

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies School Advisory Council

Minutes from SAC meeting on December 8, 2020

The virtual meeting was called to order (via Zoom) at 7:33 a.m. by Chair, Michael Larkin

Members Present: Michael Larkin, Ed Coleman, Karen Townsend, Denise Rasmussen, Max Smith, Gabriella Watson, Lynn Plevitch, Rachel Gable, Leigh Anne Ratliff, Virginia Warren, Madison Hall, and Colleen Hall. A simple majority was present for quorum at the time the meeting was called to order.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda

- The minutes from November's meeting were approved without any changes.
- The agenda for today's meeting was approved as amended to add three items of old business.

Old Business

There are two vacant Director's appointment positions on SAC and Michael has requested Dr. Lowerre fill them. Michael stated the two goals of these additional appointments would be to include alumni input and to increase the diversity of SAC membership.

PTSA update – Karen T. attended last night's virtual PTSA meeting. It was very short with few committees needing to report. President, Beth Simms thanked some PTSA members for their work on the successful movie night, one of the student socials planned by SAC's 'Campus Life during COVID' group.

Planning committee liaison – Michael asked how to add a SAC liaison to the school's planning committee since this area is no longer one of our internal standing committees. Max suggested that he reach out to Dr. Ellis since she heads Planning.

New Business

- Calendar - Max reported this committee met in November and discussed standard start of the second semester. He has contacted all districts to find out how many are considering or already have early starts: 40% already start early and 30% are considering it, so this is likely to be implemented at MLWGS within the next year or two. Work on the second semester early start calendar will begin next month.
- Nominations and by-laws – Karen T. reported that the group reviewed SAC by-laws and confirmed that ad-hoc committees are permitted to include outside participants, however the work of standing committees is restricted to SAC members only. SAC nominations efforts will

not begin until late winter/early spring. It was noted that faculty/staff representation is lacking on this committee, so Ed Coleman agreed to join to help with faculty and student recruitment.

- Campus life during COVID - Gabriella reported that Campus life is meeting once a month and will soon be working on ideas for outdoor weather-friendly activities in the new year.
- MLWGS strategic marketing plan – Virginia reported on behalf of the committee, which met twice and discussed making a 'day-in-the-life' video for prospective students. They may also look at promoting MLWGS to colleges. They are coordinating with the early engagement committee about identifying 'sister' middle schools for more involvement.
- Prospective students /early engagement – Ed reported that the committee met last week and are looking for targeted ways to engage with middle schools, starting with RPS. Research is needed on which RPS schools send a lot of students and which do not. They will also interview principals of the middle schools to get their suggestions. Lynn mentioned that the cultural fair in the Black Box was very popular with the middle school students. There are a lot of moving parts to this project because of all the differences this year. Lynn reported that 71 additional students applied from RPS, possibly due to elimination of paper applications, more social media marketing, and no test requirements. Ed stated the committee will also want to study who turns down admission offer from MLWGS.
- Removing structural barriers to student engagement – Rachel L reported they had an active past month. A focus group (including additional students outside of SAC) is designing a survey, and this effort is being led by Gabriella and Chase. They are hoping to launch the survey before winter break or early in January.
- SAC marketing and communications plan – Michael reported the committee met last week to talk about how to increase visibility and transparency of SAC's work. A shared SAC calendar will be set up for internal communications. Smoke and Scales, Dr. Lowerre's blog, Foundation newsletters, and PTSA meetings have been identified as avenues for increased external communications. The committee will also create a playbook for needed roles and deadlines, especially within the standing committees. Microsoft SharePoint will be the technology hub for SAC materials.

Announcements and Closure

There were no additional announcements from the floor. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 a.m.