

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**THE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE**  
**March 10, 2021**



These minutes are for  
informational purposes only.

**PRESENT:** Asikainen, Samantha (7:08); McGinn, Walter; Rhynhart, Hans; Trivella, Joan; Du, Stella; Smith, Adeline; McDonald, Haley (alt.); Hughes, Karin; Rigney, John; Sandford, Chris; Saucier, Bobbie-Jo; Singleton, Holly; Washington, Denzel; Woodland, Julie

**ABSENT WITH NOTIFICATION:** Samborowski, Leonard; Preston, Megan (alt.)

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Co-chairman Trivella at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Community Participation** – None.

**3. Secretary's Report—Minutes of November 11, 2020**

**MOTION:** (McGinn/Rhynhart) To approve the minutes of November 11, 2020.

Unanimous

**4. February Updates—Black History Month and Lunar New Year Presentation**

Head of School Sandford introduced Denzel Washington. Mr. Washington covers a wide array of positions at The Academy, from administrative assistant to Mrs. Singleton, to a residential life staff member on South Campus, to assistant coach for the gold prep basketball team, to head coach for the blue prep basketball team.

Mr. Washington provided a detailed handout for the committee (attached below), where he described the many events and activities that had occurred across campus during February to commemorate Black History Month and the Lunar New Year. Next steps include working with a diversity trainer during an upcoming professional development day, scheduling climate and culture committee meetings with The Academy staff and students who have volunteered to serve on it, hiring a trainer to work with The Academy's hiring committee to address bias during the hiring process, and targeting future Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings around equity and inclusion.

Student committee members shared their experiences over the past month and Board members asked to be invited when future training was scheduled.

Mr. Washington challenged the group to “keep having the tough conversations” about current events and to educate others. He also provided an overview of upcoming events during the month of March commemorating Women's History month and various holidays.

**5. Bridge to Return**

Associate Head of School Holly Singleton provided an overview of the “Bridge to Return” schedule, which detailed events and projected on-campus attendance for the next six weeks. Additional information was provided for virtual students, bell schedules, student support schedules, office hours, clubs and activities. Students are excited to return to a more consistent schedule at school, see their friends, and enjoy better-quality learning opportunities. Several questions were asked and answered.

**6. Other**

Head of School Sandford asked Dean of Student Affairs Karin Hughes to describe The Academy's new special education program which will replace the program currently offered by EASTCONN. Called STRIVE (Structured

Teaching Reinforcing Individualized Varied Experiences), the new program will provide special education and related services to eligible students between grades 9-12 and ages 18-22. It will offer resource support along with individualized support. Students in the program will have an authentic high school experience while earning their diploma. Related services will be charged as needed on top of a flat fee per student. Transitional services may be provided in-house or outsourced, as yet to be determined. Students will be able to participate in general school activities and vocational training opportunities. It is hoped to enroll ten students in the program for the fall, and students may come from sending or non-sending towns.

## 7. Adjournment

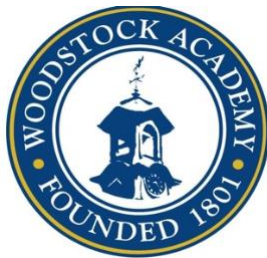
**MOTION:** (Singleton/Smith) To adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.  
Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

*Julie Woodland*

Julie Woodland  
Board Clerk

*The Woodstock Academy prepares all students by providing diverse opportunities through a rigorous curriculum and a variety of programs in order to cultivate the necessary skills to become lifelong learners and global citizens.*



February Updates on Equity & Inclusion  
Submitted by Denzel Washington

## Who is Denzel?

My name is Denzel Washington. I am the administrative assistant to Associate Head of School Holly Singleton and I am a part of the residential staff on South Campus. In addition, I am an assistant coach for the prep basketball program and head coach for its blue team. I was tasked with the opportunity to report all the great things The Academy did during the month of February as we are actively making strides to better The Woodstock Academy experience.

## What has happened...?

The Woodstock Academy was hard at work during the month of February as we acknowledged and celebrated Black History Month (BHM) and the Lunar New Year. I would like to say thank you to all who contributed.

### In School

- BHM historical facts were displayed on the TV screens around the school campuses.
- The communications department highlighted all events on the school's social media platforms (Twitter/Instagram).
- There was a display of literature written by black authors as you walked into the library.
- Mel Gronski's forensic science class explored what happened to Emmett Till through a forensic review of the case.
- Katie Burns' English classes watched the "Danger of a Single Story" Ted Talk about bias and stereotypes and how we learn and perpetuate them without consciously realizing it.
- Greg Smith's history class examined the Tulsa Race Riots of 1921.
- Samantha Romero used a series of literary pieces such as "Hair Love," "The Fourth of July," and "One Friday Morning" to create different assignments based on the grade of her students.
- The Multicultural Club, advised by Danielle Gosselin, sent out a newsletter to honor BHM. To read this newsletter, click [here](#).
- Yeantying Liaw, the advisor for the National Chinese Honor Society, celebrated the Lunar New Year by hosting a Zoom call which gave a tutorial on how to make Chinese dumplings.

### On South Campus

- Residential Life provided black history facts on social media.
- A special Zumba class, inspired by BHM, was offered to the residential students.
- Every Wednesday, FLIK's meals recognized BHM. The dinners highlighted black culture with different recipes from chefs all over the world.
- South Campus also celebrated the Lunar New Year with a special dinner on Lunar New Year's Eve.

### In the Community

- There was a [21-Day Racial Equity Challenge](#) that all employees were encouraged to participate in. We are currently planning a post-challenge meeting to discuss what was learned and what we can do differently. The Racial Equity Challenge was provided by the Michigan League for Public Policy.

### At Home

As we know, we are living in an unprecedented time. If you turn on your TV or read a news article, you are most likely reading about politics, racial equality for human rights or updates about the pandemic. We have challenged everyone at The Academy to have the tough conversations with their family and friends about what is happening. In order to grow, we must leave our comfort zone. Yes, Black History Month has come to an end, but Black History is American History, so please continue the tough conversations and educate others.

## Upcoming Events...

### Focus for the Month of March

- Women's Appreciation Month—#HERstory displays which highlight the accomplishments of women from all over the world
- FLIK will provide weekly meals that are inspired by female chefs.
- National Nutrition Month
- March Madness (college basketball)
  - FLIK will provide finger foods on South Campus for residential students to engage with one another and watch the games safely.
- St. Patrick's Day (March 17<sup>th</sup>)
- Passover (March 28<sup>th</sup>- April 5<sup>th</sup>)

### Social Media

To stay updated with what The Academy is doing, please follow a few of The Woodstock Academy's social media accounts!

- Twitter: @wdstck\_academy
- Instagram: @thewoodstockacademy
  
- Res-life Twitter: @ResLifeWA
- Res-life Instagram: @reslifewa

### Next Steps

- The Academy is actively working with Mr. Kevin Booker Jr., who is a diversity trainer from the New London area. Kevin and his staff will host two days of professional development training in areas of interest at The Academy that were identified during recent in-house surveys and discussions. Topics will likely include how to address micro-biases and how to have tough conversations with students and staff about racism. We are currently planning the dates for this event; right now the first session may be offered in May.
- A staff and student focus group were created to speak about the climate and culture of The Woodstock Academy. We cannot grow if we are not shining light on areas that need work.
- We are in the process of hiring Valerie Davis-Howard to work with administration and The Academy hiring committee to discuss bias in the hiring process. This will occur in April and May.
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings around equity and inclusion will continue for the remainder of the year.