

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on November 13, 2019)

May 21, 2019

Location: Townsend Harris High School 149-11 Melbourne Avenue Flushing. New York 11367

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Michael Byc, Principal Brian Condon, Karen Curzio, Shari Gruber (by phone), Mrs. Irina Kimyagar, Malcolm G. Largmann, Dr. Selina Lee, Gary Mellow (by phone), Debra Michlewitz, Craig L. Slutzkin, Lara Traum, (by phone) David Zarowin.

The following guests were present: Michael Rosen, Kerry Rosen, Franco Scardino, Udipto Chowdhury.

- I. Co-President Selina Lee called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM and welcomed the directors to our fifth and final meeting of the academic year. She thanked the attendees for coming to Queens. Many members feel this site is convenient.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the March 20, 2019 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Debra Michlewitz and seconded by David Zarowin. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- III. **Introductions.** Because there were new attendees, Dr. Lee asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group. People mentioned their current activities, their historical connections to the school, and some witticisms about their continued connection to the school.
- IV. **Executive Committee Report.** Craig Slutzkin and Selina Lee reported the following activities and led several discussions. The report appears on page 5 of the Board Packet.
 - A. The School Leadership Team report was postponed until Lara Traum, one of our representatives, attends in person or by phone.
 - B. David Zarowin and Selina Lee, with personal knowledge of the NYU experience, laid the groundwork for an information and orientation/ Q and A Web Meeting for current Harris students who are interested in attending NYU. We will try to stage and extend the range of this type of activity in the future with collaboration with the College Office.
 - C. Career Day was held on March 22 with much success. Gary Mellow spearheaded a new option for the program. In addition to classroom sessions, students were able to attend a panel discussion in the auditorium featuring alums who are working in various professions. Mr. Mellow, who moderated, proposed various tweaks for the composition of the panel, including panelists rotating between sessions and striving for a broader range of perspectives by recruiting a larger and more diverse pool of panelists.
 - a. The Board thanked Mr. Mellow for his commitment, his efforts, and his innovations.
- V. **School Relations Reports.**
 - A. **School Report.** Principal Brian Condon reported.
 1. Townsend Harris HS was just named the #1 high school in NYS and the #11 high school in the nation by *US News and World Report*. The principal thanked the Alumni Association and PTA for their constant and continual support. He said "the work continues." To celebrate there was a breakfast for teachers and ice cream for students at the end of the school day.
 2. College acceptance season is here. Principal Condon reported on the acceptances of current students as well as the many scholarships received.
 3. A special upcoming event is the 3rd annual Humanities Symposium. The spring course of study for the Humanities Seminar now stresses Research and Writing. Students have spent a major portion of their class time in the library doing research for prospective presentations. The best papers will be honored and presented on

Wednesday May 29th in Rosenthal Library beginning at 9:30 AM. The principal invited us to attend part of the day-long event.

4. This year there will be two evening Spring Concert performances on 5/28 and 5/30.
5. Upcoming events include Prom, Baccalaureate, and Keepers Day, a new tradition.
6. A committee is revisiting and revising the Code of Conduct for next year. The stipulation that a student “must be in good standing” in terms of the Code of Conduct in order to, in the future, receive awards and scholarships with cash awards will be added.
7. The Principal discussed the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The DOE is revising the expectations for goals and guidelines.
8. Craig Slutzkin asked about the incoming new freshman class. The principal said there would be between 295 and 306 students compared to last year’s freshman class of 309. No other demographic information is available yet. The school expected 36-39 ranked students with IEPs. The DOE assigned a total of 45, the borough’s average; the additional students were not ranked. Students with IEPs are given extra services and bring extra funding.
 - a. We continue to connect with the Twice Exceptional community as a road to recruitment of these academically able students who also have IEPs.
 - b. There was some discussion on curriculum related to accommodation of students with IEPs.
 1. One accommodation has been the inclusion of a Geology / Earth Science course in our course offerings.
 2. Some programming issues arise related to Mathematics offerings, specifically Algebra which most of our students take in 8th grade but many students with IEPs do not.
9. Mr. Slutzkin inquired about an incident which he read about in *The Classic* related to a racial slur. The principal provided details about the initial incident and the actions that he took to deal constructively with the incident.
10. Ben Fung asked about the SAT Adversity Score and its significance for our students.
11. Michael Byc, after noting “a lack of greenery” at the entrance to the school, volunteered to teach students carpentry and horticulture in the context of a club that would beautify the grounds of the school.

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

1. Mrs. Kimyager distributed copies of the current issue of *The Classic*.
2. She reported that there was a small phone-a-thon in March.
3. PTA elections took place. The new co-presidents are Bill Rettig and Nan Ng. Secretary is Cheryl Jimenez, Treasurer is Donna Monaco, Co- VPs of Communications are Michael Rhee and Susan Gardner, Co-VPs of Fundraising are Mias Sawada and Anna Tsang, Alumni Liaison is Irina Kimyager, and Co-Chairs of Hospitality are Shaunda Anderson and Sylvia Chen, pending Ms. Chen’s assent.
4. Parents were pleased with the “one day internship” idea where a student shadows an alum for a day.
5. There may be changes in next year’s budget. The PTA will consult with the principal.
6. The PTA dinner will take place on 6/13 at East Buffet. All are invited. Mrs. Kimyagar distributed invitations.

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. A 7% increase in the Mutual Fund holdings compensated for losses last year.
- B. Assets, income, and expenditures are noted on page 7.
- C. Craig Slutzkin stated that annual dues notices are slated for distribution soon.

- D. The administrators of the Winston Scholarship have awarded an additional \$20,000 to a graduate who received their scholarship three years ago and who has maintained an active connection with the Foundation.
- VII. **Other Committee Reports.** Various members of the board presented.
- A. **Events Committee Reports.**
1. Karen Curzio reported on reunion events. Reunions for Classes of 2014, 2009, 2004, 1999, 1994, and 1989 will be planned this year. The Committee requests volunteers to organize reunions for 1999 and 2004. The 2014 Reunion will take place on 8/2 or 8/3, organized by Suswana Chowdhury, John O'Neill, Mateusz Chrobak, and Anita Suvasia. Kea Richardson volunteered to oversee the 2009 event. Trina Woods planned the 1994 event to take place on 9/14 at Roma View. The class of 1989 event, planned by Michelle Williams and Danielle Williams will take place on 6/22 from 8-11 PM at Bourbon Street on Bell Boulevard in Bayside. Since the numbers seem light she may invite other alumni years or move it.
 2. Selena Lee reviewed the activities that Kimberly Lo has put in place, such as the NYC Football Club game and the Subway Series as well as pending events including the Sports Award Dinner, the SLT meeting, and the PTA Dinner.
 3. Gary Mellow referred to his remarks earlier in the meeting when he discussed the Career Day program. He then posed the challenge of assessing the success of the website and other online outreach vehicles, such as Web Chats. He will work on this issue this summer. He wants to create a means to collect relevant data about usage. David Zarowin emphasized that social media is the best, maybe only, way to do outreach and communicate with students and alums.
- B. **Social Media Report.** The report was deferred.
- C. **Compliance Report.** The report was deferred but a meeting of Lara Traum, Shari Gruber, and Craig Slutzkin is scheduled. They are working on the updated version and submitting edits. At our first meeting in the fall they will provide a more robust report.
- VIII. A list of dates for next year's meeting will be distributed in the fall.

The motion to adjourn was made by Debra Michlewitz and was seconded by David Zarowin. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Michlewitz
Secretary

