

**Advocates for Academic Excellence in Education, Inc.**  
**(Benjamin Franklin High School)**  
**Special Board of Directors Meeting**  
November 17, 2016 at 4:00PM  
Benjamin Franklin High School Library

1. **Call to Order:** 4:05 PM
2. **Roll Call:** Les Alexander, Mark Baum '77, Alea Cot, Duris Holmes '80, Richard Ireland, Jr., Ingrid Labat, M.D. '87, Dr. John Nicklow, Gary Ostroske, Daniel Schenck '94, Todd Slack, and Carlos Zervigon  
**Excused:** Sandra Katz-Levy '65 and Dr. Maureen Shuh
3. **Announcements:**
  - a. Dr. Widhalm shared his idea to revamp the back of the library into a board room / conference room and student art gallery, with new technology and more flexible seating and acoustics.
  - b. Mr. Alexander issued a reminder that board Ethics training needs to be completed by year end.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved
5. **Approval of Minutes of October 20, 2016:** Approved as distributed
6. **Information/Discussion**
  - a. **Student outreach project with Arise Academy (Madison Smither '17 and Illaria Simeone '17)** – “From Student to Scientist” flyer distributed. Both students are conducting research at Tulane Medical School and credited the work and preparations at Franklin. This experience inspired them to want to help other students succeed in scientific research. They first held an IRP seminar for Franklin students and over 200 attended to get their help and insights into completing the IRP process. Then, with funding from The Brown Foundation, “From Student to Scientist” began. This year, they partnered with Arise Academy. Twice per month they work with students, leading them in scientific experiments and lab work that the school would not otherwise have the resources to do. They plan the Saturday sessions by assessing what the class is studying and then provide experiments to support the classroom learning. Also, they have participated in STEM Day and worked with kids from around the city. The initiative is still growing as they recently started a network of M.E. students who have been through the “Student to Scientist” program to extend their work. This has even extended to work with students in Pakistan to form a global network. They elaborated on how Franklin changed their impression of science. Madison explained how she was in musical theater at NOCCA and had no connection to science until Franklin. Illaria shared how she was disillusioned with the science opportunities in New Orleans, but that Franklin has surpassed any hope she had for science instruction and preparation. They acknowledged Dr. Tabony for his mentorship as well.
  - b. **Project XQ (Dylan Borne '17 and Simon Miscenich '17)** - Through their work preparing a submission for last year’s national Project XQ, Dylan and Simon developed an experiential learning concept, where internships were a fundamental

part of their school with the aim of establishing mutually beneficial relationships. They have partnered with six organizations and anticipate having a job fair to pair students with internships in the next few months. Simon went on to share that students who have completed their IRP will be connected to research groups to continue their IRP work at the next level. Their plan is that after a semester of the research internship, students will decide whether to continue through the summer and develop a final project. A fundamental part of the concept is to strengthen the evaluation process for organizations and for student admittance to make sure academic outcomes are successful beyond the initial connection. Dylan went on to share a vision that Franklin will grow science the way NOCCA grows arts.

Mr. Alexander offered to introduce the boys and their project to Idea Village in the spring. Dr. Nicklow suggested that GNO Inc. would also be a good place to introduce the project. Simon suggested that transportation limitations to project sites might need to be explored to make sure students without transportation are included.

Other board members also offered they could connect the students with organizations.

7. **Head of School Monthly report (Dr. Widhalm)** – Dr. Widhalm highlighted faculty and student accomplishments detailed in the report. He also thanked Dr. Nicklow, on behalf of the Franklin faculty, for the decision that UNO would absorb the shortfall students would face in the spring semester because of the underfunding of the TOPS program. David Ferris shared information on the School Performance Scores (SPS) that were just released with details about how the score is determined. Franklin received the highest score for a high school in the state. He also commented that with the federal decision to replace No Child Left Behind with Every Student Succeeds Act, some of the metrics will likely change in the coming years. There was some discussion about the AP scores for economically disadvantaged students and how federal and state rules assess school success between Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate.
8. **CFO report (Allison Bent)** - Ms. Bent presented the October monthly financial statements and shared that variances from the budget can be found in the expense line items for benefits and repairs & maintenance because they are September expenditures, but were posted in October. She also noted that there was a large increase in energy spending because of a software control issue in the ac settings. Mr. Baum and Mr. Schenck said that they would look into the issues related to the AC system and control. Ms. Bent also reported that at its meeting just prior to the board meeting, the Finance Committee recommended allocating \$65,000 to fund the Facilities Assessment and Masterplan Project, and set a goal to finalize an operational reserves policy and share it with the board. Mr. Alexander asked when the revenue gains from a higher than budgeted student enrollment would be seen in the monthly financials. Ms. Bent explained that this appears near the end of the fiscal year.
9. **Committee Reports -**
  - a. **Strategic plan committee (Gary Ostroske)** – January 7 is the date for the working group meeting to discuss the Strategic Plan. The Franklin mission, vision, and measures will be discussed at the meeting. He wants the group to look at where we are with the implementation of the Strategic Plan and who is responsible for

addressing and progressing these items. Communications and the expansion of academic life into the world economy are among the topics to be discussed further at the meeting. Daniel Schenck reminded Board members that the Alumni Association Faculty Party is that same evening and board members are welcome to attend.

- b. **Facilities (Mark Baum):** The Facilities Assessment Project proposals were received and the group was narrowed down to three firms. From those three Trapolin-Peer was selected to perform the assessment. Workshops will take place over about 8 weeks and should begin after the winter break. The entire project will take place during the Spring semester.
- c. **Audit (Todd Slack)** – Mr. Slack presented the draft charter for the Audit committee and explained the functions of the group. One function of the Audit Committee is to interface with auditors; second, is to look at controls that are being used such as check registers; and the third function is to assess risk. The charter document details each of these 3 functions.
- d. **Governance (Les Alexander)** – Mr. Alexander presented the draft charter for the Governance committee and explained the function of this group. The Governance Committee oversees terms, term limits, the composition of the board, compliance with rules and regulations, orientation of new members, and recommends changes and additions. It meets on an as needed basis and will be comprised of the Chair, Head of School and two additional board members.

#### 10. Action Items

- a. **Approval of committee charters for Audit and Governance committees as distributed: Motion to Adopt:** No board discussion or public comment. **Approved unanimously.**
- b. **Election of Jyric Sims as a Class C board member (Ingrid Labat and Les Alexander).** Mr. Sims is presently the COO of Tulane Health System and is interested in serving on the board. He is not a parent, nor an alum, and would broaden the diversity and experience of the board. Alexander met with the candidate for an interview to assess his talents and availability and was impressed with his qualifications and interest in helping the school. He would be able to begin his board service in January. **Motion approved. Board discussion:** Mr. Slack supported the nomination. No public comment. **Elected unanimously.**
- c. **Election Lisa Hartman and Diego Gonzalez as members of the Academic Policy Committee (Carlos Zervigon).** **Motion approved and passed unanimously.**
- d. **Authorization to move school bank accounts (Todd Slack and Allison Bent)** — Because of verifiable concerns about the condition of First NBC, it was recommended that the school move its bank accounts to another financial institution. After investigation of several banking options and receiving proposals from two, it was recommended that an account be opened with Iberia Bank. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- e. **Authorization to sign a contract with Trapolin-Peer Architects and VMDO Architexts joint-venture to perform the Facilities Needs Analysis and Master Facilities Plan and approval to allocate up to \$65,000 from the school reserves to cover the fees in excess of other funding sources (Baum).** The Facilities

Committee supports this and would require a transfer of funds from a restricted account. Dr. Widhalm thanked Mr. Baum for arranging this study and facilitating the selection process. Ms. Bent and Mr. Parauka also expressed excitement at the school's growth and potential. **Motion was approved unanimously.**

- f. **Authorization to allow Les Alexander to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between AAEE and United Teachers of New Orleans regarding payroll deductions for medical premiums (Allison Bent). Approved unanimously.**

9. Motion to adjourn. 5:23 PM