

Sarasota Military Academy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

22 January, 2020

Board of Director Members' Attendance

Present:

Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman
F. Steven Herb, Esquire, Vice Chairman
Ben Knisely, COL USA (Ret), Secretary
Mr. Kimball Bobbitt, Treasurer
Ms. Carter Donovan
Mr. Warren P. Hudson
Ms. Linda Long
Dr. Thomas J. McElheny

Howard G. Crowell, Jr., LTG USA (Ret), Chairman, SMA Foundation Inc. (by phone)

Absent: SMA-COL Frederick Fout, Head of School, High School Campus; LTC Ben Weiss, Commandant of Cadets – Senior Army Instructor; SMA-LTC Pamela Donehew, Director of Literacy and IB; MAJ Becky Morris, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; SMA-LTC Ryan Lee, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus; SMA-MAJ Amy Mazner, Athletic Director, High School Campus; SMA-MAJ Leslie Smith, Athletic Director, Middle School Campus; SMA-CPT Bryan Burns, Prep Faculty Rep

SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, Executive Director of Schools
SMA-LTC Dr. Catherine Rodriguez, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus
SMA-LTC Abby Williams, Assistant Head of School, High School Campus
SMA-MAJ Steve Kok, Director of Finance
SMA-MAJ Dr. Todd Brown, Director of Outreach
SMA-COL Tom Vara, Head of School, Middle School Campus
SMA-LTC Lisa Currie, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Campus

Guests: Members of the SMA faculty, staff and PTCC representatives.

SMA-CPT Jennifer Vanston, High School Faculty Rep; Ms. Michele Collins, HS PTCC President; SMA-MAJ Sylvia Gillotte, English Department Chair, High School campus; SMA-MAJ Michael Holland, Math Department Chair, High School campus; SMA-MAJ Brandon Sikkenga, World Languages Department Chair, HS campus; SMA-CPT Hellen Harvey, Film Studies teacher, High School campus; SMA-CPT Jeannette Marks, Marine Science teacher, High School campus; Mr. & Mrs. Biset, High School Parents; Mrs. Fabec, High School parent; Ms. Keenan, High School grandparent; Ms. Lucy Fabec, HS cadet

Location: SMA High School campus.

The chairman called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm.

Chairman: Chairman Herb Jones discussed the timeline of addressing the IB program at the high school campus. He stated more information was requested at the 12th of December board meeting, a work session was executed on the 6th of January, the IB program was further discussed at the 9th of January regular board meeting and an additional work session was scheduled on the 18th of January for additional public comment. Chairman Jones mentioned receiving emails discussing both sides of the future of the IB program on the high school campus.

Administration: SMA-COL Christina Bowman introduced SMA-LTC Abby Williams and SMA-LTC Lisa Currie to present what SMA could look like in the future with academics and unique experiences. SMA-LTC Currie discussed options in offering a unique academic program towards a 21st century education for grades six through twelve. SMA-COL Tom Vara stated that parents now understand how education has changed with the need to include character traits. SMA-LTC Currie showed a video of Mr. Tony Wagner at TEDxNYED.

SMA-LTC Currie discussed the top ten skillsets needed for success listed on Forbes and explained how it can be incorporated into our curriculum. She further discussed a curriculum that is learner centered and inquiry based with interactions between skills and concepts and collaborations between facilitators and cadets.

SMA-LTC Williams explained how placing classes SMA already offers into "Regimental Academic Pathways" for cadets to easily follow. She further explained how ninety percent of classes are already provided and repackaging curriculum into pathways for a more meaningful learning experience. SMA-LTC Williams stated that a cadet has the opportunity to earn up to 32 credits by graduation with the current 4x4 block schedule.

Dr. Todd Brown discussed the need to lead in education by reframing what we already do at SMA. He explained the opportunities to invite teachers and cadets along with his speaking engagements that are relative to the subject at hand. SMA-LTC Currie discussed sustainable development goals for grades six through twelve with a global connection dealing with real world problems can be part of our curriculum. She stated how graduates can walk away with an e-portfolio of evidence, published works, evidence of service learning, character development and emotional intelligence, A/P coursework, and reflection opportunities grades six through twelve. SMA-LTC Currie played the ABC7 interview of Bill Logan with Dr. Brown and three high school cadets on Operation Outbreak. She stated that this suggestion could be the course for what the Academy could be and not a final product.

SMA-COL Bowman stated that the presentation is a suggestion on course the Academy can take by combining pathways and character development through ROTC to create a unique experience at SMA. Chairman Jones inquired as to how to sell this to our stakeholders in which SMA-COL Bowman responded by showing them the presentation that was just exhibited. Vice Chairman F. Steven Herb suggested to rename pathways and package it to explain in thirty seconds.

Chairman Jones asked administration to look into how to market the pathways and make recommendations to the board by next meeting.

SMA-COL Bowman discussed the data collected for IB expenses and academic numbers and the how the data does not reflect growth of the program. She recommended to the board to phase out the IB program with the completion of the current Junior class IB cadets for the 2020-2021 school year and phase in the new program presented. Chairman Jones asked the board members for their opinions in which COL Knisely stated he is in favor of phasing out the IB program with the current IB cadets completing the program and to move forward with the new and unique academic program.

Ms. Carter Donovan stated her concerns with how the new program will be marketed as her opinion is stated that the IB program was not marketed properly. Ms. Long agreed with the need to learn more about the new program. Mr. Hudson stated that he will abstain from voting as he was not a member during the meetings of finances regarding the IB program. Dr. McElheny discussed how he became an IB supporter since becoming a board member by speaking to various people as well as visiting the IB school in Massachusetts but stated that the full support of cadets, parents, community and finances are not in place to continue the IB program at SMA. He mentioned how the new academic program can be packaged and turn into something big by already having 90% in place to move forward. Dr. McElheny stated his vote is to move forward.

Mr. Kimball Bobbitt stated that it is premature to discuss a new program and that the focus should be on continuing the IB program at SMA or not. Vice Chairman Herb stated the small percentage of IB cadets tells how the program is not growing at SMA and is a detriment to other students. He states that he is in favor of transition from the IB program to the new one presented. Chairman Jones stated that mistakes have been learned and that a better job in marketing the new concept is needed. He stated he is in favor of moving forward.

LTG Crowell stated the new program deserves more study for all to embrace and to refine, develop and market new approach that benefits cadets and community grades six through twelve. Chairman Jones called to vote.

Dr. McElheny moved to accept administrations' recommendation to phase out the IB program at the end of the 2020-2021 school year and provide the current Junior IB cadets the ability to complete the IBDP in 2020-2021 and proceed with new program; Vice Chairman Herb seconded the motion.

Ms. Long stated that questions have not been answered and doing an injustice by not being fair to parents.

Ms. Long moved to postpone the current motion to the February board meeting; Ms. Donovan seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones stated that there has been two board meetings as well as two work sessions for opportunities to welcome all comments regarding IB. SMA-COL Bowman stated that a decision needs to be made in order for parents to plan accordingly and that the time is now to come together as an Academy. Mr. Bobbitt inquired as to why the overflow of IB students from Riverview High School are not

participating in our IB program in which Dr. McElheny responded that it is not realistic to expect that and 4% to 5% of cadets in one program is driving everything.

Chairman Jones called to vote on second motion with majority voting to not postpone decision until the February board meeting.

Chairman Jones called to vote on first move by Dr. McElheny and his second of the motion to phase out IB on the high school campus. Majority vote and motion carries.

Public Comments: Cadet Lucy Fabec stated that she is dyslexic and feels that the IB program is conducive for students with learning disabilities. Mr. Biset stated that his son is in the IB program and states the challenges of the program is that it is not marketed as an IB school. Mrs. Fabec stated the issues lie with lack of board or administrative support and finances in general that are not an IB issue. She suggested more people go out into the community and market the IB program as we need a receiving end for the Prep school. SMA-MAJ Gillotte stated that IB was told to her could work within the new pathways program. She mentioned how non-IB teachers participated in IB training. Mr. Hudson stated that an attrition rate for ninth graders from the Prep is an issue that needs to be looked at and addressed.

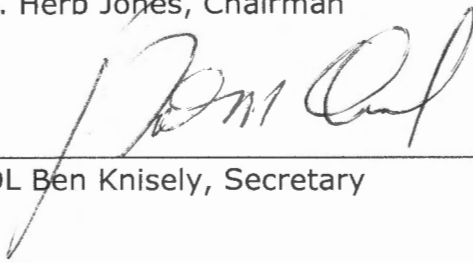
The chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:25pm.



Mr. Herb Jones, Chairman

2/13/2020

Date



COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

2/13/2020

Date