

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on March 20, 2018)

January 10, 2018

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 (by phone), Karen Curzio (by phone), Ethan Felder, Benedict Fung, Shari Gruber, Peter Lee, Dr. Selina Lee, Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Michael Rosen (by phone), Craig L. Slutzkin, Aquib Yacoob (by phone).

Guests: Gerald P. Halpern (by phone) (Honorary Director) and Franco Scardino.

- I. Co-President Selina Lee called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM and welcomed the directors and other attendees. Craig Slutzkin asked for brief introductions because Peter Lee, Class of 2013, was a first-time attendee.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 8, 2017 meeting. Further information was requested about the scholarship proposed by Kevin Kim. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Selina Lee and seconded by Shari Gruber. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- III. **Nominating Committee Report.**
 - A. The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate:

Co-Presidents	Craig L. Slutzkin and Dr. Selina Lee
Vice Presidents	Kimberly Lo, Ethan Felder and Lara Traum
Secretary	Debra Michlewitz
Treasurer	Craig L. Slutzkin
 - B. A motion to accept the slate was made by Craig Slutzkin, seconded by Gary Mellow and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Executive Committee Report.** Mr. Slutzkin and Dr. Lee reported the following activities and led several discussions.
 - A. The Videography Project continues. The session on 12/10 taped Dr. Linda Steinmann, Harry Rattien, and Debbie Michlewitz. The next session will be scheduled for the Spring and hopes to include various other retired faculty.
 - B. The Alumni Store, directed by Dr. Lee, went live on Black Friday using Red Bubble as a vendor. David Zarowin provided a cleaner copy of his 30th Anniversary Logo and Karen Curzio performed some digital magic to enhance other historical designs for t-shirts and other merchandise.
 - C. Week of Thanks and Season of Giving were launched this year by Selina Lee to coincide with the holiday season. These were social media campaigns seeking to educate our alumni about the impact that their giving has had, both payment of dues and additional donations, and to inform alumni of eight possible ways of giving. Dr. Lee received responses from people who wanted to give. Directors considered staging these initiatives at a different time of year to avoid competition with other end-of-year charity appeals. The idea of Thankful

Thursdays was suggested. Selina Lee commented that these new initiatives garnered some modest success.

- D.** The progress of other on-going projects was reviewed by Craig Slutzkin.
1. The website has been modified to allow registration without verification to make the site more user friendly. Mr. Slutzkin will verify after log-in to supply the necessary level of security.
 - a. The site will match alumni and current students for mentoring activities. It may be limited to THAA members only but that would limit the recruitment of currently inactive alumni whom we hope to attract.
 - b. We have concerns about the access of a high school student and think it's wise to have some supervision or gate keeping, perhaps through the Guidance Department, to avoid any unfortunate situation.
 - c. Ben Fung shared his experience with the IMentor program. The initial registration forms for mentors and mentees asked both kinds of participants for indications of interests and activities. He outlined the limited contact with younger students and the increased contact with older students. He spoke about email connections and in-school meetings.
 - d. Franco Scardino noted that Career Day speakers often provided personal contact info. The idea that all contacts in all programs should take place with guidance as an intermediary was applauded.
 2. The Newsletter is in Progress. Craig Slutzkin asked for additional suggestions for content though "small" newsletters are fine.
 3. We sent an email asking for updating of demographic information. Twenty recipients asked for the updates to be made while many others did their own updates.

V. School Report. Franco Scardino reported for Principal Brian Condon.

- A. The Legislative Breakfast will take place at the school on Friday January 12. Veronica York said that many legislators have RSVPed including the Honorable Melinda Katz, Nily Rozic, Catherine Nolan, and Rory Lancman. Dr. Lee will be there as well as current students and members of the PTA. Strategies for their appearances have been discussed.
- B. A key issue on the horizon is the Mayor's intention to reduce the number of selective high schools to one per borough, an ideological belief he holds. The Board discussed the issue.
- C. Councilmember Lancman recently issued a proclamation, citing the spirit of Woodward and Bernstein, honoring Mehrose Ahmad (Class of 2017), Sumaita Hasan (Class of 2017) and Mr. Brian Sweeney (Classic Advisor) for their exceptional journalism last year covering the events of the principal search.
- D. Queens College President Felix V. Matos Rodriguez will lecture as part of the Senior Seminar Lecture Series. He will then tour the school and meet with the principal in the ongoing efforts to extend and expand our collaboration.
- E. The Regional Robotics Competition will be held at THHS and hosted by the Robotics Team from 2/24 to 2/25/2018.
- F. The Festival of Nations now will feature 26 groups. Student participation is limited to 2 or 3 FON activities. There will be additional performances this year since the demand for tickets last year created an active resale market.
- G. This year's school musical will be In The Heights. Rehearsals have begun.
- H. Seniors received Early Action and Early Decision acceptances to Yale, Harvard, and MIT.
- I. The PSAL Winter Season is in full swing with positive results for boys and girls basketball teams and the "phenomenal" table tennis team who train in the hallways.

- J. All constituencies, including the UFT, Consultative Council, PTA, Queens College, Student Union, DC37, School Secretaries, meet regularly with the principal. There was a Principal's Breakfast this week.
- K. Mr. Condon is open to expanding the AP Capstone program based upon the positive results in the Social Science Research classes. This is a skills based curriculum where content is tied to concepts and themes. Expansion would require teacher training and DOE approval.
- L. Ms. Wischert and Mr. Scardino have students participating in a Book Project at the Morgan Library.
- M. THHS participates in a constitutional law project developed by NYU Law School and the Steinhardt School. Social Studies teacher Georgia Brown is instituting the program in her class after it was piloted at THHS last year.
- N. The principal initiated a discussion with the faculty and UFT chapter about the return to a block/varying band schedule providing longer class meetings. This would support the goal of deeper Academic Conversations. Some discussion about teacher support and objections followed. Questions about the presentation and advocacy were fielded and addressed. The change would require 55% support by the teachers and 60% support by the UFT. The Chancellor's Professional Development Day may address this decision.
- O. Phoenix is running a fund raiser online with a \$5000 goal. Alums, prompted by Mr. Scardino's donation, have offered matching funds totaling \$3500. The idea of maintaining a log of crowd funding initiatives as leads for other donations was mentioned. Ben Fung commented that the matching practice may be productive in the future.

VI. **PTA Report.** Michael Rosen reported.

- A. The PTA is active and 30 parents attended the last meeting on 12/14/18. The meeting focused on guidance and the college application process. A freshman parent, who interviews for a Michigan college, spoke. Parents were divided into small groups for further discussion. Four teachers attended, a presence which parents appreciated. The PTA executive board continues to use online meetings and attend SLT meetings. A real camaraderie has developed.
- B. Fundraising now totals \$23,000 with a goal of \$35,000. This year's goal, less than last year's \$55,000 goal, was lowered in response to projected budget needs. New methods include scheduling corporate presentations to the PTA, leading to contributions. Princeton Review has donated testing services and the PTA has solicited contributions from participants. Attendance Raffles are also ongoing. The PTA sponsored SAT program had to be discontinued. In that area, the PTA offers discounts for test prep for students which includes interviewing skills. SYLVAN has approached the PTA and a productive relationship may be in the offing. The PTA continues to pursue other outside sources.
- C. The PTA updated their website, adding more details about clubs.

VII. **Treasurer's Report.** Craig Slutzkin reviewed the Treasurer's Report.

- A. The Videography additional expenditure of \$1800 is payable to Jesse Ash's company.
 - 1. Mr. Ash donates his services, but there is a cost associated for his staff and supplies.
 - 2. Under the Association's by-laws, any transaction relating to compensation to a Director or his company must be approved by the Board of Director.
 - 3. Shari Gruber motioned to approve an allocation of \$1,800 for costs associated with the videography towards Mr. Ash's company. Dr. Lee seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- B. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed the Association's accounts and expenditures.

VIII. **Dues Report.** Shari Gruber reported and led the discussion.

1. Dues payments were the best since 2013, happily surpassing last year's poor result.
2. A change in cut-off date for yearly payment was discussed. We will move to a real calendar year instead of an academic year. This year's dues letter will be sent in February. Work on the letter will begin and the website will be updated to accept the 2018 contributions
3. Franco Scardino asked for a letter with a tear-off for his solicitation of the faculty and staff.
4. The continued recognition of the best paid-up constituency with a plaque on an auditorium seat will continue. For last year, the recognition will go to "Non-Alumni, Parents, Faculty...."
5. The issue of non-payment of dues by directors and executive committee members was resolved with a vote for an amendment to the By-Laws (Appendix A).
 1. Shari Gruber motioned to approve the amendment to the By-Laws. Ben Fung seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
 2. This year, all directors must pay their dues by the March 20, 2018 meeting.

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

- A. Events Committee Report.
 1. Dr. Lee reported that she and Ms. Traum have been attending SLT meetings at the school.
 2. Dr. Lee reported on the Alumni Basketball Game / Coffee with Condon Event on 11/25, also our Annual Meeting, where over 20 people attended.
 3. Karen Curzio reported that currently reunions are being planned for 1988, 1993, 1998, 2008, and 2013. Two volunteer organizers need to check-in with Ms. Curzio. If no volunteer to organize the 2003 event appears, the event can be piggybacked onto the 1998 or 2008 events in a venue with two areas. Another request will be broadcast, perhaps directed to Rishona Fleishmann or Ayanna Lambert.
- B. Young Alumni Committee Report. Report was deferred.
- C. Mentoring Committee Report. Gary Mellow discussed the progress of the mentoring survey. He affirmed that we need to constructively deal with protecting under-age students as we design protocols for contact with alums.
- D. Social Media Committee. Report was deferred.

X. **Old Business**

- A. Compliance Policies: no discussion.

The motion to adjourn was made by Craig Slutzkin and was seconded by Shari Gruber. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary