

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on March 20, 2019)

January 9, 2019

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, Principal Brian Condon (by phone), Karen Curzio (by phone), Ethan Felder, Shari Gruber, Irina Kimyagar, Malcolm G. Largmann, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberly Lo, Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Craig L. Slutzkin, David Zarowin

- I. Co-President Selina Lee called the meeting to order at 6:42 PM and welcomed the directors to our third meeting of the academic year, wishing all a Happy New Year.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**. The Board reviewed the minutes of the October 25, 2018 meeting. Corrections were made of Dr. Michael Manson's and Mr. Arthur Boulanger's names. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Kimberly Lo and seconded by Ethan Felder. 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. The Legislative Breakfast will take place on Friday, February 8. Students, PTA representatives, staff, and alumni will address the legislators who attend. Students will then lead the guests on a tour of the building. The school uses this occasion to pitch capital improvement projects, like upgrading WiFi.
 - a. Last year, the school focused on needs of the Humanities Department. Requests led to funding of the computer studios and a media classroom.
 - b. This year the school wants to tie requests to the focus on Equity and Diversity initiatives. In addition, some current concrete needs of the school are improvements of the heating system and the auditorium.
 - c. Assistant Principal Veronica York coordinates the event.
 - B. The first Equity and Diversity Open House occurred on November 17th. Board Member Aquib Yacoob represented the Alumni Association. This program is part of the Alumni Association's response to the mandate of the mayor and chancellor.
 1. Dr. Largmann asked about the DOE's assessment of the diversity of Townsend Harris High School ("THHS").
 2. Ms. York reported that the current student population is 20% Black and Hispanic which is not as high as the mayor's goal.
 3. 40 students from these underrepresented groups attended the Open House.
 4. The Board discussed issues surrounding broadening the effort and maintaining current academic standards and the school's response.
 5. The Open House showcased the journalism and robotics activities that are part of life at THHS. Alumna Kristine E. Guillaume, the first black woman to serve as President on [Harvard's] *The Crimson* in the paper's 145-year history, skyped with the Open House.
 6. Jesse Ash related that the NYC Office of Student Enrollment wanted to produce a video to increase applications through increasing student and parent awareness though that project targets the Specialized High Schools.

- C. Founders' Day was Friday November 2nd from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Alumna Julie Ae Kim spoke. She is on the board of the National Asian Pacific Women's Forum, NYC Chapter and has worked in the Mayor's Office.
 - a. Following the assembly, THAA hosted a successful, celebratory luncheon in the Principal's conference room.
 - D. Georgia Brandeis was formally appointed Assistant Principal for ISS and LOTE after the completion of the C-30 process.
 - E. The annual meeting scheduled for December 16th at Kew & Willow, a bookstore, took place across the street in a diner because an emergency prevented the owner from accommodating us.
 - a. The bookstore paid the diner bill, refunded our deposit, and waived any fees for our next scheduled event at Kew and Willow.
 - b. Assemblymember Nily Rozic helped arrange for the donation of the food we had ordered to a food pantry in Bayside.
 - F. Our Projects are works in progress.
 - 1. Craig Slutzkin reported that he and Michael Byc are working on a new design for the Website with a developer. One requirement is that it is user friendly for more than one generation.
 - 2. Craig Slutzkin announced the Winter Newsletter which follows the Summer Issue. These are simple online publications highlighting updates about people. It's essential that to continue this endeavor that the product remain simple.
 - 3. Work on the Bulletin Board continues.
- IV. **Nominating Committee Report.** A motion to accept the Nominating Committee's slate of officers was made by Gary Mellow, seconded by Jesse Ashe and passed unanimously. Congratulations to Co-Presidents Craig Slutzkin and Selina W. Lee, Vice Presidents Lara Traum, Kimberly Lo, and Ethan Felder, Secretary Debra Michlewitz, and Treasurer Craig Slutzkin.
- V. **School Relations Reports.**
- A. **School Report.** Principal Brian Condon reported.
 - 1. The superintendent visited the school on Tuesday 1/8, one of two annual evaluative observations, to see what's happening in the classrooms and provide a rating of the principal. The superintendent visited 8 or 9 classes and met with the Inquiry Team, parents, and teachers who are leading different initiatives.
 - a. The superintendent was very happy about all the collaborative initiatives, the SLT, Consultative Council, the Executive Board
 - b. This positive evaluation is a helpful because the thought is that it will be less likely that the school will be micromanaged.
 - 2. On Wednesday January 9, principals from our district participated in a Learning Walk at THHS. Principals noted the coordination between teachers and the librarian.
 - 3. The principal thanked the PTA for the luncheon it hosted for the staff before the winter break.
 - 4. FON season has begun and students are practicing in the halls after classes.

B. **PTA Report**. Mrs. Irina Kimyagar, the PTA Liaison reported.

1. Mrs. Kimyager distributed copies of the *Classic*, wished us Happy New Year, and described the luncheon with homemade ethnic dishes that the PTA prepared for the staff before the winter break.
2. At the January 17th Winter Carnival, the PTA will be fundraising energetically, along with other groups. The PTA will be selling raffles and gourmet coffee and snacks. Ideas for prizes are appreciated.
3. The PTA is collaborating to implement and expand mentoring initiatives. Mrs. Kimyagar met with Ethan Felder to design a means to connect mentors through parents. Ideas discussed included:
 - a. Creation of Networking Events during the week, perhaps at the school. One model envisioned an event focused on a specific profession, giving students an opportunity to speak to people in a profession that they are considering.
 - b. Organization of an auditorium panel after Career Day with a Q and A format; organizing a panel during senior meeting
 - c. Modification of Career Day to substitute a Panel Presentation for the third session; and using the time afforded by the new Friday earlier dismissal to offer a panel presentation.
 - d. The Board discussed further ideas; a subgroup will discuss and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

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

- A. Mr. Slutzkin reviewed balances, assets, dues, receipts, expenditures and changes in market values. The downswing in the market affected our investments. In the last four months, we experienced a 6% loss, much less than the market in general. Hansard Global issued a \$7,650 dividend, less than in the past, although the 2018-2019 budget took a smaller number into account.
- B. Craig Slutzkin described the current details about dues payment. This year, we have 34 fewer dues paying members than last year but the 737 members is, in historical context, a good number.
 - a. We began solicitation later as we changed the dates of our fiscal year and sent fewer reminders.
 - b. Reunions seem to promote dues payment. This year's round of dues collection will begin soon.
 - c. Board members must remit dues by the next meeting in March.

VI. **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 on reunion events. Reunions for Classes of 2014, 2009, 2004, 1999, 1994, and 1998 will be planned this year. The Committee requests volunteers to organize the events. The reunion event for 2008/2003 was under attended on 12/1. There had been some confusion after a change in organizer. The Class of 1988 event on in December worked well despite some lost emails.
 2. Selina Lee reported that SING! took place on November 17 and 18 with some controversy about the vote.
 3. Upcoming events include the Legislative Breakfast on February 8.
 4. Kimberly Lo reported that the THAA Mets Yankee event will take place on July 3. The NYC Football Club just released their schedule and Ms. Lo is looking at a June or August date. Planning for a service event is pending.

- B. **Mentorship Committee Report.** Gary Mellow reports. He led a discussion about blanks in our understanding in the progress that the mentoring program, six months along, is making. He wondered if we could track the searching that visitors to the site make. Key questions will be addressed by Mr. Slutzkin with the web designer. We would like to know who is searching and who is responding. Mr. Slutzkin observed that we encounter the fundamental difference between a high school student seeking a mentor to discuss college and a graduate's search for a mentor to deal with career issues. High school students need to work through the guidance office while graduates can work independently. The video conference format was discussed. Asking for feedback with a link to a Google form, using an "I Accept" option for a count, and creating an audit trail were suggested. Remarks, about the problem of publicizing this program and other services that THAA provides, ended the discussion.

- C. **Social Media Report.** The report was deferred but a question about using Reddit was raised.

- D. **Compliance Report.** The report was deferred but a meeting of Lara Traum, Shari Gruber, and Craig Slutzkin is scheduled for Martin Luther King Day weekend.

The motion to adjourn was made by Shari Gruber and was seconded by David Zarowin. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary

