

2010 Annual Meeting Minutes

It has been a very difficult year for public higher education, and next year's budget will be extremely challenging, but PHENOM was successful in a number of ways.

Opening Remarks

Ferd gave opening remarks in Micki's absence

Ice Breaker

"Speed Dating" led by Sam and Anneta

Assessment of Last Year and Where We're At

Presentation by Ferd – see below

Q & A/Discussion

Plans for Next Year

Projects in the works

i. Presentation: We've been talking about..

– Debate: Patrick, Cahill, Baker, Stein: Education issues

With K-12 education groups, too

o Get the muscle to pull them

Would have to happen in September

– We will put out a paper on the economic impact of investing in public higher education

– More internships

– High-profile marches

o Connect to National Day of Action October 7th?

– PHENOM calendar

o Raise awareness & maybe funds

– Blog. We need bloggers!

ii. Discussion

– Voter Registration

– To do debate, you either need a major media sponsor or a major issue

o Youth in general, focus on Boston area

– If we can't pull off for the gubernatorial, try for legislative debates

– Finances – waivable fees on campuses, or other, because SGA funding can be tricky....Not allowed

– Work-study

– Go for high profile march – across Mass

– Web presence – get articles & resources up there for people doing research

• The Great State of Mind Campaign

i. Presentation (5 mins.)

ii. Discussion in small groups by regions (15 mins.)

iii. Report from small groups (10 mins.)

– First Week

– Constitution Day Events (September?)

– High School Seniors/Prospective Students

- PBS documentary on education crisis as an education tool
- Class visits & Dormstorming
- County & Local School PTAs – Presentations
- All major gubernatorial campaign events
- UMB, UML music/festivals, etc. – table
- Alumni: go directly to the organizations (skip development office)
- MTA
- Alternative methods – bookmarks with info for online
- Business associated with campuses
- Social events – dances, raffles
- Work w/ SGA
- Farmer’s Markets
- Electronic – send to listserves? Facebook?
- Educate about who we are & what we mean while we collect
- MAKE THE ARGUMENT STRONGER We’ve got it let’s show this
- Blog on the website
- YouTube
- Online blitz
- College reunions
- BoTs
- Chambers of Commerce
- Rotary, etc.
- Create a PR process
- Social networking sites
- Don’t ask them to mail signatures back – collect them there!
- 1st year orientations
- MTA summer conference
- Alongside voter registration
- Approach when eating
- Parades
- Each campus commit to 1 signature gathering event
- How do we share best practices?
- Contacting uninvolved SGAs
 - o SGA resolutions
 - Set campus goals & have accountability
 - Get youth orgs. To help cosponsor debate
 - Ask people where they think MA ranks in support
 - o Montage of reactions
 - Email massphenom@gmail.com
 - Melissa will Tweet
 - Discipline
 - Righteous Rage
 - Someone should take on job of compiling list of orgs, esp. labor
 - Alphas & Deltas, other frats and sororities

Small groups met again to prioritize ways of getting signatures in the summer and the fall, and set up accountability mechanisms.

BREAK and DOOR PRIZES

25% Campaign

The Board proposed that we endorse the campaign that echoes Barney Frank's call for a 25% reduction in the military budget so as to be able to better fund education and human services. The Board proposed that we should not specifically work on the campaign but that we include the theme of the campaign in our discussion of where funding for higher ed can come from. The Membership debated this and voted not to endorse the campaign at this time and to continue the discussion at next year's Delegate Assembly meetings.

Internal Business

a. Amendment to Bylaws recommended by Delegate Assembly

Alex presented a By-Law amendment that would restructure the Board

– We had great people but it wasn't always representative

– The people on our board should be those most connected to the campuses and should represent all regions

After discussion, an amendment to the proposal was made that would remove the phrase "using instant runoff voting (preferential balloting)" from Article IVb.

The amendment to the proposal passed with 2 votes opposed.

Then there was a unanimous vote to close debate

The amended proposal (see below) passed unanimously.

Board Election

Nominating Speeches followed by Vote

PHENOM Budget recommended by Board

Ken and Ravi – We raised and spent half of what we expected

The proposed budget passed unanimously.

PHENOM Policies

The Code of Business Conduct and Ethics and the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, both adopted by the Delegate Assembly, were reviewed

Announce Results of Election (5 mins.)

i. Greater Boston

1. Stephenson (Hollywood) Aman
2. Stasha Lampert
3. Heike Schotten

ii. Central

1. Dale LaBonte
2. Heidi McCann
3. Kim Selwitz

iii. Northeast

1. Chris Power
2. Jim Tarr
3. Ryan Chamberland

iv. Southeast

1. Elton Jhon DaGraca
2. Ron Weisberger

v. Western Mass

1. Patrick Burke
2. Ken Kaar

3. Max Page

4. Melissa Urban

7. Evaluation of Meeting (5 mins.) (see page 19)

+

Good people, good conduct

Dinner

Central Location

Delta

Shorten icebreaker

Include an education piece

Set up a discussion Board

Add a forum to the website

Send out materials in advance

Having it after a day of campaigning is tiring and Squeezing

More getting to know you time

A social event?

PHENOM mixers (regional)

What, who & How

To be done, will do it, hold accountable

Assessment of Last Year and Where We're At

Presentation at PHENOM Annual Meeting 6/5/10

It has been a very difficult year for public higher education, and next year's budget will be extremely challenging, but PHENOM was successful in a number of ways.

Some of the year's highlights included:

A large conference on Expanding Access to Public Higher Education that brought together a diversity of constituents to explore barriers to access, pathways to overcome the barriers, and short-term steps we can take. Following the conference, we redoubled our efforts to win in-state tuition for immigrants. Our close collaboration with MIRA and SIM have strengthened us, despite our lack of success and the rise of anti-immigrant fervor among cowardly politicians.

The establishment of a Public Higher Education Caucus in the Massachusetts House. Its presence will prove significant, and the known fact that PHENOM made it happen has added to our reputation. We look forward to working closely with the Caucus in publicizing the crisis and advocating for legislation to alleviate it. We have suggested the Caucus go on a fact-finding tour of our campuses in the fall.

The launch of our most ambitious campaign – For a Great State of Mind. The demand to just “be average” has helped shine a spotlight on the sad state of affairs in Massachusetts and has resonated in many quarters. We have collected thousands of signatures and involved many people in the process.

Helping stimulate and form a coalition to demand increased revenues generated in a progressive manner, and incorporating revenues into PHENOM's program. At last year's Annual Meeting, members said loudly and clearly that PHENOM has to say more than “here's the problem, fix it”; we have to fight for increased revenues.

We amended our complaint with the Obama administration about Massachusetts' use of federal stimulus funds and got quite a bit of publicity and, more important, over \$50 million quietly added to the higher education budget by the Patrick administration. Once again, we were the only ones willing to step out and fight for what others quietly grumbled about. Respect for PHENOM increased as a result.

The March 8 rally, march, and Race to the Median on the Boston Common energized the couple hundred participants and was heard throughout the State House. As always, it was as important for the increased campus activism and widespread publicity as for the immediate impact on the Legislature.

There was much more.

Our first statewide training coordinated with Campus Camp Wellstone

We were very visible, speaking at teach-ins, presenting at conferences, meeting with many higher ed officials, unions, and student groups, organizing call-in and lobby days, sponsoring receptions with authors, joining coalitions, and testifying to the Legislature

The production and distribution of two excellent newsletters, a new and improved website, cleaning up and expanding our database, receiving good press coverage, publishing guides to student organizing guide and setting up call-in days to the Legislature.

Launching a program of academic credit for student organizers

Developing closer relationships with college presidents, student governments and campus unions.

Doubling the amount of money we raised, allowing us to hire Alex Kulenovic as our Eastern Mass. organizer. With Ravi Khanna's guidance, we have diversified our funding sources.

That's the good news. Here are a few pieces of bad news:

1. Ironically, as we have grown and expanded in scope and reach, our grassroots efforts have not kept pace. Whether we look at the number of activists, the number of active campuses, the number of people at our rallies, the number of cards we have signed – we have not grown. Our numbers have remained roughly constant over the past couple of years. This of course means we are not living up to our potential and is something we have to analyze and correct this coming year.
2. So much of our energy and staff time go to logistics, bureaucracy, finances, technology. If we were twice as big, the amount needed for all that would increase but nowhere near double. I.e. we are inefficient and the only answer is to grow – recruit, train and retain more activists; raise more money; organize ourselves effectively while encouraging autonomous and independent activity on our campuses.
3. And of course there is the state of public higher education. We always knew we were in it for the long haul, and this year has made that even more evident. Fees continue to rise, financial aid continues to stagnate, staff and faculty salaries have been frozen, college budgets keep shrinking. Public higher education is under attack – not just in Massachusetts but around the country.

And finally, one more piece of good news – that attack on the public sector is generating a response. Not only in California but in many other states, students, unions and community organizations are mobilizing and fighting back; groups are seeing the common causes of their problems: state tax structures, federal spending priorities, and a business-led assault on the idea that we need collective solutions to our collective problems. PHENOM is proud to be part of this growing movement.