

**Re: Minutes, Academics Advisory Committee
Meeting of May 15, 2014**

From: Tom Armbruster

To: Distribution

Date: August 18, 2014

The meeting started at 7:06 pm in the High School's College and Career Center, Shelley Enger presiding.

Members Present: Bob Boyd, Lisa Link, Shelley Enger, Chris Norgaard, Betsy Felix, Strefan Fauble, Yu-Wen Taylor, Sally Buckley, Mary Johnson, Gary McGuigan, Ananth Natarajan, Tom Armbruster.

Invited guests: From Pasadena City College, Dina Chase, Director of Outreach, Degree, and Transfer Services (retiring June 30, 2014), and Robert Ball, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Pasadena City College Update:

Our invited guests, Dina Chase and Robert Ball, led a discussion of how to expand concurrent enrollment. The following four concepts were discussed. (1) Students are probably better off taking actual college classes while high school students than they are taking an equivalent AP course, (2) classes should be held late in the weekday, or Saturday afternoon, (3) there is probably an emphasis on math and other transfer courses, (4) a designated representative from SMHS is needed to coordinate the program. Robert Ball said that AB 1451, sponsored by Assemblymember Holden, expands the opportunities to get students into concurrent enrollment classes and getting these courses physically onto high school campuses.

To review terminology: "Concurrent enrollment" courses appear on the college transcript but not on the high school transcript. "Dual enrollment" courses appear both on the college transcript and on the high school transcript, both for credit.

There was a discussion of schedule conflicts, and the scheduling of classes in the late afternoon or Saturday from 12 to 4.

Shelley Ryan asked about computer science courses, and credit for internships.

At PCC, CIS is in the business division, while "Computer Studies" is in the Math Department.

Chris asked about “pathways” to transfer to 4-year colleges. Robert said that PCC has received “accolades” for their transfer program.

LCAP, the Local Control Accountability Program:

Shelley E. brought up the need for a continuing internship program. Gary said that the parent survey showed a concern about access to AP courses, and that another perceived weakness is the absence of Computer Science, which was discontinued in 2010 when the teacher [Tom] who had introduced the two high school courses retired. Gary said it needs to be the Board’s decision, what should go into the LCAP.

Sally B. asked whether in the LCAP there’s an established priority among the various identified needs. Loren responded that there wasn’t. Shelley E. asked if this could be an opportunity to establish goals. Gary responded that the primary job of the LCAP is to focus on the three categories of the educationally disadvantaged: English learners, low income students, and students with foster parents.

NASA: Our students’ micro-gravity experiment has been selected for being carried out in space; results will be presented in the Smithsonian.

Internships: Courtney Rushing wants to place students into internships. She has 100 in El Monte. She wants to place SM students as well, but has no funding to support this. Yu-Wen asked if there is a dedicated internship person at the high school. Loren said no, the new counselor is dedicated to “at risk” students. A visitor pointed out that participation in internships is effectively a “gate keeper” for admission to the most challenging colleges. Jamie Linton asked whether we even have a handle on how much is happening now. Ananth said we found out how much work it is, managing expectations of students and the expectations of those providing internships.

Two math classes, two sciences classes (the bar against taking both AP Statistics and Calculus, and the bar against taking two science courses concurrently): Loren said we have just added one math teacher, which will be used either to lower class sizes or enable students to take two math classes. With regard to taking two science courses concurrently, the problem is science lab space. Mary pointed out that when we opened a fourth Math Analysis class (Honors?), 17 dropped.

“Basic Aid”: Bob asked about what it would take to qualify for this avenue of state funding. Loren said “We have a long way to go.”

Huntington Update: There is an effort underway to improve the teaching of science and technology at the 7th grade level.

High School Update:

Mary reported that we are finishing AP exam administration. One frustration, of several, was that at 4:00 p.m., the AP Chinese proctor called and said that every computer in the exam room had failed.

There is an effort targeted at juniors related to the on-line administration of the upcoming Common Core exams.

District Update: Chris reported that the new superintendent will be Dr. Alex Cherniss. For three years, he has been Chief Financial Officer of the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Prior to LACOE, he handled K–8 teaching in Beverly Hills. Alex has Common Core “oversight,” because the county schools have shifted to Common Core.

Adjournment: At 9:00, we adjourned *sine die*. We will try to get a meeting together in July, involving the new superintendent.

Remaining action items from prior meetings: Mary will investigate getting a catalog of our curriculum offerings 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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