

**Re: Minutes, Academics Advisory Committee
Meeting of August 19, 2014**

From: Tom Armbruster

To: Distribution

Date: September 7, 2014

The meeting started at 7:10 pm in the High School's College and Career Center, Brinton Young presiding.

Members present: Lisa Link, Brinton Young, Chris Norgaard, Gary McGuigan, Doug Berry, Mary Johnson, Sally Newman, Alex Cherniss, Yu-Wen Taylor, Julia Grier, Ananth Natarajan, Tom Armbruster.

Other board members present: Joseph Chang, Shelley Ryan.

Invited guests: From Pasadena City College, Linda Wah.

Introductions:

Brinton introduced himself as the new chair. He holds an M.B.A degree and a J.D., and is retired from the CFO position at Earthlink. He has three children: two are being schooled entirely in SMUSD, and one has had some experience at Flintridge Prep. He is most impressed in SMUSD by the work ethic of the students. Brinton would like to focus this year on one or two or three issues of interest to the Board, and present a report at the end of the year.

Linda Wah was introduced. In addition to her service on the Pasadena City College Board, she is now President of the Los Angeles County School Trustees' Association, a consortium of all school boards in Los Angeles County, at the Kindergarten through 14th grade levels.

Lauren Leahy has left Huntington to become the Principal of Hugo Reid Elementary School in Arcadia.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of April 17 were approved by consensus. The minutes of the meeting of May 15 are undergoing revision.

Internships: Brinton said that a counselor has been added whose duties include supporting students in internships. Internships were one main focus of the AAC's report in the spring of 2013. Later in the meeting, Yu-Wen Taylor discussed the handout about internships that she e-

mailed us prior to the meeting. She pointed out that it is important to have a balance between the needs of the institution and the expectations of the interns.

Board update: Chris reported that at the August 5, 2014 Board meeting, all currently serving AAC members were reappointed for another year. Bob Boyd, however, has resigned from the AAC. Chris went on to remind us that the larger of the two parcel taxes is up for renewal this spring.

Superintendent's report:

Dr. Ilene Strauss is now consulting at the high school, planning professional development that is targeted at the Common Core. Dr. Strauss is also the Vice President of the California State Board of Education¹.

Alex continued his introduction, reviewing his past experience. He was CFO at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, overseeing the budgets of all 80 school districts in the County. Prior to that, he managed educational programs for incarcerated youth. The move from Beverly Hills to managing programs for 13 juvenile court schools gave him experience at each end of the educational preparation and achievement spectrum. Alex also currently teaches school finance at USC in the Rossier School of Education. He is especially interested in figuring out what works in education.

Alex pointed to our students' outstanding scores on standardized tests. He said he sees scores as not the primary objective, but as an offshoot of outstanding education.

Alex plans annual goals for the District. During the first six months of his tenure, he envisions a Phase I of listening, learning, and leading. He will work with the Board and meet with the public. Phase I will run through December. Phase II will be an assessment report on his findings; this will occur in January. Phase III will be developing and finalizing a 3-year action plan, a strategic plan with a broad focus, but highly detailed; this will be finished in June.

Later in the meeting, Alex said that when he met with Steven Koblik, the President of the Huntington (who has served for more than twelve years and who will retire in June), they discussed the expansion of our courses in the humanities. Courses will be developed for this coming year. There is the possibility of offering AP Art History.

Alex wants to develop on-line courses. The infrastructure to support this is good here. He is interested in getting away from the one-teacher-in-front-of-30-students model, which is not used much any more. The driving concept is the "flipped classroom," turning around how instruction is delivered. Students start by doing their own research on the topic at hand, and reporting in. The teacher is used to refine what is learned, providing feedback on what the students report.

¹Dr. Strauss retired in 2011 from the post of Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services in Beverly Hills.

Alex is also interested in pursuing e-textbooks, where appropriate. We need to move with the times; too often education is one step behind the times. Our advantages are that we are small, with one high school, and a lot of resources, so we can be at the forefront.

High School update:

Mary reported on SMHS. She introduced the new Vice Principal of Instruction and Guidance, Doug Berry, the “greatest” addition among several great additions this year.

We now have seven counselors: five general counselors, one for at-risk students support (Laura Ives), and one, Jeanne Brown, newly hired from Edina High School in Minnesota, specializing in career education and college readiness. She will develop an internship program for the school. She interned at South Pasadena, and in fact is a South Pas graduate!

There are two new math teachers, one a newly created position. To accommodate the increased staff, one new teacher will teach upstairs in the Lo Laboratory on the mezzanine level of the library². We also have a new full-time Spanish teacher.

We have a new School Psychologist, Jacqueline Diskint. Jennifer Lozano, her predecessor, took a District Office position.

We have a new registration procedure, all on-line, InfoSnap. Of all students coming into the high school this year, only thirteen did not participate in this, a major success in participation in the new system.

Mary said that due to the SMTA calendar, the first day of class was Monday.

We had a coaches meeting, at which 45 coaches showed up. D.R. Moreland delivered great information on new CIF rules and on time lines. Linda de la Torre covered the HR aspect of coaching, and Julie Boucher covered the financial aspect. The meeting included CPR training.

Enrollment: 1,139 students finished last year, and 1,195 started this year. Mary said that when she started at SMHS in 2005, the starting enrollment was 1,204. It dropped for a few years, and has now recovered.

Mary said we have a new pattern of ELD student immigration, from the mainland. We currently have 67 students in ELD.

On the first day of school, ASB paid for lunches for students, including pizza. Over 900 lunches were served.

² Tom said this is good news, because for several weeks the thought was that this new teacher would have to move from room to room each period.

Computer Programming discussion:

We discussed the prospect of again teaching computer programming. We discussed the PCC coding class, and its offering here at SMHS Friday evenings and Saturdays. Brinton and Julie emphasized that any background in programming is valuable. Julie pointed out that the Troy students she's dealt with can program fast. Tom said that he found that first year Algebra was an adequate prerequisite for programming, three academic years below the PCC requirement of Mathematical Analysis.

This is important because Andy Walker resigned very recently. Alex emphasized that the qualifications we would look for in a replacement would depend on what kind of programming, if any, we wanted to teach. Alex asked Mary, Doug, and Gary to meet with him the next day on this.

High School Instruction and Guidance update:

Doug Berry reported on excellence in the Math Department, by presenting summary statistics on last May's AP administration. He also said the participation in the science and U.S. History AP exams is increasing. A handout he distributed is attached to the e-mail by which these minutes are distributed.

Doug continued that chemistry teacher Cynthia Chubbuck has had a lesson posted in TedEd. It deals with automotive engineering. It may be seen at <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/under-the-hood-the-chemistry-of-cars-cynthia-chubbuck>. It has received more than 100,000 hits so far.

Chair's wrap-up: Brinton asked for input on what we should focus on in the coming year. He offered the idea of what we could do to increase the amount and quality of writing instruction. Doug added that the Common Core is honed in on how well you can express your ideas.

Adjournment: At 9:00, we adjourned to September 18, 2014.

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.

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.

Distribution:

Tom Armbruster	tarmbru@gmail.com
Doug Berry	dberry@smusd.us
Sally Buckley	buckley2735@aol.com
Joseph Chang	chihchang@aol.com
Alex Cherniss	acherniss@smusd.us
Shelley Enger	shelleyenger@yahoo.com
Strefan Fauble	strefan@strefan.com
Betsy Felix	betsyfelix@earthlink.net
Julia Greer	jrgreer@caltech.edu
Liz Hollingsworth	lizhollingsworth@smusd.us
Mary Johnson	mjohnson@smusd.us
Deborah Kallas	dkallas@san-marino.k12.ca.us
Jason Kurtenbach	jkurtenbach@smusd.us
Louise Hindle	lhindle1970@gmail.com
Lisa Link	links4@aol.com
Gary McGuigan	gmcguigan@smusd.us
Ananth Natarajan	ananth@i-biomed.com
Sally Newman	sally@gps.caltech.edu, and at jsctp5@yahoo.com
Chris Norgaard	cnorgaard@regentbc.com
Shelley Ryan	optimacall@aol.com
Colleen Shields	cshiields@smusd.us
Yu-Wen Taylor	yuwentaylor@gmail.com
Larry Wong	larry.x.wong@sbcglobal.net
Brinton Young	brinton@earthlink.net