

MINUTES OF NICHOLS SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 9th, 2008

ATTENDEES

S. Angelakos; C. Augustine; K. Andersen; R. Avino; M. Bacon; J. Beecher; L. Bell-Chopra; A. Bellows; M.L. Bisone; J. Borges; D. Bourne; D. Briatico; R. Bryan; P. Catipovic; K. Collins; J. Collins-New; D. Corbett; L. Cuthbert; J. Ennis; C. Fenn; D. Fulton; G. Gibson; E. Greene; J. Greene; M. Grenda; M. Goldfarb; E. Gurney; S. Hall; J. Hamilton; P. Haughton; G. Higgins; N. Hoerner; L. Hotung; M. Jones; K. Loree; W. Lowe; D. Marshall; J. Munro; N. Oak; C. Pegado; D. Russell; W. Schutte; T. Tantillo; K. Vanderhorst; L. Vossler; L. Wright; S. Yerkovich; D. Zacher

REPORT OF DR. ARANYA MARITIME, HEAD OF THE UPPER SCHOOL

- School year has begun with 401 Upper School students
- 22 students are currently here visiting from Spain
- On the late summer trip to Yosemite some students violated the drug and alcohol policy; an SCC hearing was held but is under appeal
- Class sizes: Officially 18 is the maximum. Of 173 classes, 22 have 18 students. 1 sophomore level class was approved for 19 with agreement of the teacher (Dr. Rockwell) that she has time to be available for extra help having only 2 classes. No teacher has 4 classes at maximum size, to ensure they can serve the needs of all of their students. Teachers grading on class participation will take class size into consideration.
- College Night with two college admissions directors: 9/16 FPAC All are welcome, mostly geared towards Senior Parents

REPORT OF JOHN MUNRO, ASST HEADMASTER AND HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 184 Middle School students began the school year in a way unique to Nichols, with very successful class trips to various parts of the country and across the border designed to develop a sense of community and trust within each grade.
- Cost of trips was offset by the Orientation budget of \$9,000.00. Dan Dolan, CFO, works to analyze cost; efforts are made to cut prices down as much as possible. For next year no significant changes to program aspect of trips is anticipated; slight alterations may be made to bring down cost.
- 5-12th Grade Parent Coffees: upcoming this month in the Reading Room, dates on website. Agendas include presentations from College Office (grades 10-12), Nichols Admissions Office (grade 8). Proposed format is to begin with announcements from the Head of the Division/deans with the majority of the meeting to be interactive discussions. Asked Grade Reps to survey their parents to determine what topics they would like addressed.

REPORT OF MR. RICK BRYAN, HEADMASTER

- New Roadways/Parking Lots: Prior to school opening, an email went out including a map; internal road usage the first days of school has gone smoothly. Asked for parents' feedback on possible improvements. (Garth Gibson asked for Yield to Pedestrians signs at crosswalks with student drivers in mind.)
- Construction site of new building is fenced off in a very conscious effort to keep kids safely away. (Parental concern expressed about safe place to wait for bus. John Munro explained students are to cut through the Middle School and are guided by two MS faculty along a temporary cone walkway.)
- Urged all to attend September 26th presentation of Phase 3. (Phase 1 was new sports fields, Phase 2 was new roadways/parking)
- Core Competencies: Group of faculty over the summer revisited core competencies developed three years ago; goal- to enrich our curriculum in terms of 21st century goals/strategies. Suggested as future Parent Association meeting topic: explanation of different targets for curriculum going forward.
- Faculty Evaluation/Professional Development: Presentation upcoming to Board on how evaluations are done-different forms used, who is involved. Evaluation leads to professional development. Goal: finest quality faculty and retention. Suggested as future Parent Association meeting topic so parents can understand how thorough the process is.
- Strategic planning: (facilities and curriculum) Has brought us to where we are now as a school. Former method of 5-7 year plan/slowly checking things off has evolved into a new way of continuous strategic thinking, allowing specific updates to the plan as circumstances and issues develop. Now in the process of putting together some building blocks (faculty, facilities, curriculum, financial, marketing aspects) that are very important to our future. Constant planning ensures awareness and ability to adapt to current dramatic changes in college admissions, athletics.
- Strategic planning for Nichols admissions: requires many different strategies. Budgeted for 575 students, enrolled 585 this year-as large as has been in a number of years. Asked current parents for feedback on how to best reach other families, neighborhoods. Expressed appreciation to parents for attending meeting, willingness to help with this.
- Internal Communication: Parents are the school's best allies on how to best communicate/email internally.
- External Communication: An important challenge is to communicate to the wider community and our alumni about what's going on at the school.
- Parent Survey Results: (reply to a parent question) Very helpful; good feedback factored into strategic thinking particularly guiding focus to different aspects of the program within various academic departments, communicated parental feedback to departments.
- Alumni Survey: Upcoming email survey to young alums will ask how well prepared they felt coming out of Nichols, give a sense of their type of majors, get immediate feedback to aid curriculum development.

REPORT OF ELIZABETH GURNEY, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

- Dynamic new team will work to improve communication with parents and ensure that Nichols is inclusive and welcoming to all.
New Development staff: Director of Parent Relations: Gyda Higgins (from Middle School), Special Events/Database Manager: Jill Robins (new to Nichols),
Staff: Annette Kellogg
- Parents are to report problems receiving emails to Gyda (both spouses can receive emails)

OLD BUSINESS

- Approval of New Parent Slate: approved by group vote. Chris Augustine thanked all who volunteered for positions
- Minutes of the Parents' Association General Meeting on May 12, 2008 were approved upon motion by Ann Bellows, seconded by Monica Jones.
- Secretary Report: Members of the Nichols family received cards from Parent Association to express our support during difficult times: Get Well to Warren Lowe (Nichols parent), Sympathy to Dr. Sutherland (English teacher/XC Coach) and Jack Ludwig (facilities). This important gesture will be continued throughout the year.

REPORT OF LORI VOSSLER, UPPER SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR

- Most of the four Upper School grade reps have met with their dean (freshman meeting is upcoming). All are in the process of organizing their events, everything is off to a good start

REPORT OF JACKIE ENNIS, MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR

- Grade reps have met with deans, 5-7th grades have had Back-to -School party, 8th grade party upcoming
- Gyda has requested that parents forward to her photos taken of school events, outings

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Annual Fund: Michele Goldfarb explained 2008 goals-Annual Fund is 7% of operating budget which is \$835,000 of which \$100,000 is Parents Division goal. Aim is 100% participation. Thanked Annual Fund telephone/writing volunteers and welcomed others to contact her to help on 11/5/08.
- Wrapping Paper Sale: Geared to Middle School/freshman, but any student can participate. All profit benefits Technology department. In the green spirit, product is eco-friendly, printed on recycled paper with water based inks that are recycled. Most orders will be done online; link from Nichols website. Contact person is Heather Williams.
- Community Service: CS committee/Stephanie Angelakos met over the summer to explore new opportunities for advisories and individuals, reporting that the new 12 hour service requirement is off to a great start with at least 50 students submitting service forms from volunteering over the summer.
- Tom Franz has direct access to the improved website for continuous input/updates which students/parents can refer to when the new site is up and running soon. Asked parents who have direct access to an agency/contact people that might be able to work with some of the advisories on one of our service days for individual/small group service opportunities outside of school hours to contact Tom Franz or Stephanie Angelakos.

NEW BUSINESS

- Nicholsfuture.org: Wendy Schutte, working with Elizabeth Gurney/Development staff reported that, as parents can see, there have been a lot of changes in the campus and now it is time to unveil the plans for the next big endeavor. Presentation of expansion plans will be combined with an incredible celebration on 9/26. Included will be a one hour performance in FPAC showcasing students of the Art/Science departments followed by great food and a party in the Quad. Adults only. Please come! RSVP ASAP; at least 400 are expected to attend. Not a fundraiser, there will be lots of surprises.
- By-laws: Stephanie Angelakos reported on slight revisions to the Nichols School Parents Association By-laws (last revised in 2004) most notably the addition of the two Grade Representative Coordinator positions (Middle School/Upper School), the addition of a Chair on the Nominating Committee to be filled by a past president and clarification that At Large Reps may serve for one year rather than a two year obligation. Motion to approve revised By-laws: Rhonda Avino, seconded by Jackie Ennis

Meeting concluded at 5:00 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Pegado, Parent Association Secretary