

URSULA FRANKLIN ACADEMY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes, October 29, 2019 at 7 p.m.

Co-chair: Andres Lopez

Recording Secretary: Ann Perry

Staff: David Freedman, Barbara Wagner-Heim

Students: Jonathon Gotlib, Hannah Lowy, Emily Goncalves

Parents: ~12 in attendance

Co-chair Andres Lopez called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Adoption of minutes of September 17, 2019, meeting

- Cindy Zhou has agreed to head the Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee and will be added to the Executive Team.
- Diane Zinnica moved that the minutes of the Sept. 17, 2019 meeting be passed.
- Madeleine Lowenberg-Frick seconded the motion.

2. Report of Student Council – Jonathon Gotlib

Student Council Elections

- Students elected the Student Council House at the end of September, with three to five representatives from each grade.
 - Student Council piloted online voting to lessen the environmental footprint and ease the vote-counting process.
 - The process worked and is more efficient than paper ballots.

Grub Days

- Each month, Student Council hosted a grub day. Students typically pay \$2 for the privilege of wearing non-uniform clothing to school
- The first grub day, on Friday, Sept. 27, was free due to the climate action march.
- First grub day to make funds took place on Oct. 18. All the funds went to Youth Without Shelter, an organization that helps homeless youth.

UFA Unplugged Week

- PALS ran UFA Unplugged Week from Oct. 21 to 25. The event encouraged students to “unplug” from electronic devices and engage in other activities, including a range of lunch-time activities. Thanks to all those who donated prizes for students who earned the most points.

Halloween

- On Friday, Oct. 25, Student Council ran a haunted house in the drama room.
- We have the Halloween spirit assembly on Thursday, Oct. 31, and are also running a door-decorating contest.

Wednesday Sessions

- The first unit of Student Council Wednesday sessions focused mainly on electing grade representatives. The next Wednesday session unit will include only Student Council and grade representatives, who will be planning events for the year.
- The Executive, led by the external affairs representative, is developing a current event protocol to provide guidance on when and how the school should acknowledge international events.
- The Executive is also working on a protocol for allocating funds collected through Grub Days. These funds help the Student Council, but there are also opportunities to grant funds to other clubs. In the past, there has been no formal way to allocate these funds, so this year the Student Council voted to create a clear, consistent and equitable process for distributing Grub Day funds.
- Student Council will hold a town hall meeting in November to discuss events and seek general feedback from the student body.

Questions:

How much money does Student Council collect on Grub Days, and how do you allocate it?

- Between \$500 and \$700 per Grub Day, which is deposited into the Student Council account to fund spirit events such as the semi-formal, or into an account with the school that is donated to charity. Excess money can be reallocated as a grant to clubs.

Can amount charged for Grub Days be increased to raise more money?

- It's an interesting idea, and we will take it back to Student Council.
- But we want to keep Grub Days accessible to all students.

3. Report of Franklin Athletic Association (FAA) – Hannah Lowy, Emily Goncalves

- If your child participated in fall sports, parents should have received an e-mail via School Cash Online regarding the athletic banquet fee.
- The fall season is coming to a close, and winter sports have started recruitment/tryouts.
 - The cross-country team did particularly well at regionals, tying Humberstone for top team in the west. UFA cross-country athletes will be competing at OFSAA on Nov. 2.
- Intramural sports are in full swing, with soccer starting the previous Thursday.
- FAA will be selling samosas and baked goods at the Grade 8 open house on Nov. 5.
- FAA is looking for students who can share their talents at the holiday assembly in December.
- Mental health committee is running Wednesday sessions in Unit 3 (next block of sessions), which will feature guest speakers and include activities such as making stress balls and arts and crafts.

Questions:

How to get involved in mental health committee?

- Contact Danielle Farmer, UFA's child and youth worker.

What advice can you offer to students who do not make competitive teams?

- Participate in intramural sports at lunch.

4. Report of Teachers – Greg Saylor

Update on Labour Negotiations

- Teachers will be in legal strike position on Nov. 18 if vote is approved.
- No info yet on sequence of potential job action.
- Sign-up sheet to receive updates on status of labour negotiations.

Wednesday Program

- UFA has had a Wednesday Program website for five years, and for the past two years has been able to mine some data from the website to help guide improvements to the program.
- Key insights:
 - Expected marks do not appear to affect how students choose Wednesday sessions.
 - Last year, 183 out of 500+ students had led sessions

Questions:

Are there student evaluations of Wednesday sessions?

- Evaluations talked about but not yet implemented
- There is a pretty obvious rating system when sessions are undersubscribed.

Are there a lot of proposals that are not accepted?

- Proposal section of website difficult to use until recently.

How do students come to lead sessions?

- Sometimes they propose sessions, sometimes teachers invite them to lead them.

Does it tend to be more senior students?

- No, not necessarily.

If sessions require materials, how are they provided?

- Teacher might charge materials fee
- Wednesday grant system
- Used uniform sale money goes into Wednesday program funding.

School Census

- The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) conducts a census every five years. It includes every student in the building on the day of the census.
- Greg provided an overview of how UFA fared in the 2016-2017 census compared with TDSB-wide statistics, and compared with UFA census data from 2011 and 2006. On the positive side, UFA students feel safe at school; however, their comfort level speaking in class is lower than we would like. Greg also covered topics such as homework, students' relationships with their parents, whether there is a "caring adult" at school they can confide in, and mental health.

Questions:

Several parents raised concerns about the relatively low level of racial diversity at UFA compared with the TDSB as a whole.

- UFA revisits its entrance policies every five years, and has looked at barriers to access the school. It has also reached out to elementary school councils.
- Grade 8 students who apply to UFA do not reflect the diversity of the city. This is not new, but has been an ongoing challenge for UFA.

- The best time to reach students is in Grade 6 so they can start to think about their options and plan.
- There are widespread misperceptions about UFA that need to be tackled.
- Parents expressed a desire to revisit this issue at future SAC meetings.

5. Report of the Vice-Principal – Barbara Wagner-Heim

- Future Options Fair took place in October for students in Grades 10, 11 and 12
- Grade 8 information night will take place on Nov. 5. The two sessions are already almost full.
- There will be a professional activity (PA) day on Nov. 15.
- During the October PA day, staff watched a TED talk focused on the learning versus performance zone. The talk generated lots of discussion around student stress and what we can do to create lower-stress environments. For example, UFA teachers have created a master spreadsheet to show when tests are happening and projects due to help coordinate and manage student's workloads.
(https://www.ted.com/talks/eduardo_briceno_how_to_get_better_at_the_things_you_care_about/transcript?language=en)

6. Report of the Principal – David Freedman

School Statement of Needs

- SAC needs to complete the School Statement of Needs by Friday, Nov. 1. All schools complete the form annually. The superintendent uses the form to understand the school's needs in the event they need to select a new school administrator.
- Discussion resulted in some edits to the document:
 - Addition: Maintain the number of teachers required to ensure the integrity of the UFA program as it stands right now.
 - Desire to rephrase #7 – "Support teachers and students independency". David will consult Sanja

Optional Attendance Consultation

- The TDSB in decline. Its structures were meant to serve 140,000 secondary students per year, but only ~80,000 are currently registered.
- The TDSB is holding meetings in November to review its optional attendance policy. One of those meetings will take place on Nov. 14 at Western Tech. UFA parents should attend this meeting.

Staff

- Staff changes are still happening. Once we know staff changes will be permanent, we will include them in a news flash.

School Infrastructure

- The school is in the process of changing some windows on the Glendonwyne side of the building.
- The windows have old caulk that contains asbestos. It is classified as "asbestos 1" because it is incorporated into the caulk.
- To remove the caulk, the room is sealed off from the rest of the building and workers spray the caulk before removing it. Workers are taking measurements during two points during process to ensure the asbestos is properly contained. The process is working so far in room

113. Work is happening at nights and on weekends. Permitted activities on weekends are continuing as the rooms being worked on are sealed.

- Work will probably continue until end of December.

Lock Down Drill

- UFA had a lock-down drill in October.
- Some students were upset as it reminded them of the real lockdown that occurred last year.
- UFA staff are in the process of addressing concerns that have been raised. There will be more announced drills before we go back to unannounced drills.
- A speaker from the Toronto Police Service will be coming to the school to explain what a lockdown is, what staff and students should do, and what supplies teachers should have in classrooms in the event of a real lockdown.

Other

- **Grade 8 Open House (Nov. 5)** – There has been extremely strong interest. We have scheduled two presentations, and may not be able to accommodate everyone who is interested in attending.
- **Budget** – All TDSB schools have suffered a budget withdrawal because of reduced funding from the Ministry of Education. UFA has a smaller budget than in past years. There will be an effect on the program, but we don't know how severe it will be.
- **Vaccinations** – Students need to be fully vaccinated or they could be suspended.
- **Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)** – Parents are invited to attend a PIAC networking/capacity-building event on Nov. 16 at Earl Haig SS.
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/PIAC-2019-Event>
- **Agendas** – UFA is looking at having mobile, rather than paper, agendas for students. The cost of equivalent to paper agendas, but some staff are not keen to switch as they already use other tools such as Google Classroom. One parent raised a question about accessibility.
- **UFA Administration Update:** David's term as UFA principal will continue indefinitely. A permanent principal was appointed in the summer, but has been on a leave of absence.

7. Ward 7 update – Jennifer Wills

- Jennifer will send around minutes of the last Ward 7 minutes to attach to these meeting minutes.
- Ward 7 is looking for a PIAC representative.
- The Ward 7 meeting discussed changes in the PRO (Parent Reaching Out) grants. These will be based on allocation per student rather than application. Jennifer is unsure of the process to access these funds.
- There was a lot of discussion about the potential labour dispute. Parents can go to the TDSB website or the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation website (<https://bargainingforeducation.ca/>) for updates.

The co-chair adjourned the meeting at 9:36 p.m. The next meeting will take place on Nov. 26, 2019, at 7 p.m. in the UFA library.