

DeBakey HSHP PTO – Meeting Minutes  
**Tuesday, November 10, 2020**

Meeting called to order by President Ghulab Singh at 6:30. 66 meeting participants. (Attendance log to be uploaded with Minutes, upon approval).

President Singh discussed the importance of PTO and encouraged parents to join PTO. He then introduced the evening's guest speaker - Sonny Lim, PhD, a College Access Counselor. Following are highlights of his presentation:

40 – 50% of institutions did not meet their enrollment targets in 2019.

University's are looking at a combination of HS grades/Standardized test scores, Extracurriculars and an assessment of student's potential for contributing to campus culture.

Grade by grade targets for increasing student's pathways to college:

9th Grade

- Discuss pathways with HS counselor (students and parents should meet with their counselor)
- Start a Creative/Arts Portfolio – collection of awards, honors, artwork, etc.
- Enroll in 1-2 AP/IB classes – rigorous classes, if possible

10th Grade

- Enroll in 2-4 AP/IB classes
- Plan Pathway to Leadership – run for club office (which dovetails into college assessment of your student's potential contributions to campus culture)
- Prepare for SAT subject tests

11th Grade

- Enroll in 3-5 AP/IB HL classes
- Plan summer internship or Volunteer Experience
- Prepare for ACT/SAT/AP exams during Spring semester

12th Grade

- Shortlist colleges based on research/virtual visits
- Secure letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors – ask early!
- Essays, essays, essays – hallmark of applications; what sets your student apart

Essays are even more critical this year because standardized tests are optional due to Covid-19. Your student's college acceptance could easily hinge on their ability to convey self-understanding and self-awareness; discipline, integrity and other qualitative factors will be extremely important to college admissions teams. Caution regarding editing your student's essay. Dr. Lim explained that while parent's are encouraged to review essays and provide feedback, it is important for the your student to assume responsibility for content and editing. Evidence of clear thinking is key.

This year's Common App includes an optional question regarding Covid experiences is the student's opportunity to share an experience that has led to developmental maturity; again looking for opportunities for your student to distinguish themselves amongst the applicants. For example, share a constructive challenge, how you overcame the challenge and what you learned. Keep in mind: Covid is causing admissions personnel to dig deeper in making decisions. For more information, please contact Dr. Lim at [Sonnycollegewebinar@gmail.com](mailto:Sonnycollegewebinar@gmail.com).

Dean Sharkey reported on after school tutorials are starting, virtually. They will run from 3:30 to 7 p.m. and will run in 1-hour blocks, giving students multiple opportunities to get extra help. Progress reports for Cycle #2 will be available Friday, November 13.

Responding to a parent inquiry for Freshman assistance: A parent get together is being planned for 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents (following up on a student meet up that occurred in several weeks ago. Ms. Perry also encouraged freshmen to contact Ms. Jafarali to request a pair-up with an upper classman.

Principal's Report – Ms. Perry shared the State of the School Report (rankings shared last PTO meeting). Latest rankings will be reported Sunday, November 29, 2020 in the Houston Chronicle. DeBakey hopes to retain its top rankings.

Important Upcoming Dates:

November 13th – Progress Reports

November 17th – Parent University – topic: Digital Citizenship

November 20th - Virtual School Talent Show, starting at 2 p.m. Parents are encouraged to register to attend (via school website). Students will vote on top talent and former DeBakey students will serve as judges.

Ms. Perry reiterated importance of students taking advantage of DeBakey's midday and after school tutorial program. Midday tutorials run from 11:10 – 11:50 a.m. (have your student check with the department or teacher); and after school, starting at 3:35 p.m. Also, if you have not already completed the Socio economic data form (sent home first week of school), please do so as this information is critical to the school's Title 1 status (funds from which are used to support the tutorial program). College application fees may also be waived if you qualify under Title 1.

HISD provide some transportation, depending on where you live. Please check with HISD transportation division as the local school has no control over decision/ability to provide transportation to school.

Final exams will be administered in January.

Upcoming PSAT Testing Dates:

10/29/20 and 1/26/21 (Juniors)

1/13/21 (Freshmen)

2/23/21 (Sophomores)

Fundraising – Trina Nguyen reported \$26,000 has been raised to date. Special recognition of Dr. Kenneth '85 DeBakey alum who donated \$12,000. Committee is trying to get all 48 name plates purchased and engraved by January.

Uniforms – Nellie Naidoo reported on available inventory, which is smaller this year since uniforms are not mandatory. She will be on campus Friday, November 13 during lunch hour (11:10 – 12:24). All available items are listed on school website.

Communications – Andrea Simon asked parents to forward messages through [Communications@DeBakeyPTO.org](mailto:Communications@DeBakeyPTO.org). All posted information must be pre-approved by the Administration.

9<sup>th</sup> Grade Liaison – Nichole Ake is planning a Parent Meeting. Administration is reviewing her draft agenda – plan is to announce the meeting via the DeBakey website upon approval. Sports are currently on hold (due to pandemic restrictions). Ms. Ake is also investigating possibility of having some virtual Volleyball drills, which would be open to all grades.

President Singh adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.