

Nova PTO Meeting Minutes  
April 6, 2021 6:00 via Zoom  
Hosted by Heather Gray

Board Members: Heather Gray, Chair; Vidya Doppalapuddi, Vice-Chair; Isabel Chavier-Geist, Secretary; Lakshmi Narayanankutty, Treasurer; Ginger Gabor, Board Liaison

Our Mission: Nova Classical Academy PTO is an organization of volunteers who actively support the Nova Classical Academy mission and promote community within the school. The NPTO engages families, teachers and staff in fostering a school community that actively supports Nova's mission and enriches the students and the school in a manner that serves to equally benefit or level the playing field for all students, while also supporting the faculty and staff.

1. Welcome and Roll Call
  - a. In Attendance (names are as they appeared on Zoom): Heather Gray, Chair; Vidya Doppalapudi, Vice Chair; Lakshmi Narayanankutty, Treasurer; Ginger Gabor, Board Liaison; Isabel Chavier-Geist, Secretary; Committee Chairs: Upper School Parent Advisory Committee, Jane Lagerquist; Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Kluznik; Administration: Executive Director, Dr. Brett Wedlund; Lower School, Brooke Tousignant; Upper School, Michael Pelofske; Kim Dumitrica, Maria Marchand, Nicole Roesler, Andrew Dahl, Tammy Cruz, Lindsey Griffin, Kelly Rogosheske, Patty Matthews.
  - b. Agenda additions : Heather
    - i. none
  - c. Minutes and Approval Motion : Isabel
    - i. Seconded by Lakshmi, all in favor, motion to approve passed
2. Officer Reports
  - a. Board Liaison Report : Ginger (partial report)
    - i. Board discussed a branding proposal presentation and budgeting issues.
    - ii. Also discussed the reopening plan for grades 6-8 as a hybrid learning model. The prospect of re-opening the Upper School was discussed and decided to keep Upper School in distance learning through the end of the 2020-2021 school year with the addition of a targeted group of upper students identified as needing guidance who will meet one a week on site.
    - iii. The meeting lasted three hours, and all resolutions were passed. Over 60 attendees.
  - b. Executive Director's Update : Dr. Brett Wedlund
    - i. Dr. Wedlund added some notes on the budget discussion. The first read of the proposed budget included no cuts to funds and put forth measures to add positions for the coming year to help address learning loss and intervention instruction for students post distance learning.
    - ii. Dr. Wedlund clarified that the branding proposal had a goal of finding a way to highlight a more inclusive approach for Nova to showcase its educational quality for all communities.
  - c. Lower School Principal report: Ms. Brooke Tousignant
    - i. Ms. Tousignant reported that despite the challenges of re-entry of Lower School students on site, the change has been very gratifying and positive. She stated

that there are 350 students on-site, around 135 remain in distance learning and 33 students will be re-entering on 4/19. There were thankfully very few Covid related absences.

- d. Upper School Principal report: Mr. Michael Pelofske
  - i. Mr. Pelofske admitted the decision to keep the Upper School in distance learning was difficult and involved much discussion and consideration. He shared that the decision ultimately took into account several criteria; the feasibility of busing, the logistics of space for adequate social distancing and availability of staffing esp Education Assistants who are needed to deal with IEDs, 504 programs, etc. The reality of a broad 6-12 return on-site was not feasible given all the parameters that needed to be met. Instead, school leadership decided to prioritize 6-8 re-entry following guidance from the state that leaned toward the needs of reintegrating younger learners to onsite instruction.
  - ii. Upcoming events for the Upper School include; planning for Graduation, Senior Thesis, Prom on May 22nd, Senior Day events.
  - iii. In addition, the Upper School is considering installing a garden in the courtyard near the Kindergarten room following a proposal by the Green Team who received a grant from the Department of Agriculture for their project.
  - iv. Several attendees asked questions about the Garden proposal and possible tie-in to learning and curriculum in Science classes. More information will be available as the project nears implementation.
  - v. A question was asked if Prom will take place at Nova. Mr. Pelofske told the attendees that the Prom will be off site at an event venue called Paikka. Ms. Strand is the staff member serving as a guide for students to plan the event with proper protocols re: Covid, esp regarding food preparation and serving, vendor safety and spacing, etc.
  - vi. Heather discussed the funding request from Upper School for Prom. NPTO will make a donation to the school and let the school leadership decide how to allocate the money as NPTO is not comfortable being responsible for how the funds will be used given the restrictions for gathering under Covid. The amount of the donation will be forthcoming after the next meeting where the budget will be discussed.
- e. Treasurer's Report: Lakshmi
  - i. Lakshmi reports that the NPTO continues to receive funds for the senior baskets, and that the response for donations has been very positive.
  - ii. The budget will be discussed and voted on at the May meeting.
- f. Upper School Parent Advisory Committee Chair Report: Jane Lagerquist
  - i. The USPAC met recently with 15 in attendance. Items for discussion were the results of a poll. The minutes will be shared on the website for the public.
  - ii. With students back on-site, there are many new issues to address. Including the reintroduction of fundraising events and their feasibility given lack of volunteership and Covid protocols. There is much still up in the air.
  - iii. The USPAC discussed using the leftover money from Basket donations to fund graduation and senior day events. The USPAC is planning the baskets to be distributed May 19th.
  - iv. In addition, Nova Parents are trying to plan a Senior picnic day after the Graduation event. Jane realizes that given Covid restrictions and liabilities, the event will have to occur outside the purview of Nova or Nova PTO. She has a

Google form set up under a personal address, not NPTO or USPAC. Donations will be solicited thru a parent unaffiliated with either committee to assure separation.

- g. Lower School Parent Advisory Committee Chair Report: Stephanie H. (not in attendance)
- 3. Action Items: Heather
  - a. Positions on the NPTO are open for Treasurer and Vice-Chair. Please pass on to anyone who is interested.
- 4. Updates and Upcoming Events
  - a. Parent Coffees via Zoom (Jane Lagerquist, Mary Kluznik, Kimberly Dumitrica)
    - i. The Parent Coffee events are taking place every other week with regularity. The next meeting will be on April 16th, the dates are updated and announced on Nova Notes.
    - ii. Kim gave an update on the last Parent Coffee meeting where one of the items discussed was the possibility of informal playground meet-ups among parents and kids. There was some concern over reaching the most families possible to extend the invitation for a meetup; but the planners didn't have access to parent emails. In addition, there were concerns about involving NPTO in the planning of gatherings since no NPTO member could reliably be in attendance to police mask wearing, social distancing and other Covid protocols.
    - iii. Heather raised the idea of using the teacher-provided email lists as contacts for the invitations. These lists were an 'opt-in' list not a conclusive list however, so not complete. Ms. Tousignant offered to see what lists were available for each Lower grade.
    - iv. There were questions in the chat about the open PTO positions. Patty Matthews indicated an interest in volunteering for a position. Heather will reach out to her.
    - v. Kelly R asked a question about the playground playdates idea. She wanted clarification on the NPTO position regarding the liability problem of NPTO involvement in the events and why there was difficulty for Nova to provide a conclusive list that would reach all parents so the invite would be as inclusive as possible. Heather responded that she couldn't address the incompleteness of the email list since any available lists were teacher-driven and grade specific. NPTO was asked to not make a directory since the teachers had already initiated lists. As far as the liability issue, Heather reiterated the difficulty of having to assume the role of Covid protocol police at any event officially sponsored by NPTO. Kelly R asked if there was a liability created were the invite to go to all parents with a caveat that the event is not school sponsored. Ms. Tousignant answered that there was no such liability for the school if the event were wholly parent planned and sanctioned. Ms. Tousignant reinforced that she speaks for Nova, however, not for the NPTO.
- 5. Public Comments, ideas or feedback
  - a. Maria Marchand announced the availability of a Parent seat opening on the Board. A questionnaire and application form can be found at [governance@novaclassical.org](mailto:governance@novaclassical.org), a link will be provided in Nova News. The application is due April 9th, and elections will take place in May. Questions can be directed to Maria.
- 6. Adjourn
  - a. Heather moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Vidya.