

**Re: Minutes, Academics Advisory Committee
Meeting of January 16, 2014**

From: Tom Armbruster

To: Distribution

Date: February 4, 2014, 10:30 a.m.

The meeting started at 7:07 pm in the High School's conference room, Shelley Enger presiding.

Present, clockwise around the table: Sally Newman, Joel Glassman, Linda Wah, Gary McGuigan, Keith Derrick, Shelley Ryan, Jason Kurtenbach, Nina Zacuto, Shiva Mandell, Bob Boyd, Robert Chave, Ananth Natarajan, Shelley Enger, Julia Greer, Betsy Felix, Chris Norgaard, Brinton Young, Lisa Link, Louise Hindle, Joseph Chang, Sally Buckley, Tom Armbruster.

The minutes of the meeting of November 13, 2013, were approved by consensus.

Shelley E. asked that each person around the table introduce himself or herself. The new people at this meeting were Nina Zacuto, Shiva Mandell, Robert Chave, Julia Greer, Lisa Link, and Louise Hindle. Nina, Shiva, and Robert were from Trash for Teaching, discussed below. Julie is Professor of Materials Science at Caltech. Lisa is the new Board representative to the AAC this year, and she will serve with Chris, a long-term Board representative to the AAC. Louise is a parent in the community, and an educator.

District update:

Chris announced that Loren Kleinrock will retire as District Superintendent at the end of June. Loren has been involved with classrooms for four decades!

The new state funding formula is "not great news" for the District. We will be third from the bottom among California Districts in per-student monies received. We are recovering some of the money that was taken away in prior years, but not all of it. Some school districts will receive double what they are now receiving, but not SMUSD. Also, the ACLU may challenge the newly adopted funding formula in court.

Trash for Teaching:

Representatives from the non-profit group Trash for Teaching were introduced. Nina Zacuto is the president of its board, Shiva Mandell is Director of Creative Programming, and Robert Chave is a scientist in program development, recently at JPL where he worked on the Hubble Telescope. Our AAC member Linda Wah is also on their board. (Linda is also a PCC Board member and state Community Colleges Board Trustee.)

Trash for Teaching collects cast-off materials from local industries. These are materials which would otherwise go into general recycling. Instead, Trash for Teaching recasts the materials as science and engineering teaching kits, for the 8th through 12th grade levels. Each of their many kits is lesson-specific. Begun in 2004 by a couple who manufactured See's Candy boxes and saw many of them going into non-specific recycling. Trash for Teaching has become a large program; for example, one of their programs involves 38 teachers at 25 schools, serving a total of 3,500 students. Overall, Trash for Teaching has placed their program kits into schools in the districts of Hawthorne, Compton, Pasadena, Long Beach, and LA, as well as several in the South Bay area.

For follow-up, Jason said he had already sent them an e-mail, and will go down to their plant in Gardena over the weekend¹.

High School update:

Keith and Jason reported on "Challenge Day." Challenge Day is a program that enlists volunteer students to train on communication and empathic listening. Three hundred of our students have participated at the High School. It is a three-day program, with one hundred students participating each day. The cost is \$9,000 for the three-day session, plus the costs of food and lodging for the outside leaders, and the costs of substitutes for the teachers involved. Keith learned of the program from the principals at La Cañada and Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The program emphasizes that vulnerability and empathy are strengths.

Lisa said that when debriefed at the end of the day, students' problems came not from "too much homework" or that "the teacher is mean," but rather from generalized pressure.

A school psychologist was always present during the sessions, and available for follow-up. Eight to ten parents were also involved in each day's program.

Of the 300 students who participated at the high school, 15 were found to be in need of immediate support.

¹More information about Trash for Teaching is at their web site, www.trashforteaching.com.

Keith summarized by saying it was the best spent program day he had ever had as an educator. Jason summarized by saying that these were the most compassionate students he had ever encountered.

More visitor introductions:

Joel Glassman was introduced. Joel has an M.A. degree. He has taught architecture at SMHS for several years, and his work has been shown in museums and exhibitions in several states. He has a background in the constructivist approach to education. He would like to see career and technical education more integrated into the high school program, thinking not only through college, but beyond college into the workplace.

Louise Hindle has been in education since 1993. She was credentialed in the United Kingdom. Just this last week she has graduated with Masters in Education, specializing in literature and languages. Louise works on evaluation systems with the Norton Simon organization, and she serves with the non-profit Pasadena organization Institute for Educational Advancement².

Huntington update:

Finals are at the end of this week. Jason's goal has been to "stress out" the testing technology, before it is actually used in SBAC.

Jason's teachers are looking at new ways to get more writing done. They are looking into AI feedback on students' writing.

The Pirates of Penzance will be performed in two weeks, from the 6th through the 9th of February.

School Board meeting update:

Sally B. reported that at the School Board meeting, Loren's resignation was announced, there was a report on Challenge Day, and presentation regarding teaching in East Asia.

PCC update: No report. Linda said the survey (discussed in prior minutes) will be conducted in January.

²More about this group is at www.educationaladvancement.org.

AAC membership update: Chris says we do not want to wait; we want to fill three slots now.

AP and college admission matters:

We will offer a course next year titled “Honors Physics.” It will prepare students for the two new AP Physics exams, AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2. The former exam, AP Physics B, which covered one year of university physics, is being split into two courses by the College Board, with the intention that high schools can spend a year covering one semester’s worth of material. This is similar to the approach of Calculus AB, which covers the first semester of university calculus. San Marino, however, will continue to teach the entire year (Physics 1 and Physics 2) in one high school year, leading up to the two AP exams³.

Shelley E. commented on SMHS admissions to UC Berkeley last year, which were below the percent admitted to UCB overall. Admission rates vary from year to year for various reasons. The committee discussed factors that may be related to the low admission percentage (16%) of SMHS students to UC Berkeley last year."

Data collection update: Tom reported on progress in this area. He expects all needed data will be available before the next meeting.

Adjournment:

At 9:12, we adjourned to Wednesday, February 12, 2014, 7:00 pm.

³ More information is at the College Board at http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/ap/2013advances/Physics_FAQs_June2013.pdf. One “frequently asked question” is, “My students do well on the AP Physics B Exam. Should I teach AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2 in one year?” The answer reads in part, “However, as with all AP subjects, individual schools are ultimately responsible for determining the schedule for their AP courses, as long as the course is designed to fulfill all requirements delineated by the AP Course Audit.”

Remaining action items from prior meetings: Mary will investigate getting a catalog list of our college preparation services together, and getting it up on the web site. Loren or someone he designates will assemble information on students who have left the district at the 6th and 9th grade transition levels.

The AAC's On-Going List of Possible Topics: (1) Follow-up on the implementation of the recently adopted AP and Honors course access policy. (2) Assembling and reviewing data regarding improved instruction. (3) Making better use of parent volunteers to support instruction, broadly. (4) Follow-up on improving students' interviewing/oral communication skills. (5) Student retention when moving to the 6th and 9th grades. (6) Partnerships with other institutions. (7) Internship and career presentations and opportunities for students. (8) Assemble and review data on the impact of scheduling on programs and college placement.

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