

## 2/6/15 Academic Choice Advisory Council (ACAC) Meeting

February 6, 2015, 7:30-8:35 AM Room C-309

### Minutes

#### In Attendance:

Who	Role	E-mail address
Matt Laurel	AC Co-Chair and AC Lead English Teacher	mattlaurel@berkeley.net
Hannalina Kalonji	ACAC Student Representative	hannalinakalonji@students.berkeley.net
Sheryl Drinkwater	Future AC Parent	
Helise Cohn	Future AC Parent	
Rene Kvidahl	AC Parent	
Sam Arriola	AC Parent, AC Webmaster	sarriola@gmail.com
Rakhi Rao	ACAC Treasurer	rakhiprao@gmail.com
Johanna Reneke	ACAC Parent Rep at Large	j.reneke@gmail.com
Donna Storey	ACAC Secretary	donnageorgestorey@gmail.com
Jeremy Thorner	ACAC Student Support Coordinator	jthorner@berkeley.edu

#### Public Comments

There were no public comments at this meeting.

#### AP Requirement for Juniors and Seniors

Matt Laurel reported that last year all rising AC juniors were required to sign up for at least one AP class of their choice. If undecided, students were encouraged to pick AP Language and Composition because this provided the best transfer skills for college. Of 11 English classes, only 2 English classes this year were American Literature, which were taught in the style of the AP class. The plan was to phase out non-AP English for juniors. AP classes are more heterogeneous this year, which is a positive.

Acting Principal Glenchur decided that requiring all juniors to take a specific class was not advisable. Thus, next year's class of 2017 juniors will still be able to sign up for one

AP class of their choice, including history, math, science, music or art history. English teachers will encourage undecided students to sign up for AP English because it will have the best resources to support students. Teachers will visit sophomore classes to provide information on AP. All English classes will have a rigorous curriculum.

Students in the American Literature classes scored roughly the same on the multiple choice section of a practice AP test as the AP students, although the essay section showed greater divergence.

At the present time, the history department is considering whether to continue to require all AC seniors to take AP Government. The teacher who was providing support to students who needed extra help has left Berkeley High. Hannalina Kalonji reported that his year, as well as last year, many students who had never taken an AP class felt rushed. The administration wants more support in place for students first.

### **AC Spring General Meeting**

We are considering holding the AC Spring General Meeting the week after spring break in April. Mr. Laurel will check for conflicts in the Berkeley High schedule.

### **AC Student T-Shirt Fundraiser**

Ms. Kalonji said that AC student leadership is in the process of accepting T-shirt designs for the contest. They will create a budget for the project this month.

The student leadership will sponsor a picnic for AC freshman during fourth through sixth periods at some point in March. IB, CAS and AHA have special activities for their learning communities, so AC also wants to do something for its students. The picnic will be held in Ohlone Park and the student leadership hopes to have parent volunteers.

The AC student leadership is also discussing a new design for the graduation sash. Donna Storey suggested the redesign be completed by the end of April to allow time to order the new sashes.

### **Treasurer's Report**

ACAC Treasurer Rahki Rao presented a Statement of Activities for Academic Choice as of February 5, 2015. Donations so far for the 2014-2015 school year have reached \$20,824.39. Ms. Rao reported that the Berkeley High Development Group has presented the ACAC with a bill for \$34,300 to pay for Jessie Luxford's Bridge Program and the AP Coordinator which BHSDG has been paying for until now. Funds for the former were approved by the ACAC in the 2013-2014 school year and for the latter at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. This represents a significant change in our balance.

Jeremy Thorner asked if the BHSDG could support programs like Bridge and the AP Coordinator. He asked if the BHSDG had a public comments period at their meetings. Ms. Rao said no, but she could inquire if the AP Coordinator, Mr. Borrelli, could speak at a meeting.

Mr. Laurel suggested that because the Bridge program serves a relatively small number of students, we should focus our resources on supporting AP classes. Perhaps Bridge

can find other sources of funding?

Ms. Rao suggested we send out another fundraising letter to the AC community. In the past, AC was able to obtain donations from businesses. If members of the community are a part of businesses that might contribute to AC, they should clue us in on the opportunity.

Rene Kvidahl asked for a written description of the duties of the AP Coordinator. Mr. Laurel said he would email us the description, but stated that Mr. Borrelli recruits and trains readers for AP US History and AP Language and Literature, supervises after-school augmentation, makes visits to UC Berkeley and applies for the Chancellor's grant. Mr. Laurel repeated that we will need to decide which expenditures are most important.

### **Long-term Substitute Teacher Issue**

Johanna Reneke, Donna Storey and Jeremy Thorner decided, after an AC parent's comments about problems with long-term substitutes as the last ACAC meeting, that they would like to focus on improving the long-term substitute issue at Berkeley High.

Areas for improvement include recruiting qualified teachers, supporting long-term substitutes under the mentorship of veteran teachers, and improving the administration's support of families who are dealing with the disruption of learning because of a long-term substitute.

Donna Storey spoke with Mr. Zolezzi about his own successful experience finding a long-term substitute during his parental leave two years ago. Mr. Zolezzi suggested that Berkeley High encourage teachers to find their own qualified substitutes and advertise in more places so recruit candidates. He suggested that new teachers be paired with a veteran teacher to get advice and guidance and perhaps sit in on the veteran teacher's classes to get a sense of pacing, content and lesson plans. Ms. Reneke, Ms. Storey and Mr. Thorner will continue to work on bringing this issue to the attention of the community and the school board.

Mr. Laurel informed us that the administration and teachers are conferring about replacements for anticipated openings for biology teachers.

### **Next ACAC Meeting**

Friday, March 6, 2015, 7:30-8:35 a.m. in BHS Conference Room B in the D Building.