

## Minutes of Physical Sciences Task Force

November 1, 2013

Meeting Place: CYP 2222  
Meeting Time: 10:00am  
Participants: Jim Heath, Chris Cavalli, Elliot Richmond, Joe Brinkley, James Friedrichsen, Qurrat Thakur, June Mullin, Saad Eways, John Underwood, Karl Trappe, Paul Williams, C.D. Rao, John Cise, Ed Dupnick, Clyde Springen, Mostafa Pirnia, Jeff Bechtold, David Potter, Shana Shaw, Gabriel Arellano

### General Session

- 1.) **Approval of Agenda:** Approval of Agenda
- 2.) **Approval of Minutes from:** October Minutes Approved
- 3.) **Information items**

- a. ACC STEM Club – ACC Engineering student Sarah Kelton visited to introduce us to the newly-formed ACC STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Club. Right now, they meet Fridays at 2:30 in the RGC student lounge. They have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ACC-STEM-Club/185710814783024>. Saad Eways offered to advise students on courses to take. Faculty informed Ms. Kelton about ACCHaoS, our Star Parties, and our NASA collaborations as opportunities for her members to get involved. She announced that they are having a T-shirt design contest. The faculty expressed their support for her efforts, and hoped to work with her group in the future.
- b. SPS Chapter at ACC – The proposed Society of Physics Students chapter will have an organizational meeting the afternoon after the departmental meeting, with the goal of launching the club and getting students involved. Gabriel Arellano, James Friedrichsen, and Paul Williams will be faculty advisors. Students in SPS will get access to professional publications and organizations, as well as chances to get grants and internships. To maintain status as an ACC club, the SPS chapter will have to have at least 4 students and meet monthly.
- c. Highland Mall, Campus of the Future – Full-time faculty willing to move to HLC will now get individual offices. The College is not willing to spend large amounts of money to equip the new lab, so we will likely have to move equipment from RGC. Jim Heath presented a plan for having one lab at RGC devoted to our various Physics 1 classes and the other devoted to Physics 2 classes. This will allow us to ship most of one lab's equipment to HLC, and make up the difference via regular departmental purchases. Since such a schedule likely could not support 4 full-time faculty at RGC, Jim Heath announced that he is negotiating with the administration to build a department chair's office at HLC, so that he can move there, perhaps with others. Faculty expressed concerns and made suggestions.
- d. Star Parties – The second star party for the semester will be November 8, starting at 5:30 pm in the RRC student lounge. The Austin Planetarium and ACCHaoS will be there. Jim Heath will give the second of his talks about the history of astronomy at 7:00 in Room 3339, and the observing deck will open around 8:00, weather permitting. June will make flyers available to pass out.
- e. Possible Dark(er) Sky Site for Astronomy at Elgin – In a discussion about our recent Astronomy Instructional Program Review, Mike Midgely suggested that we consider the new Elgin Campus as a possible site for observation. The site has 100 acres, most of which are not currently being used. There is also a concrete slab on the property. A group will go out to the site after meeting to inspect it.
- f. Summer Camp possibility – Jennifer Martinez has approached Jim Heath about the possibility of holding a one-week summer camp similar to the "Rock Star party" we had earlier in the year. Plans are still tentative for now, so please contact Jim if you are interested,

2. Safety Officer Report (Chris) – Many faculty still need to do the Blackboard HazCom training, and to submit student safety contracts. Please take care of this as soon as you can.
3. Technology Report (June) – ACC now requires a formal request for any new hardware or software to be installed on computers. Please tell June what software you may need, and she will get the process going. Jeff Bechtold mentioned that some of the Physics laptops at CYP were not working properly. It was suggested to see if Geology could lend the use of some of their laptops. Now that our departments are separate, we will request 12 laptops for Physics use in our long-range planning process.
4. Committee Chair Reports
  - a. Assessment (James) – Emails regarding end-of-semester assessments will be sent out soon. Many faculty expressed concern that our assessments should be created with an eye towards getting resources that will help us teach more effectively.
  - b. Budget (James) – James would like to divide the budget up by campus, while keeping some money aside for standardization of equipment. However, we must wait to find out how much of the burden of equipping HLC we will have to bear.
  - c. Curriculum (Joe) – The committee will meet after the December meeting to decide on projects to pursue.
  - d. Evaluation (Chris) – Portfolios will be submitted to Google Docs this year. Please check the Departmental website to get details. Everyone must also submit Faculty Input Forms for their student reviews.
  - e. Engineering Steering Committee (Saad) – Ed Dupnick and Clyde Springen will be helping Saad with supervising the NASA Aerospace Scholars program. Registration for the program is underway, so please inform your students. A representative from ACC's CAD program will be coming to talk to our Engineering students.
  - f. Long Range Planning (Allen) – The Long Range Planning Committee will meet on January 17 at 10:00 at RGC. All interested parties are invited. Contact Allen Underwood for more details.
  - g. Professional Development (Paul) – There are a number of opportunities for professional development on the Departmental website. Note especially the meeting on Physics in the Life Sciences in March.
  - h. Scheduling (James) – We are still working on scheduling at RGC and HLC. Jim presented a schedule for RGC which has one lab dedicated to our first-semester courses, and the other to the second-semester courses. This will allow us to move a lab's worth of equipment to HLC without having to close a lab at RGC. It is doubtful that this schedule can support 4 full-time faculty at RGC, so Jim is negotiating with Administration to build a Department Chair's office at HLC; he and perhaps Saad would then move to HLC. These are all tentative plans; nothing is set in stone yet. Please check your Spring 2014 schedule for possible errors. There will be a meeting in November to discuss the Summer 2014 schedule. All interested parties are invited to attend. Contact James for details.
5. Discussion Items
  - a. Astronomy textbook – A vote will be taken at the December meeting to decide whether or not to adopt the latest edition of *Astronomy Today* by Chaisson and MacMillan. Some differences with the previous edition were briefly discussed.

b. Laptops at CYP – Discussed during Tech report

6. Action Items

- a. Approval of Engineering Circuits Class – Saad reviewed the reasons for creating a Circuits course (ENGR 2405), to better serve our Electrical Engineering students. The class will be lecture-lab, with an extra hour of recitation for problem-solving. The Department unanimously approved the course without further discussion. ENGR 2405 will be added to the Engineering Degree Program as a Restricted Elective. The Department unanimously approved this change as well. Finally, Saad presented the possibility of adding a recitation hour to Mechanics of Materials, ENGR 2332, since the recitation hour added to Statics and Dynamics has been so successful. Again, the Department approved of this change by unanimous vote.

Minutes of PHYS/AST/ENG Subcommittee  
November 2, 2012

Participants

Jim Heath, Lala Guerra, Chris Cavalli, Elliot Richmond, Joe Brinkley, James Friedrichsen, Qurrat Thakur, June Mullin, Saad Eways, John Underwood, Karl Trappe, Paul Williams, C.D. Rao, Julianne LeMond, John Cise, Barbara Endl, Phillip Walsh, Ed Dupnick, Mostafa Pirnia, Larry Wigginton, Luis Cuellar, Paul Williams.

Curriculum Chair Report

Nothing to Report, Jeff Bechtold out.

Evaluations Chair Report

Instructors were asked to place any portfolios in designated box. Chris Cavalli went over the evaluation schedule.

### Assessment

The Assessment for spring 2012 was submitted on time. There will be two different assessments this year. One will be General Education requirements and the second one will be a Physics degree assessment. James Friedrichsen and Jim Heath went over the requirements and the assessment schedule for Physics. Everyone shared their suggestions and concerns. Everyone also was informed that the three things that need to be assessed at the program level would be problem solving, conceptual understanding and lab work. Jim Heath reminded instructors teaching Physics 2425 and 1401 for the fall 2012 semester to submit their assessments results in to June Mullin at the end of the semester.

### Engineering Steering Committee

The Engineering committee held their meeting prior to the department meeting. The committee shared with everyone what was discussed at the meeting. The following is what was discussed: Coming up with a common uniform framework for Intro to Engineering similar to physics courses, changing Dynamics and Mechanics and Material to 4 hour credit courses, discussed the engineering budget, shared how the faculty coach for engineering help figured out ways to improve students success, discussed Engineering assessment for Statics and Intro to Engineering and the progress of the circuit course.

### Astronomy IPR

An Astronomy IPR meeting is scheduled for November 30, 2012, 9:00am at CYP. Chris Cavalli announced that the committee needed more members