

PHENOM Annual Meeting
June 15, 2013 12 – 5 PM
Quinsigamond Community College

Attendance: Collen Avedikian, Joshua Catanzaro, Doreen Deschler, Carl Ericson, Andriana Foiles-Cifuentes, Brittany Haughton, Ken Haar, Sheila Hanley, Nikki Villar Hernandez, Alex Kulenovic, Dale LaBonte, Gillian Mason, Neil McInnes-Barker, Frank Olbris, Max Page, Manny Pintado, Edy Pye, Kim Selwitz, Ron Weisberger, Ferd Wulkan

1. Lunch and socializing

2. Watch short film and hear synopsis of Montreal trip to meet with activists from the student strike against tuition hikes. The three main principles of the coalition's success were:
 - a. the organizations always negotiate together, and never separately
 - b. the organizations don't critique each other publicly, always show solidarity
 - c. the organizations never recommend how to vote on a settlement to the membership

3. Review agenda and agree to guidelines. Establish a parking lot for issues that emerge outside the agenda

4. Increasing access to higher education:
 - a. brainstorm aspects of access
 - b. divide answers into 5 broader categories:
 1. retention once on campus
 2. getting to school
 3. links between K-12 and Higher Ed
 4. institutional hierarchies
 5. helping people get engaged
 - c. The first 4 were given as topics, one each to small groups, for discussion and to formulate three questions to then share with the larger group. [see notes at end]
 - d. Discussion of upcoming Access conference

Tentatively scheduled for late fall 2013 or spring 2014

Two ways in which it will be different from PHENOM's 2009 conference are that we hope to plan and organize it in coalition with other groups, and that we hope it leads to a concrete campaign for specific improvements. Nikki Villar Hernandez will be coordinating outreach and planning this summer.

A sheet went around and lots of people volunteered to help plan it

5. Short items:

a. Legislative Subcommittee on Student Debt

1. the subcommittee chair (Paul Mark of Pittsfield) wants hearings on campuses this fall.
2. PHENOM is working with some UMass economists who want to quantify the economic impact on the state
3. We will support Sen. Warren's bill to hold student loan interest to the prime rate and establish consumer protections for student borrowers
 - a. we can invite her to campuses
4. we can encourage people to call their representatives to voice their opinions
5. we can support the national Jobs with Justice student debt campaign

b. Next PHENOM newsletter - materials due by August 1

1. possible topics:

- a. Sen Warren proposal
- b. the upcoming Access conference
- c. undocumented students – deferred action
- d. Ad for Neil's movie and trailer
- e. pass along questions from today's Access discussion and invite answers
- f. spotlight on people and accomplishments
- g. the tuition and fees freeze process
- h. Quebec trip report

2. make a Spanish translation available on-line

c. t-shirt design

1. there is money for about 300 shirts
2. Brittany presented possible options for feedback from the group

6. PHENOM Restructuring Proposal

a. Presentation

- * redefines Membership away from being dues-based to being involvement-based
- * redefines Chapters (formerly Campus Councils) to:
 1. require 6 or more active members
 2. meet regularly
 3. include students or people who do not have access to become students
- * redefines General Assembly (formerly Delegate Assembly) to:

1. include all members, even ones without a Chapter
2. remove location and quorum requirements
3. allow proxy votes for members who do not attend General Assembly
 - a. 1 rep can carry up to 3 votes

* redefine the Board

1. 8 total members
 - a. 4 officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Clerk
 - b. 4 Team Leaders:
 - Legislative Work, Communications, Fund Raising, Organizing/Training
2. need an interim board until the first General Assembly

b. Discussion about restructuring

1. need a mechanism to know how many members are in the chapters
2. how to ensure differentiation and broad representation on the board
3. how to grow PHENOM and have involvement on more campuses

c. Vote on bylaw amendments to implement proposed restructuring (2/3 vote required)

It passed with 15 in favor and one abstention

7. Discussion and vote on what days of the week to hold General Assembly meetings

- a. Sundays: 10 votes
- b. Saturdays: 3 votes

Dates and locations for General Assembly meetings established:

- a. Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Feb. 2, Mar 2 (provisional)
- b. April 6 (annual meeting)

c. tentative plan for the October meeting to be at Worcester State; other meetings tentatively at Fitchburg State, UMass Lowell, and Quinsigamond Community College

8. Board elections:

Nominations and elections were held for PHENOM's Interim Board which, according to the just-adopted bylaws, will be in office from now until October 6 when the Board for the remainder of the 2013-14 year will be elected. The following people were elected:

President - Joshua Catanzaro
 Vice President - Colleen Avedikian
 Treasurer - Max Page
 Clerk - Andriana Foiles-Cifuentes
 Communications Team Leader - Brittany Haughton
 Fundraising Team leader - Gillian Mason
 Legislative Team Leader - Ken Haar
 Organizing/Training Team Leader - Nicole Villar Hernandez

9. Planning to table at the State Democratic Convention at UMass Lowell in July
10. Budget explained and accepted by unanimous vote
11. 2 items in the parking lot:
 - a. privatization on campuses will be on the agenda of a future meeting
 1. an email will go out to find out what is happening on different campuses
 - b. future locations for meetings will depend on the abilities of different campuses to host
12. Brief synopsis of the legislative budget process and the prospects for freezing student fees
13. Other Announcements and Suggestions
 - a) UMass Dartmouth will be holding a party upon the hiring of their 100th administrator
 - b) We should attend the July 14 hearing at the State House that includes the bill to give all UMass student trustees full voting rights
 - c) PHENOM should do a trip to Washington, DC
 - d) Each PHENOM meeting should have an education/training component
14. Close with a round of each participant listing a plus and something they'd change from the meeting, along with something they are looking forward to

Issues related to Access

Affordable fees
Support upon arrival
Getting there and what do you do when you get there
Access to information – on and off campus
Who gets to know about college
Unequal opportunity
Retention programs
Hierarchy of institutions
Outcomes and end results
Worthless degree + debt
Feel like you deserve to be in college
Access, info re scholarships
Opportunity to be involved in campus community
Child care
Transportation

SMALL GROUPS

1. On campus issues

3 questions:

- a) How can campuses support, financially and otherwise, non-traditional students?
- b) How do we make sure students have full and equal access to all resources on campus?
- c) Is there a new way of accounting the real cost of going to college, and how can PHENOM develop this idea?

Issues and possible answers:

- Physical access
- Access to finances on campus
- Pathway from 2 to 4 year college
- Need for advisors
- Conduits for information – e.g social media, libraries; advertise EVERYWHERE
- Open house, invite community, get potential students to see campuses
- Set up unofficial channels
- Need to consider illness, car trouble
- Materials are hard to understand
- Cost of books; know required books earlier – relates to adjuncts not knowing til last minute who is teaching
- Monopoly of bookstore
- Consider income foregone as part of cost of college
- Mentors – engage alums
- Don't assume college students are 4 year middle class young people
- Lots of financial aid not available to part-time students
- Financial aid system geared to people who don't need it the most

2. Getting to campus

3 questions:

- a) How much public transportation is available and affordable; how do we help those who drive their cars to campus?
- b) Do institutions have enough housing available and affordable, and assistance for housing on commuter campuses?
- c) How do we help encourage students to be aware of their local institutions which would be more accessible?

Issues and possible answers:

- Vouchers for carpooling – money could come from parking fees
- UMA model – some of parking fee goes to public buses
- Cell phone-based zip cars – use social networking more
- Look at hours of buses – UMD campaign
- Push free transportation for students – cf other countries
- Bike sharing
- Fewer transportation problems if more housing available and affordable
- Ctty colleges considering building houses – could be good but could cause problems if too expensive

3. K-12 what happens there

3 questions:

- a) Test culture and how underperforming people are locked out; MCAS does not mean college-ready
- b) How do we make a coherent system where guidance is visionary process throughout schooling that opens up possibilities
- c) Balkanization and bureaucracy – different parts of pie often work at cross purposes

Issues and possible answers:

- K-12 teachers have so little control
- Need more conversation between groups of rank and file K-12 and HE educators
- No programs to support students in summer
- Standardized Testing is restrictive and useless
- Not everyone is able to test well
- Remedial classes add to cost
- Cycle of poverty
- College accommodation different for those over 18
- Ctty colleges have DOL grant – targeting recently laid off people – our conference could be a reporting out time. Lots of ideas piloted.
- Librarians looking at: my HS senior is your college freshman.
- More advertising at HS level and on TV and on social media, but need to target.
- College students come back to HS to talk to students.
- Workshops for seniors before graduation – life skills eg financial literacy
- PARCC may be worse than MCAS

4. Hierarchies of institutions

1. How do we educate people to class nature – eg tracking, early determinants
2. How do we value a variety of institutions – eg public and private; how address overshadowing of public by private?
3. How do we fight vocationalization of public higher ed – focus more on transfer than workforce track?

Issues and possible answers:

Need to educate parents as well.

Older people who have worked themselves out of their jobs – think about vocationalization in a better way, leading to career ladder, upward mobility....

Free Higher Ed card that you use for (e.g.) 2 years whenever you want.

“Step up to college” – programs at community colleges

Need to fund programs that teach people how to be a college student. It’s very different from HS.

Campus hostility to marginalized groups. Students of color approached with certain attitudes. No forums for students of color to discuss. It has to do with a lot more than just academics and affordability.

Sibling days – include other relatives