

MINUTES FROM PRIOR BOARD MEETING (DRAFT)

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on January 7, 2020)

November 13, 2019

Location: Telephonic

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Principal Brian Condon, Karen Curzio, Ben Fung, Shari Gruber, Irina Kimyagar, Dr. Selina Lee, Gary Mellow, Craig L. Slutzkin.

The following guests were present: Bill Rettig

- I. Co-President Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 6:38pm and welcomed the directors our first meeting of the 2019-2020 academic year. Mr. Slutzkin explained that this first meeting will be a phone meeting. The second will be located in Manhattan. The third will be located in Queens. Finally, the location of the final meeting of the year will be determined at a later date.
- II. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**. The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 21, 2019 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Selina Lee and seconded by Ben Fung. 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. Founders Day was Friday, November 8th. Alumna Tanya M. Odom ('88) was the speaker. She is a global consultant, facilitator, professor, author, Executive Coach and thought leader. Tanya was also the first female Co-President and later Co-Chairperson of THAA's Board of Directors.
 - B. The SLT's Legislative Breakfast will be held at the THHS Library on Friday, January 31st 2020.
 - C. The THAA Annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 8th. Possible locations for this meeting include THHS or Kew & Willow Books (since we have a \$300 credit from last year's meeting). When Dr. Lee is able to work out the details, she will inform the Board.
 - D. This year, the SLT co-chairs are Christopher Amanna (Teacher of Latin and THHS' Class of 2006) and AnnLin Su (SU President). In the September and October meetings, much of our discussion have been focused on (1) the CEP goals, (2) creation of a vision statement, (3) amendment in the way a full year's course is graded, and (4) class selection for juniors and seniors. Lara Traum and Selina Lee continue to represent the Alumni Association.
 - E. Flom scholarship – Given that the Flom Foundation was disbanded, THAA most likely will no longer be able to award new scholarships. One last idea is to be in touch with another donor's family. Since this is a 4-year scholarship, THAA will continue to provide the money for the remaining years for existing recipients..
 - F. Newsletter – Since a good time to update is when THAA does the dues statement, Mr. Slutzkin hopes to have that ready after a critical mass of payments are made.
 - G. Mr. Slutzkin reports that he would still like to continue the videography and would like to specifically target Ms. Odile Garcia and Ms. Judy Beiner (recently retired).
- IV. **School Relations Reports**.
 - A. **School Report**. Principal Brian Condon reported.
 1. Founders' Day – Principal Condon really enjoyed this year's event and said that this was the smoothest, most organized, and most enjoyable Founders' Day event yet.
 2. SING! is on next week. The students are all practicing and getting ready.
 3. Physical education for junior and seniors – NYS has identified 4 areas where the city does not regularly meet the state requirement in a straight forward way so physical

education implementation was under the telescope. The school was flagged for number of physical education hours the students received. Due to a misunderstanding of what “daily” means to THHS’ band schedule, the juniors and seniors didn’t meet the frequency requirement of NYS. Due to help from various administrators within the school, this issue has been resolved.

4. Using Resolution A funds, the school was able to redo the weight room. It is relocated to a larger space and is now top notch.
5. There is now a Zen Den on the 3rd floor. It is a mindfulness area, for the students to come and destress. One of the guidance counselors moved into that room.
6. Assemblyperson Nily Rozic has pledged funding for a new media/journalism center.
7. Ms. York and Mr. Heathwood is creating a digital music lab. A parent pledged \$25,000 and the school is looking to find another \$25,000.
8. State Senator Toby Stavisky promised \$80,000 for a new sound system in the auditorium.
9. The school’s partnership with Queens College continues to flourish. A math professor is collaborating with THHS to look at instruction. In addition, THHS is looking to extend our partnership with the social studies program. We are currently 2 years into the Bridge Year contract and therefore, Principal Condon has started re-writing and thinking about its renewal.
10. THHS was ranked #2 for serving underprivileged kids who finish college within 4 years. A school in New Zealand wants to come visit after hearing about the ranking
11. Eva Moskowitz from the Success Academy reached out to THHS and wants to come for a tour and learn more about the school.
12. This year, THHS has a total of 1,222 students across all grades which is an increase from 1,154 last year. The incoming class was 308 last year whereas it was 322 for this year.
13. The Open House for Prospective Students had 4,500 to 5,000 visitors. This event was reorganized it so that the students did a lot more talking. Sarah Loew really did an amazing job getting the students ready. Veronica York scripted the event. Ellen Fee pulled all the pieces together. Susan Brustein, Rafal Olechowski, and Georgia Brandeis did a good job showing off their departments. The PTA graciously provided a stipend to teachers.

B. **PTA Report**. Mr. Rettig, PTA Co-President and Mrs. Kimyagar, the PTA Liaison-Elect reported.

1. Scheduling difficulties at the beginning of the school year was resolved. However, some students still have 2-3 periods free each day. Some science classes didn’t have enough seats so some students were forced to take classes like geology. In addition, there weren’t enough seats for AP calculus.
2. There is a new way of teaching which is promoted – progressive vs. traditional learning. Some classrooms have discussions in class and the students need to learn on their own at home. Some parents believe that this increases the level of stress for students.
3. The PTA webpage is fully updated.
4. Since THAA has database of mentors and the PTA has a mentoring page, we should think of some way to combine the two. Of course, a central issue is what the safest way is to control students’ conversations with alumni. It was suggested that there be an intermediary at the school.
5. The PTA has fundraised \$5600 in the first part of phone-a-thon. The fundraising leader has a lot of ideas. Some of these ideas include working with the alumni to sell t-shirts or other memorabilia.
6. The parents and students enjoyed alumnus Vincent Yuen’s talk last year regarding college admission interviews and would like to invite Vincent back for another round.
7. The panel format was highly successful last year and the PTA hopes that this can continue for Career Day.

8. Mr. Heathwood, the band director, proposed to do a competition in Orlando. Therefore, students are fundraising now.
9. The PTA is helping in test prep and college advice because a lot of parents are concerned or mystified about the whole college process. 70 students took the PSAT for free at Kellar. There is also PSAT test prep in school on Fridays for 90 minutes. In the future, there will be a college essay workshop by the Queens College writing teacher for Juniors and Seniors with parents. The PTA also is hosting an SAT practice test for 12/6 and another in January.
10. A 3rd college trip was added. Usually, the October trip goes to the Boston area, the February trip goes to the Washington DC area. For each trip, the 50 students visit 6 colleges.
11. The PTA has a document about STEM program at THHS. Mr. Rettig has been in communication with 10-15 high schools in the NY area to ask about their STEM programs. Mr. Rettig says there is a shortage of core AP classes (like physics and bio) at the school.

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

- A. Since the last report to the Board on April 30, 2019, there has been a nominal increase in value from our holdings in mutual accounts/managed account through August 31, 2019 at around \$8,000. The association received a dividend of \$5,062 from Hansard Global.
- B. There were \$6,820 in dues collected since April 30, 2019 along with \$88,043 in contributions.
- C. Since the last report, there were \$122,440 in expenditures.
- D. The 2019-2020 Budget, as presented on Page 16 of the Board package was voted on. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Selina Lee and seconded by Gary Mellow. The motion to approve the budget passed unanimously.

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

A. **Events Committee Reports.**

1. Karen Curzio reported that the Class of 1994's 25th Year Reunion was on Saturday, Sept 14th. The Class of 2009's 10th Year Reunion is scheduled for the end of December. And the Class of 1999's 20th Year reunion is coming up at the beginning of December.
2. Dr. Lee reported that unfortunately there was no interest in the NYC Football Club event and so this was cancelled.
3. The Subway Series event which was on July 3rd was successful, per usual, where all the seats we allocated to THAA were sold out.
4. There have been two School Leadership Team meetings thus far. There will continue to be one meeting each month until the end of the school year.
5. The Open House for Prospective Students happened on Monday, November 4.
6. Upcoming events at the school include SING! and Winter Carnival.

B. **Social Media Report.** The report was deferred.

C. **Compliance Report.** The report was deferred.

D. **Mentorship Committee Report.**

1. Gary Mellow reported that one main focus of this committee should be how to get information about who is utilizing the mentorship program data. A technical solution is feasible
2. The last survey sent out to the alumni body was done a while ago so it is suggested that we send another. Not only could we gain information in terms of who actually may

have gone to the website to use the program, but also, we can make it a better bigger picture of what kind of events alumni would like.

3. Questions we could ask In relation to fundraising is where alumni would like their donation to support (with a listing for them to choose top 3). In addition, we can put in little comments like if you want to donate, all you have to do is go to this website and use paypal/venmo.
4. There could be a subcommittee for this. If interested, please email Dr. Lee.

The motion to adjourn was made by Shari Gruber and was seconded by Gary Mellow. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Selina Lee
Co-President and Acting Secretary of the Meeting

