

US PAC
November 2009 Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 5:40. Member Anne Barnes was ill and did not attend. Middle School PAC representative Ilana Rugg attended.

1. **Student Gov't** report by Kelsey Ausherman, Student Body President.

Recent Activities by the Student Gov:

- Fantastic Friday—students brought a pair of jeans for donation and could wear jeans to school. 60 pairs donated and taken to Kids in Transition.
 - Pep Rally at morning break; went really well.
 - Lunch—tail gate party—
 - Night scary movie w good turn out.
- Spirit Week—this week
- Bake Sale at School wide Coffee House
- Dance: Sady Hawkins/ 80's theme

- Upcoming: Casino Night taking place of winter formal.
 - Will possibly include a Formal dinner served by student gov't reps followed by movie "21".
- Candy grams upcoming for Holiday.

Dr. Gaye congratulates Student Gov't this year...they are very active and organizing lots of activities that students are enjoying.

Questions to Kelsey:

Craig Robinson: Why does she think that students are not ordering lunch through Men Wielding Fire?

Kelsey: It's a turn off with lunch being served in upper building and it's a little too expensive for what's offered...sometimes portion sizes are inconsistent.

Karen Gabriel: It is really important to let students know that lunch is now delivered upstairs so it needs to be publicized. She suggests a survey of what kids might like to eat because we want Lunch to be successful for MWF and for students.

Lunches now parked by Laura's desk and she knows who's absent, who's returned, etc. so now students are getting their lunches (previously a problem w/ lunches being given away).

2. Faculty Report by Jon Cook

Faculty extends its thanks to parent volunteers for taking care of getting lunches back in upper school,; faculty knew it was going to be a problem.

Fall Sports: biggest season ever. Congratulations to Pat Casey and the student athletes.

Weight Room is completed. Jon Cook will offer conditioning/fitness as an elective credit in spring semester. After school some sort of physical program destined to be offered, if staffing can be settled.

Winter sports start Monday (co ed skiing and boys basketball). Wrestling didn't have enough to make team, so individuals will work with Pat Casey.

We'll invite Pat Casey to attend next PAC meeting to address some questions of athletic team development.

Rob Van Cleve will attend next meeting to talk about senior thesis.

Tomorrow night is dance/ dodge ball.

Saturday is Science Club, going to Exploratorium in San Francisco.

3. Middle School Report by Ilana Rugg

Survey on homework load conducted and results show that for the most part, it easily met guidelines.

New 5th grade parents are settling in well.

Discussion ongoing about the awards ceremony: suggestion of sending awards home rather than presenting in public assembly so that celebration of individual student's success takes place in their home rather than in front of entire student body. Many parents are concerned because of desire for public recognition of excellence and feel sending awards home takes away from 'culture' of excellence. Others think the family celebration of success is more appropriate and avoids feeding a culture that focuses on public recognition rather than personal achievement.

Ilana will bring back information next meeting about how it proceeds.

4. Administrative Report by Gaye McCollum-Nickles

Green House arrived today that Laurie Bissonet will use for science experiments.

She's been hearing from some the myth that 'Sage Ridge cares only about students who are academically excellent.' Dr. Gaye vehemently discounts such a false belief and notes that the combination of fine teaching and a good school wide program helps each and every student reach their potential and character development.

The School does not let any student flounder and she wants parents to know that students who are struggling receive lots and lots of extra help, individual attention, and personalized approach.

Mark Lowenstern: we need to offer more information to parents of middle school students about the upper school and what it does for each student.

Ilana Rugg : There is a long standing and widespread trend in private school education that about half of the middle school population is lost in transition to upper school, even in the most established of private schools. In younger schools, parents think something is 'wrong' if there's only 50% retention, without realizing that it's the norm for independent education.

Janet Lowe: parent to parent recommendation is just as important as school talks for retention.

Mark: 2 ideas: first, US parents write a small quote to go on Sage Ridge website (testimonial)...

Second, parent liaison between Upper School and Middle School...upper school parent can have several middle school families because of greater numbers in the middle school community; and we should all remember that Community may be our weakest link in our pillars.

Janet Lowe: David Geddes and she on Annual Fund; last year was rough. Dollar fund met but not numbers of families...asking for input from PACs/families...trying to do various marketing to promote annual fund, but what is the parent response to culture of giving.

PAC suggests personal contact, recognition of giving, social opportunities for giving, etc.

Mark: Without a sense of community, fundraising won't be successful.

Community: need to bring Thanksgiving feast back for entire community.

Janet will take back input on Annual Fund; personal touch and confirmation of sense of community.

Gaye wants Mark to continue ski days...as part of community and suggests looking at master calendar to create a community event and promote annual fund.

Janet will go speak to faculty at Thursday 3:30 – 4:15 meeting about Annual fund.

Mini-semester: suggest a Life Skills/Basic Finance Course....

5. **Adjournment and Next Meeting**

Next meeting: Dec 10th 5:30 p.m.—2 conflicts. Possible rescheduling. Will send out dates as soon as determined.

Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Darla Garey-Sage,
US PAC Chair