condon wants every student to participate in class discussion every day. Dr. Largmann was overwhelmed by the Robotics Lab and the sophistication of the hardware and courses of study in the Science department. He appreciated the tone of the school where a teacher and an alum, Shijing Shen, took a moment to share her ideas with Dr. Largmann and students approached him to thank him for creating the school.
 2. Principal Condon cited a book Academic Conversations which he shared with the SLT. The text and discussion motivated students to create their own survey and gather data.
 3. The principal described his strong feelings about the wonderful experience of his first Founders Day. He commended this THHS tradition, which he called "a fine concept" because it includes ideas like "welcoming, leading, and protecting." In the wake of this milestone, he's scheduled to do an interview with The Classic staff.
 4. The principal met over 3,000 people at the Monday 11/6 Open House. Ms. Veronica York orchestrated the evening which includes an auditorium presentation, which was repeated seven times to accommodate the turnout, and musical performances; she did a wonderful job. Students conducted the tours and talked about "what it is like to be in this school."
 5. The Principal's PPO / Principal's Performance Observation is scheduled for next week when Ms. Pinero will return to the school. The Superintendent will visit during the Spring.
 - a. Gerald Halpern asked if any of this can affect the assignment of Special Ed students. Mr. Condon said the number is determined by objective statistics, constituting 2% of the school registration, about 9 to 11 students in each grade, and noted that all our Special Ed students are all on track to be graduated. One student transferred to another school with the help and counseling of THHS staff.
 - b. Dr. Largmann asked about the impact of AP test scores, specifically "3s" instead of 4s." Principal Condon contrasted the AP situation at THHS with other schools and talked about trying to expand AP Math and Science offerings because our students in another school would take AP Math and Science. Our strongest AP offerings are in the Humanities. All students take AP World.
 6. SING is scheduled to take place on 11/17 and 11/8 and preparations are in high gear.
 7. The Seminar Lecture series continued with an "amazing" lecture on Machiavelli. The intense focus in the auditorium impressed the principal.
 8. Principal Condon is happy to attend the 11/25 Annual Alumni Meeting titled Coffee with Condon which will run from 2-4. This follows the Alumni Basketball game at 11:30 and lunch at 1:00.
 9. The school has reverted to the old alumni visitation policy with a separate sign-in book.
 10. Principal Condon met with Queens College President Matos-Rodriguez who offered a new Computer Science course for 25 THHS juniors. There will be no tuition fee; Queens College will cover it. Queens College wants the group to reflect the THHS demographic of 75% female as part of Queens College's endeavor to recruit more female students to computer science and business fields. It will be a pilot program with a research component. Our AP Computer Science students are good candidates. This supplants any need to look to College Now for a computer class. Mr. Condon noted that Queens

College does so much research, specifically in Environmental Studies, providing mentoring and research opportunities for our students.

11. Mr. Condon thanked THAA for its support of the AP program professional development. This contributed to a successful Professional Development Day where teachers took the opportunity to attend programs outside the school.
12. Principal Condon closed his remarks by saying that he is happy to tailor his presentations to our specific requests.

B. **PTA Report.** Michael Rosen reported and provided the PTA's perspective.

1. There is a good, new team with new co-president Nicole Remy, a senior/junior parent working with a freshman/sophomore parent. Mr. Tam left due to business responsibilities.
2. This year's fundraising goal is \$35,000 and currently \$13,000 has been raised. This year's first Phonathon just ended. Teachers were involved. Contacts were made in different languages. Robocalls go out as well.
3. PTA meetings have been well attended. 80 parents attended the last meeting, more than the 60 attendees in past years at the same time. The PTA is broadening its investment in committee work. There have been two successful Principal Breakfasts with 25 and 29 parents attending. Nily Rozic was a special guest at the last breakfast. There will be a PTA / THAA meeting from 6:00 to 6:30 PM before the next PTA meeting which convenes at 6:30PM.
4. There were 8 PTA parents at the Open House and they only heard 2 or 3 Open House parents mention the events of last year. No concerns were expressed.

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

A. **Events Committee Reports.** A summary with dates appears on page 16 of the Board Packet.

1. Karen Curzio reported that currently reunions are being planned for 1988, 1993, 1998, 2008, and 2013. She is organizing 1988 event, perhaps at a Manhattan site. Laarni Mateo Hazel is organizing the 1993 event. Mannan Hassan is organizing the 2008 event. Despina Leontiadis is organizing the 2013 event. No one at this moment is planning the 1998 or 2003 event.
2. Kim Lo made the down payment for next year's Subway Series tickets. It includes a Saturday game so that may lead to more participation.
3. Selina Lee noted that Culture Vulture Events have been deferred. We are trying to tweak the events perhaps linking a visit to a special exhibition like the Michelangelo show at the Met.
4. The 11/25 Annual Meeting / Alumni Basketball Game / Coffee with Condon Event will include activities for children. We're aiming for a 45 minute arts and crafts project and 45 minutes of physical activities in the gym. Lauren Caiaccia has volunteered to supervise the physical education experience. Margherita Wischert is designing the arts and crafts project. Sara Oberlander is recruiting student volunteers to help.
5. School Events include the THHS Chamber Ensemble guest performances, meetings of the SLT and PTA, SING, Winter Concert, Arista Induction, and Career Day.

B. **Young Alumni Committee Report.** Kimberly Lo reported that there may be a volunteer event at the Queens Botanical Gardens next month. Sarah Oberlander will coordinate to recruit student involvement.

C. **Mentoring Committee Report.** Gary Mellow reported. The survey to assess mentoring attitudes and ideas was available for comments.

- D. **Social Media Committee.** Kimberly Lo reported. There hasn't been any recent meeting. Facebook has been active. Selina Lee is overseeing Linked-In but has received no Likes. Michael Byc has done some postings. Possible moments to seize are the Holidays and Amazon Smile, Paying Dues, and the launch of the new Alumni Store.
- E. **Nominating Committee.** Craig Slutzkin reported.
 - 1. Elections for the Board of Directors will take place at the Annual Meeting. An email will be sent noting that nominations are due a week before. Current members should express their desire to serve again. The issue of an attendance requirement was discussed.
- F. **Dues Report.** Shari Gruber reported and led the discussion.
 - 1. The issue of non-payment of dues by directors and executive committee members was discussed.
 - 2. Some attempts at understanding the omission were suggested. Craig Slutzkin offered some possibilities and some clarifications. Someone may believe that he/she is contributing "my time." If someone makes a contribution and has not paid dues, the first \$30 is allocated to dues payment. If there is an inability to pay, adjustment would be made. Most people did not feel that the lapse at this point was simply accidental.
 - 3. There is no automatic procedure or policy in the by-laws to deal with non-payment of dues by a board member. To revise by-laws we need to follow a procedure. An amendment will be crafted and sent out by email so that we can vote on the amendment at the next meeting. The amendment will link the concepts of "election" and "non-payment of dues."
 - 4. Ms. Gruber will contact non-dues-paying Board members.
 - 5. Later in the meeting, some thought was devoted to looking at the different alumni class years and where dues collection was more successful. The idea that specific alums could be targeted was suggested. Also, siblings seem to be more committed to sustaining THAA.

VIII. **Treasurer's Report.** Craig Slutzkin reviewed the Treasurer's Report which appears on pages 9-14.

- A. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed dollar values of THAA's investments, dues, contributions, and expenses. In terms of expenses, Science and Tech Assistants are Queens College Interns who assist Mr Tsai; the Library Allocation covers the expense of keeping the library open for an after-school ends. Our budget allocates \$2,000. The Association then makes up the difference by garnering a specific contribution.
- B. Going forward, Gary Mellow and Ben Fung, both with expertise in the field of finance, will serve with Mr. Slutzkin on the Finance Committee. The three of them will participate in periodic conference calls with the financial manager.
- C. A first meeting, via conference call, of the newly organized Fundraising Committee recently occurred. The committee members are Craig Slutzkin, Rudy Ash (1998), Laura Risimini (2006), and Alicia Salmoni (1990).
- D. One piece of advice that the subgroup shared is that 100% of our Board of Directors should be current in their payment of dues. We should be able to announce that to any perspective donor. Though the Association doesn't, many boards require that directors make additional contributions.
- E. Historically, we have put money into Endowment Funds. The subgroup advised that we fundraise for a purpose. This, however, would mean that an annual recurrent expense would require fundraising every year. Going forward, perhaps we can merge both methods.
- F. The idea of a geographic fundraiser, perhaps sending Mr. Condon to Boston to an alumni gathering in that city, was received positively. The response was based on the experience when Ken Bonomo was sent by THAA to Florida to meet alumni.

IX. **Old Business.** Discussion of compliance Policies is deferred.

X. **New Business.**

The motion to adjourn was made by Gerald P. Halpern and was seconded by Dr. Largmann. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary