

University of Chicago Laboratory Schools Parents' Association

Minutes of the General Meeting

June 5, 2017

Attendance: Sarah Abella, Michael Allen, Liz Anderson, Anuradha Behari Asthana, Zainab Baig, Monica Bahroos, Frank Baldassare, Sandy Bixby, Kathleen Brandenburg, Lorna Campbell, Anna Campos, Angela Cobb, Tracy Coe, Archana Dharanipragada, Donna Lee Fackenthal, Ann Grissom, Amy Han, Beth Henry, Eric Ginsburg, Mariana Ingersoll, Lena Jessen, Yuhei Jiang, Christopher Jones, Bonnie Kang, Amelia Klein, Dan Kraemer, Sieglinde Lim-Seiwert, Tina Louie, Evelyn McCullen, Melissa McMahon, Sairam Muthialu, Amanda Norton, Tiffany Norwood, Subrina Pace-Palmer, Tracy Quinn, Abundio Rodriguez, Claudia Roeder, Lynn Sasamoto, Colleen Sheehan, Andee Stacy, Nancy Stern, Kim Stolze, Heather Tamburo, Abe Thomas, Sunitha Thomas, Gretchen Winter, Audris Wong, Jen Zhang, and Zhenjuan Zhang. Nancy Stern took the minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Recap of the Year

Audris Wong thanked the outgoing board members and event chairs. She noted that there were 1400 attendees at Rites of May, including 40 invitees from High Jump. She specially recognized Brittany Chang and Christie Henry. Audris stated that the PA Annual Report highlights innovation, including a High School dialogue about civil rights, parent-to-parent meetings in the Middle School, and Lower School lobby displays. There was an ESH all-campus event and a holiday book fair. This was not more for more's sake but deeper. The Diversity Committee sponsored a panel discussion and affinity group. She also mentioned the PA grant program.

Security

There was then a discussion on the approach to conflict resolution. It was noted that people are eight times more likely to issue a threat over email, and we are more likely to miss the nuance in an email. Christopher Jones thanked the parents and the PA for being informed and engaged.

Welcome New Board Members

There was then an introduction of and welcome of new board members.

Remarks of Beth Harris, Director

At 7:15 p.m., Beth Harris thanked Audris Wong and Tina Louie as well as Christie Henry and thanked those in attendance. Beth noted that at the beginning of the year, she had focused on the many changes and expressed it as a mark of progress that the sense of nervousness associated with this change has abated. She recounted highlights of the year, including the Family Celebration, Rites of May, speakers, and the Dewey Dance. Beth noted that she has deepened her appreciation of Lab and the sense of community and stated that she has really loved being the interim director of Lab this year. She

said that she wanted to see Lab flourish and pave the way for the new director, and she thinks she has done that. Beth then played a video highlighting the sweet moments of the year.

Report on PA Grants

Tina Louie then gave a report on PA grants, noted that \$15,000 had been funded this year. She highlighted one project led by Matt Landa, the "Stress-Less Fest." Matt is a Middle School counselor. She showed slides highlighting the purpose of the project, including showing students they are not alone. The Stress-Less Fest was held one Wednesday a month for five months during tutorial period. Lessons were provided to advisories, including the causes and forms of stress, goals and time management, dealing with stress through arts and expression, dealing with stress through reading and relaxing, technology usage, and dealing with stress through exercise and nutrition.

School Operations

At 7:43, Tina Louie introduced Christopher Jones, the Chief Operating Officer. Christopher thanked Tina, Audris and Beth for their work. He provided updates on security, wifi for unaffiliated families, and construction. He noted that it is a challenge to balance security and community. The policy for IDs for students in Middle School has changed; they must show IDs when they come in but are not required to wear them. Regarding limiting the number of entrance doors, the number has been expanded, so that now Blaine and Judd will welcome visitors. The new policies will be published on the web site. The security committee will continue to meet quarterly next year. There were questions regarding bus routes. Christopher stated that the goal is to run on a break-even basis. With respect to wifi, Christopher stated that there will be a form once you log into the parent portal. Within 24 hours after submitting the form, an applicant will be set up. He noted that there is no construction inside Lab, but the school is in the process of revitalizing Lab Logs and will have it open by the end of August. There will be an outdoor classroom just east of that, which will also be open for the start of the school year next year. The area currently fenced off will return to athletic facilities. Christopher also noted that Summer Lab will welcome over 1100 students.

Director Search

At 7:55, Tina introduced David Fithian and David Kistenbroker, who gave an update on the director search. The new director had been announced earlier that day. He will come in two weeks. He has two sons, one at Exeter, and the other joining at Exeter, so they will not attend Lab. He will start work in four weeks. They praised Beth Harris, who received a standing ovation for her work as interim director. She will stay on through the Fall as a consultant. David Kistenbroker noted that the new director, Charlie Abelmann, had done a great deal of due diligence on Lab. His focus is on the child. There was then an opportunity for questions. The only question was about opportunities to welcome Charlie Abelmann.

Questions

At 8:06, the meeting was opened for general questions. There was a discussion regarding the stability of the director in terms of length of tenure. After further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.