

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

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## *Minutes from SAC meeting on March 9, 2021*

The virtual meeting was called to order (via Zoom) at 7:32 a.m. by Chair, Michael Larkin

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

## Approval of Minutes and Agenda

- The agenda for today's meeting was approved.
- The minutes from January's meeting were approved with a few minor changes.

## New Business

Karen T. attended the March 1<sup>st</sup> PTSA meeting and provided a summary of its activities and announcements. During the PTSA meeting, Dr. Lowerre described reopening plans and stated that approximately 60% of students have opted to return to in-person school, with freshman and sophomores making up a large portion of this returning group. The admissions process is concluding with offer letters having just gone out. No admissions testing was done this year and student selection instead relied more heavily on essay responses. The goal remains for some form of in-person prom and graduation. Make up times for other events (such as the missed freshman lock in) are being considered for next fall.

## Committee Reports

- Calendar - Max reported this committee met a few weeks ago to look at the early start calendar draft and will finish it soon. Early start would take place 2022/2023. The regular start draft will go before the school board this month for first read. The proposed (regular start) calendar for 2021/2022 does not contain many changes from previous years, except that a few religious observances have been included to mirror the calendars of the key counties. The committee will complete its work within the next 2-3 weeks.
- Nominations and by-laws – Karen T. reported that the group has not yet met but its work will begin in earnest this month. Of the four officer positions, the role of historian will need to be filled by someone new since Denise's term on SAC is ending this year. Karen will inquire about interest and availability for renewing the three other officer positions, or for filling them with new individuals. Michael asked about typical avenues for advertising for student, parent, and

faculty positions on SAC. Karen stated that Smoke and Scales will be used for parent recruitment. Ed stated that the faculty positions involve a multi-stage process: nominations from faculty via email, inquiry about individual faculty's willingness to serve, and finally a vote by faculty on the candidates. Max stated that (rising Junior) Class Schoology pages have been used to recruit students. Michael offered to do outreach to alumni groups to solicit interest for filling some of the director-appointed positions which have been vacant this year.

- Campus life during COVID – Rachael G read a written report from Gabriella: “Virtual Game Night was on February 5th from 7-9 pm and there was a Zoom link for each grade operated by SCA Class Officers. A special shoutout to the Freshman Class Officers Rehaan Jain and Milind Murthy for going above and beyond! Virtual Game Night was especially successful for the freshmen class and 94 freshmen attended. A handful of juniors and seniors came and there were 15 sophomores. If the restrictions are more lenient for social gatherings, we hope to have another drive-in in the spring! There are some other events at the school like Prom and Graduation that will hopefully bring students to the campus.” Ed praised the Black History Month activities in February as another outstanding program which helped make connections, though not run through this committee specifically.
- MLWGS strategic marketing plan – Virginia reported that the committee got guidance from Michael on marketing to prospective students. They also collected information from Dr. Loving about how MLWGS' outreach to colleges currently works. In the coming weeks, Virginia and Chase will be meeting to further develop both marketing plans.
- Prospective students /early engagement – No report. Michael reminded everyone that this committee is a follower of the efforts of other groups and will resume work once things begin to open back up.
- Removing structural barriers to student engagement – Chase reported the committee ran the Black History Month assembly last month, which included Maggie Walker House video, African American poetry performed by the Slam Poetry Club, and a keynote presentation from Faithe Norrell, a Maggie Walker family member. The focus group's work is ongoing, and they are nearly finished analyzing the results of the student survey on racial climate at the school.
- SAC marketing and communications plan – Michael has started setting up a folder within SharePoint. He asked if anyone has barriers to access and Colleen mentioned that she needs assistance. Michael encouraged everyone to upload subcommittee materials to the shared drive.

## Announcements and Closure

Michael brought up the topic of the Foundation and upcoming online auction. Donations of items are still being solicited and he also encouraged participation. Max added that there will be a drive-in component to the auction night, and he is impressed by what the organizers are putting together during these challenging times.

The next meeting will be in May. The Executive committee will meet in April and working groups should continue their group meetings as well. The meeting adjourned at 8:02 a.m.