

Report of the TwoYear College Representative CPS-AAPT Executive Board Meeting 31 Oct 2015

I continue to have problems contacting, or identifying, physics professors at different colleges. Department web pages seem to be designed to be standard and generic, which means faculty names are often not given. High schools also seem to go out of their way to hide who their teachers are. This is making keeping the mailing list updated difficult.

My college is in its second semester of 14+1 weeks. In the spring it didn't work out well for the science courses, in large part because no one had considered snow days. All my physics courses were rushed and the results showed in student performance. This semester is proving to be the same. As student abilities are eroding with each new entering class, we're trying to rush them through the material. I know other colleges have also adopted this schedule and we need to resist this trend.

The Physics Olympiad exam is coming up, everyone should consider contacting your local high school teachers and offer to act as the sponsoring school.

HACC is having some success with encouraging students to work on research projects and independent studies. We have 3 students this semester doing projects that I hope to see at our Spring meeting. All three are in modern physics. Our section needs to encourage more undergraduate research and have students presenting at our conference. Perhaps we can share ideas about research topics.

I'm not having much success putting together a local competition for students. It seems everyone is rushed and doesn't have time to get involved. Such a competition would generate interest in science and possibly boost our enrollment.

HACC is in the process of revising graduation requirements, changing from the Core A,B,C we have now to a competency requirement. Instead of specifying a menu, each program will designate which courses meet outcome competencies such as critical thinking or computational skills. Faculty is viewing this with caution and concern. Some 2-yr terminal programs no longer have a science requirement outside of the General Ed requirements, and this could allow a student to graduate without science. It's proposed that exercise science be removed completely as a requirement. On the good side, the new requirements on transfer programs changed the science requirement to a science with a lab, so that's a step up. I'll report on the outcome of faculty votes on this issue in the Spring meeting.

I attended the AAPT National Meeting in University Park. McGraw-Hill has introduced a SmartBook for their algebra based physics text and an online version and is slowly introducing the same for other titles. These are a fraction of the cost of the regular hardcover texts (roughly \$40 vs \$260) so this might be a good alternative for students. If they buy the regular book they can have access to the SmartBook. OpenStax showed off many of their texts and gave out samples. I've suggested to my students that the OpenStax physics text is a recommended extra text.

The TWC breakfast was not as well attended as in the past, but discussions were lively. There was general concern about the future of TWCs in general and physics programs in particular due to dwindling enrollment and lack of true support for STEM. Funding is decreasing while more is expected from the programs. Lack of student skills, especially in math, was also discussed and solutions proposed. One idea is that AAPT should push for better math requirements for elementary ed teacher certification. More cooperation and exchanges of ideas between colleges was brought up. I explained how our mini-

meetings were organized and what the results have been so far. There was also some interest in professors attending section general meetings outside their area as a means of intercollegiate exchange and professional development. Out low conference registration pushed this idea. Perhaps we should try advertising our conference outside our section area.

Among the presentations at the conference were several by students from TWCs, including some original research by two students from a school near San Francisco. These were all well received and proved to be both informative and professional.

Respectfully Submitted

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