

Redwood High School

Department Chair Council

Minutes of the October 1, 2008 DCC Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m. Present: Kim Stiffler, Fran Bozdech, Julianne Schrick, David Goldsmith, Jennifer Harris, Ann Jaime, Skip Lovelady, Keith Murray, Nancy Neu, Chris Gilmore, Steve Hettleman. Parents: Elaine Bengle, Ashu Sikand, Suman Vyas. Students: Amy Bettencourt, Anders Miltner, and Jill Waxman. Guests: Elise Rubio and Louise Aliano. Minutes taken by Sam Miller.

Minutes of 9/3/08 DCC Meeting (N. Neu)

Minutes were approved as submitted.

First Day of School Schedule (L. Aliano & K. Stiffler)

Louise said that a survey consisting of open-ended questions was conducted in the 9th grade Integrated Science classes regarding the first day schedule and student orientation. She distributed hand-outs to the group. Louise talked about how this project initially came under the Site Council and that their concern was the transitioning of new students to Redwood. Louise worked with Kim and the Site Council members to develop this survey which was given to the department chairs to take their departments and bring back. Louise did the raw data count (169 student responses). 50 % return of the survey is statistically good. Louise is looking for feedback to fine tune the schedule and see how it can be redesigned. There were some concerns regarding mixed level classes, but Nancy reiterated that at this time we need to collect feedback and then address the issues, keeping in mind that we need to make this transition easier for 9th graders. Louise asked the chairs to get the feedback to her by Oct. 10th. This survey will also be discussed at the Site Council meeting as well. A suggestion was made to get feedback from the 10th, 11th and 12th graders. The DCC students commented that looking back they wish they would've had the same opportunity as freshmen. Dave Goldsmith commented that maybe the periods should be shortened to 10 minutes rather than 15 minutes, as it became boring for both him and the students. Louise reminded him that the ice-breaker activities that were given to all teachers were designed to use up the entire time.

Academic Workshop (E. Rubio)

Elise Rubio and Ann Tepovich are two of the Academic Workshop teachers this year. They primarily teach 9th grade. Claire Ernst teaches Academic Workshop for the 10th graders. Elise is here to ask for support from the teachers. They welcome emails from teachers with concerns about any of the students they have and their progress. If a student has an assignment in your class they need to complete, you can email Elise or Ann and let them know so they can include it on their calendar and help keep track of the students' assignments. They ask that teachers please continue responding to their emails and also continue to send email alerts with projects and deadlines. Parents have been very engaged and responsive to Ann and Elise's emails. Elise and Ann are also available to help facilitate communication between teachers and their students if they need help initiating a conversation. Elise is asking that this be brought back to departments for informative purposes.

Student Elections Feedback (N. Neu)

As discussed at the 9/3 meeting, the departments were supposed to provide feedback on the process of student elections for the DCC. Not all departments were able to bring back to their departments for discussion, so it will be brought back at the next meeting.

Twig Announcement Feedback (N. Neu)

As discussed at the 9/3 meeting, department feedback regarding Twig announcements were as follows:

English Dept. – Steve reminded his department to read the Twig daily.

Applied Tech Dept. – Dave reminded his department to read the Twig daily.

World Languages Dept. – Greg reminded his department to read the Twig daily.

P.E. Dept. – Jennifer reminded her department to read the Twig daily.

Social Studies Dept. – Ann reminded her department to read the Twig daily.

Math Dept. – Julianne said that her department was surprised that not everyone reads the Twig. The math department does not want Twig read over the loud speaker.

Science Dept. – Skip reported that the Science department already reads the Twig daily.

Counseling Dept. – Fran said that Counselors would rather not have the Twig read over the loudspeaker.

Leadership students – They wondered if hardcopies were necessary. They also do not want the Twig read over the loudspeaker, but they liked the idea of a marquee or a big LCD projector that constantly shows the Twig announcements.

Nancy asked the chairs to continue to remind their departments to read the Twig.

AP Honors Matrix Meeting (N. Neu)

Nancy announced that on January 29, 2009, we will meet with AP/Honors teachers to discuss testing and the online Matrix and the issues and problems with it. Nancy commented that the information on the Matrix is put out online and for whatever reason, this year was one of the most difficult years regarding contradictory information. The information on the Matrix needs to be consistent. IB will not be included on this Matrix. One student rep. commented that sign-ups should also be available online. It was explained that the meeting needs to take place prior to sign-ups and that students sign-up at the meeting or with a designated person. Skip commented that having all the information online would be helpful, as the Twig is not good enough for disseminating the information. It's frustrating to have to give the test multiple times because the information regarding the test date and location was not advertised enough. Some students don't go to the information meetings or choose not to go and then end up appealing to get in the class. Fran thinks that all the AP/Honors teachers should attend the meeting rather than having the department chairs disseminate the information.

Fall Assembly – November 13, 2008 (K. Murray)

Keith handed out a mock-up schedule for the assembly on November 13th. The guest speaker will be Jason Barber who was the guest speaker the evening before the Every 15 Minutes assembly. The PTSA will be paying to have him come and speak again. Jason will be speaking to the entire school, so Keith would like to divide the school into assembly groups (9th/10th & 11th/12th). He feels that by having a smaller venue, this would also allow for Q & A time. The 2nd period time slot would be divided into two. Group one (9th & 10th) would hear Jason speak from 8:00 – 9:15 a.m. and group two (11th & 12th) would hear Jason speak from 9:20 – 10:35 a.m. There was a concern about the 5 minute passing period for the students to get out to the assembly...would that be enough time? Keith said that there is built-in time within the assembly to allow for students to get in and out of the gym. Another concern was about supports that would be available for students after the assembly. Keith said that the counselors on staff from BACR will be available to students if needed and there are plans to have follow-up activities afterwards (i.e. quick-write). Julianne asked about adding 10 more minutes into Office Hours. Keith took note and will check. Another question asked was if we can change the end time of the day to 3:11 p.m. rather than 2:40 p.m. like a Wednesday block period day. Keith will also check on that.

End of Year Schedule Proposal (J. Schrick)

Julianne handed-out a proposal to change the final exam schedule. She asked that the opening question to their departments be, "Do we value final exams as a staff?" Julianne's hand-out outlined a different final exam proposal with no more senior exams given separately and seniors having frolic day in May after exams are over. Julianne has talked to several staff members about things that can be done differently. The most common comment seems to be that teachers don't get the chance to reflect with their students after giving them the final exam. The current final exam schedule is difficult for teachers who teach 1st and 7th periods. Some teachers don't have their exams during the finals schedule. Some teachers have their finals early then have classroom parties during the final exam week. With regards to the senior frolic day, Ann Jaime commented that the way senior frolic is now is not in the spirit of the way it was designed to be. Senior frolic used to be a day when it was fun to go and spend the day with the seniors and senior teachers went as chaperones. It wasn't optional for senior teachers like it is now. Nancy agreed that senior teachers should be chaperoning and if senior frolic is to continue then those teachers should expect to attend. Julianne suggested holding graduation on Saturday, but Nancy said that's not an option. Another suggestion was to move graduation to Friday, but we would need to check with other schools and the district to make sure there are no other conflicts. We also have to consider the impact on the maintenance staff in setting up the ceremonies. Nancy said that there is time to look at the changing the final exam schedule, but not the graduation date, as that date is already set for this school year. Julianne asked that this discussion and hand-out be brought to departments for feedback and back to the November 5th DCC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.