

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on October 25, 2018)
May 30, 2018**

Location: Townsend Harris High School 149-11 Melbourne Avenue, Flushing, New York

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Principal Brian Condon, Karen Curzio, Ethan Felder, Ben Fung, Peter Lee, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberley Lo, Gary Mellow (by phone), Debra Michlewitz, Craig L. Slutzkin, Lara Traum, David Zarowin.

Guests: Franco Scardino, Irina Kimyagar.

- I. Co-President Selina Lee called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM and welcomed the directors and other attendees. Dr. Lee thanked Principal Condon for hosting the board meeting at the school.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**. The Board reviewed the minutes of the March 20, 2018 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Ethan Felder and seconded by Karen Curzio. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- III. **Executive Committee Report**. Craig Slutzkin and Dr. Lee, with Lara Traum's input regarding the SLT, reported the following activities and led several discussions. The report appears on pages 7-9 of the Board Packet.
 - A. The School Leadership Team (SLT) meets once a month and deals with school issues which arise but primarily designs the CEP, the Comprehensive Educational Plan, which identifies four or five goals for the school year. Goals may be academic or related to guidance. The DOE offers a framework for the CEP. Budget and progress in meeting goals is tracked during the year. Dr. Lee and Ms. Traum attend these meetings representing the Association.
 1. This year's CEP appears on page 8 of the board packet. The SLT is currently designing next year's CEP.
 2. Principal Condon provided some historical background about the evolution of the CEP submitted by the SLTs in the past and outlined his plan to enhance "rigorous instruction" through developing skills which enable academic conversation and improve student discourse.
 3. The Board discussed the CEP and Ms. Traum asked that any feedback or suggestions be directed to her.
 4. The SLT organized a Student Diversity Initiative to devise strategies to increase the diversity of the THHS student population. Franco Scardino briefly summarized the current plan which includes contact with guidance counselors and principals of middle schools with diverse populations, various events for prospective students and the involvement of elected officials.
 - a. Another aspect is recruiting THHS alums who lived in these underrepresented areas to do some of our outreach.
 5. Mr. Slutzkin thanked Selina Lee and Lara Traum for their tireless engagement with the SLT.
 - B. The progress of other on-going projects was reviewed.
 1. Mr. Slutzkin added the mentoring function to the website. The Board discussed various ways to communicate it and to look at ways in which the current student body can safely interact with alumni.
 2. The Spring Newsletter arrived this morning.
 3. Videotaping was postponed until the fall.
 4. The Bulletin Board is still a work in progress which has made progress. Selina Lee sees photos of alums honored as part of the "25 at 25" celebration as a valuable feature.

5. The dues paying link for 2018-2019 has gone live. All Directors have paid their dues.
6. THHS news happily includes the upcoming 90th birthday of Jerry Halpern. Birthday wishes via email or phone are a good idea. Selina Lee will email contact information. Sadly, we heard of the passing of beloved former Humanities Teacher Arthur Boulanger.

IV. **School Report.** Principal Brian Condon reported.

- A. Principal Condon expressed his and the school's gratitude for THAA's support and engagement.
 1. He cited specifically sponsorship of FON and professional development. He described an impressive video produced by Mr. Scardino's and Mr. Hackney's students who are in the AP Capstone class made possible by THAA funding of training and certification of these two teachers.
 2. Principal Condon hopes to refine, improve, and expand the AP Capstone program.
- B. The teachers approved the SBO to institute a block schedule. Every class does not meet every day.
 1. A key component is the Friday schedule which provides time for teachers to plan together. Class time will be increased by 10 or 11 minutes, allowing for "deeper learning."
 2. Students will be able to stay on the school campus on Friday to use the library and to do homework.
 - a. The school is looking at limiting Friday team practices and membership in too many clubs.
 - b. Programming is trying to limit zero band classes. There has been a shift of half the student population to lunch time chemistry and physics labs.
 3. The new schedule should go into effect in September.
- C. The superintendent visited the school on 4/19/2018 for the twice yearly review of the principal's performance; the evaluation focused on nine classroom observations. T
- D. The Spring Concert took place during our meeting. The principal wants to add more music and art events but the budgetary limitations make this a challenge.
- E. The June calendar notes dates for the Athletics Awards Dinner, Baccalaureate, PTA End-of-Year Dinner, Commencement, and Keepers' Day.
- F. We again deeply discussed Special Education and Diversity, with some intersections, with some focus on recruitment and admissions, with reference to mandates from the DOE.
 - a. Two additional special education teachers have been hired for September.
 - b. The Board repeated their commitment to assist the school meet any challenges in any way that it can.
- G. THHS students who participated this year in a Morgan Library program, which married research and book art, achieved remarkable success because four of the six students achieved honors and two of the six achieved "distinct honors." The supervising teachers were Mr. Scardino and Ms. Wischerth who have been invited by the program to participate again next year. The books which the students designed are on display at the Morgan Library.

V. **PTA Report.** Mrs. Irina Kimyagar, the PTA Liaison-Elect reported.

- A. Michael Rosen could not attend what would have been his last meeting. He sent word that it was an honor to serve on the board and he, his wife, and his daughter will continue to be part of the THHS family.
- B. Ms. Kimyagar introduced herself as the mother of freshmen twins that are involved with the Classic and the Robotics Team.
- C. The PTA elected new officers. The new co-presidents are Shibrah Jamil and Stephanie Stein Werther.
- D. The PTA End-of-the Year Dinner will take place at East Buffet on 6/14/18. The Directors are invited to attend.
- E. A fundraising event for Robotics will take place on 6/2/2018.

F. Next year's fundraising goal will be \$36,000.

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

- A. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed balances, assets, dues, receipts, expenditures and changes in market values. He clarified that the \$48,887 for the Robotics Team is the amount that the team fundraised.
- B. The Board discussed the website and certain features that link to the database that would not lend themselves to using Wix as a website platform.
- C. We will have \$29,000 additional expenditures going beyond this year's annual approved budget in the near future to cover several professional development programs requested by the principal. These include a college essay writing workshop for teachers, guidance counselor training, eight sessions about the integration of creative writing across the curriculum, and second year teacher and new teacher Capstone training. The principal shared feedback from college admissions officers who said that our students' college application essays seem "formulaic." The training would model a four-year writing program where students accumulate a portfolio of narrative pieces and establish the habit of narrative writing, better preparation for the writing of a college application essay. This workshop will take place on 6/7. In terms of the goal to foster writing across the curriculum, he recommended a book, Pathway to the Common Core which explores this theme. Principal Condon thanked THAA for its generous support.

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

- A. Events Committee Reports.
 - 1. Karen Curzio updated us about scheduled and planned reunions. Reunions are being planned for 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, and 2013.
 - 2. The Class of 1988 Reunion will host 2008. They are looking at Bubo on 10/13.
 - 3. The Class of 1998 Reunion will host 2003. It will take place at Bread and Tulip on 6/16.
 - 4. The 1993 reunion will take place at Junior Bar and Grill on 9/15.
 - 5. Kimberly Lo announced that the Subway Season is sold out. She's thinking about arranging some minor league team events during the summer. Michael Byc offered that there are fireworks at Friday night Cyclones games. Kimberly Lo has been funneling volunteer events directly to Archon advisor Sarah Oberlander.
- B. Mentorship Committee Report. Gary Mellow reports.
 - a. No update.
- C. Social Media Report. The report was deferred.
- D. Compliance Report. The report was deferred.
- E. Membership Committee. The report was deferred.

VIII. **Old Business.** None.

IX. **New Business.**

- A. Michael Byc announced the possibility of an end of year event for the Board at Oscar Wilde's. More information may follow.

X. **Adjournment.**

A. The motion to adjourn was made by Selina Lee and was seconded by Peter Lee. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary