

BHS Academic Choice



ACAC Meeting Minutes – 1/18/08

In Attendance

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Incoming 9th Grader Night

Matt reported that the presentation of the Academic Choice option for incoming 9th graders at the meeting earlier in the week went very well. Representatives on hand to speak to the interested students included Matt, Sherene Randle, Alex Angell, Brian Crowell, Sasha Ginsberg, Janet Delaney, and Jon Marley. The five break out sessions with the students were only 12 minutes long, not long enough for all the teachers, parents, and students representing AC to fully participate. All sessions were heavily attended and there was a lot of interest in the AC program.

Alex Angell's daughter attended the different presentations put on by the other school groups and found that while the students of all the different groups were enthusiastic about their particular school program, only the AC students expressed why they felt their school curriculum offered the best choice.

Senior Thesis

Jane asked if anyone had talked to the Senior Thesis Committee (headed by David Bye – actual committee not yet formed) about compensation for additional/outside work in planning the program.

David said that had been discussed and would be appreciated. Most important was moving on announcement of the program so that next year's junior class was aware that the thesis would be a requirement for their senior year. Also, there needs to be time set aside for student's to work on their thesis and, since the

advisory periods that had been discussed and planned for BHS appear to have been tabled, the development time and help on the senior thesis will have to be incorporated into the senior classes – something that will require the support of all teachers at the senior class level.

Sherene noted that much of the planning could be developed at a teacher retreat funded by AC. Other council members felt the basic planning should be done by a smaller group, perhaps 4 members total. In any event, actual members of a committee and who should be involved in planning the program would have to wait until after teacher assignments are made later this spring.

Alex said that it would be better not to wait, would like to pull together a committee to meet sooner. Interested parties currently include David Bye, Alex Angell, and Carolyn Wilson-Scott. Two others can be pulled in for a group of five. The committee will try to hold an initial meeting during a lunch period following semester finals week.

Professional Development Day Plans

Sherene wanted to give the council an update on plans for professional development.

- Ben Sanoff, Rebecca Martin, and Heather Sadlon are scheduled to attend the Kinsella conference on the 30th and 31st, which ties in to the data results we received from our literacy assessment.
- Rebecca and Sherene are scheduled to attend the “Learning and the Brain” conference set for 2/7 – 2/9/08.
- Sherene also brought up an idea that had been discussed of sending any interested AC Teachers to AP Teaching courses for special training in how to conduct these intensive, concentrated classes. Sherene noted that there should be Title II funds to supplement the cost of the training. Matt noted that this was more important than ever as our curriculum level and the number of AP courses offered has picked up over the past few years. Teachers who have been identified with an interest in attending include Heather Sadlon, Joanna Vilenski, and Brian Crowell.

Student Leadership Report

Mia and Paris advised that there was a lot of interest in holding a carnival at the school at the year end. They are looking into renting booths and could use some help in that area and planning. The students indicated they were also talking about raising some money at this event and donating it to a charitable organization. Timing for the event would be after AP Tests but before final exams. Although the students were hoping to hold the event on a short schedule day, Pasquale advised that was probably not a possibility. Best option would be to hold it right after the school day. Pasquale also suggested that the students meet with Al Willright at the school to check on scheduling and be sure the facilities would be open and available to the students on the day of the event – get it on the calendar. Security and insurance may also be required, and the BSD offices should be consulted on that. Pasquale offered to attend a meeting with Al and the student leadership to discuss the issue.

AC Spending Procedures

To maintain order in project budgeting and to avoid concerns about proper authorization for expenditures by the BHSDG, it was agreed that all submissions for expenses by teachers need to be routed through either Sherene or Matt (or current AC Lead teachers in the future) and checked with Scott (or current AC Treasurer in the future) before submission to the Development Group for payment. Jane wanted to make two additional suggestions:

- 1) Expenses over a certain threshold, such as \$500 or \$1000, should be discussed and approved by the ACAC as a whole.
- 2) Expenses that benefit the school as a whole rather than just AC may be proposed to the BHSDG for a general grant rather than being deducted from our designated account.

AC Lab Proposal

Ben Sanoff and Sherene Randall made a presentation to the group with a proposal to acquire a mobile lab for the entire AC community. This lab would include thirty laptops, each able to connect to the internet wirelessly. Although the proposal included two system options, one utilizing Dell Latitude D600 refurbished laptops, the other utilizing new Apple MacBooks, the unanimous teacher preference was for the Apple system. The Apple system was recognized to have better performance, fewer maintenance problems, greater capacity, and included a suite of learning programs. The teachers felt a mobile lab is important to provide more equality in access by students to this technology that has become so important for today's high school students. Essentially, access and knowledge of use of the computer in today's educational environment has evolved from a luxury to a necessity.

Teachers could sign up for use of the lab, which would be brought to their classroom for a designated period, and allow all the students to work on projects or research in class that requires a computer. While the school does have 2 computer labs on campus, access to the labs is difficult with the facilities often being unavailable during busy times during the school year.

Unfortunately, the cost of either the refurbished PC system or the Apple system was beyond the current AC financial reach. (The Dell system was priced at \$18,599 and the Apple system was priced at \$31,840.) It was evident that we are going to have to explore different funding options for this project.

Next Meeting Scheduled for 2/29/08