

PHENOM Annual Meeting
August 16, 2014 11 AM – 3 PM
Quinsigamond Community College

Present: Ron Weisberger , Colleen Avedikian, Max Morongiello, Kim Selwitz, Gillian Mason, Johannes Raatz, Carl Ericson, Sue Blake, Naka Ishii, Dale Labonte, Ken Haar, Maryelen Calderwood, Natalie Higgins, Ferd Wulkan, Christine Lowe

1. Ferd gave a brief summary of the state of the organization: changed political climate; cohesive Board; new Executive Director; success in some of our original goals; challenges in grassroots organizing; need to BOTH fight for short-term incremental gains AND project a radical vision.

2. Natalie, the new Executive Director of PHENOM, introduced herself and shared some of her experiences and early sense of things PHENOM needs.

3. Around the table advice/ideas for Natalie:

Max: engage alumni organizations and help connect different campus constituencies.

Sue: no advice, just here to observe

Johannes: get students more involved and connect the campuses, increase diversity of those involved

Carl: consider reaching out to groups outside higher ed – selected unions and community organizations

Dale: increase both student and faculty involvement; use community engagement focus of Vision Project

Ken: find your own voice, connect alumni

Maryelen: reconnect with campus unions such as USA and AFSCME

Ron: build bridges between constituencies, mediate where needed; develop good analyses

Colleen: do more to get higher ed involvement outside of UMass

Naka: we need to strategize around students' short term involvement; add administrators to list of constituencies

Dale: it may be possible to create a UMass PHENOM alumni group

4. Johannes made a pitch for PHENOM to support Progressive Massachusetts' Higher Ed platform of free public higher-ed, pre-K through college, and an initial priority focus on progressive tax reform.

Discussion

Motion and unanimous vote to endorse and support the platform and campaign

Gillian will work on a press release in September and we will work to distribute it widely. **Ken** will try to arrange a presentation at the Summit Group. **Kim** will arrange for power point to be posted on our website.

5. Ferd summarized Anastasia's work around the economic causes and consequences of student debt and asked what us to consider what PHENOM could do with it.

Gillian: Jobs with Justice connection to Campaign for a Debt Free Future might get it national press

Kim: has connection to WGBH

Ken: use it as part of a presentation for campuses and other interest group; and get her in front of the Legislature's Higher Ed Caucus

Dale: offer it to faculty as an avenue for internships, projects, and independent studies

Ron: radio and cable tv

Gillian: State Dept of Ed can also be reached through Campaign for a Debt Free Future
Ron: could we get it into the governor's race?

6. Natalie mentioned that Sen Warren's refinancing bill is being reintroduced Sept 8
it lost by two votes last time
Natalie is talking to Maggie at the Center for American Progress about how we can help in MA.
7. Possible conference with Jim McGovern this fall
Ferd brought the group up to date
Dale, Ron, Gillian, Maryelen, Christine and Carl are interested in helping
8. Colleen mentioned the "How Public is Public Education" conference at UMass Dartmouth Nov 14 & 15
PHENOM should have a presence: tabling and maybe be on a panel
9. Campus Organizing Discussion Proposal for MTA funding
Ferd pointed to UMass Dartmouth chapter as an example of what institutional support can do
Colleen used an internship model and received a stipend from her union to do it
Naka and Ferd will draft proposal to ask MTA for funds to help build chapters
MTA might be able to help us identify interested faculty members
Possible ways to spend the money: stipends for faculty, wages for students
Gillian suggested we don't get too focused on faculty, that staff can recruit students too
And beyond the SGAs are many cultural and activist student groups
Ken encouraged the group to consider having campus chapters be registered student groups –
discussed pros and cons
And to take it to SAC (Kim has connections)
Dale suggested working with Career Planning, Internships, and related offices on the campuses
We could make a proposal at the statewide Community College conference in the spring
We need a set of questions for figuring out the landscapes and possibilities on the different campuses
10. Access Conference
Access is one of PHENOM's 5 principles and goes well beyond affordability
Vanessa Martinez at Holyoke CC is making a proposal for Mass Dept of Ed funds
to map access efforts and identify best practices
applications due: Sept 30, awards announced Dec 2014, report due out: Dec 2015
Can PHENOM help? We are interested but are not sure what Vanessa needs?
Kim will ask Vanessa for more information.
11. Summit Group
Ken explained what it is and talked about the importance of the coming year
UMass' 2 year freeze will be up
the state universities and community colleges need to get back on track
Next Summit Group meeting, 1 pm, Sept 10, State House
Natalie, Gillian, Kim, and Max (and **Lisa Field**) expressed interest in attending
Agreed that we want to again have a student legislative intern to work with and learn from Ken.
12. Gillian proposed that PHENOM join the Massachusetts Jobs with Justice coalition of over 120 groups.
There are 2 requirements:
 1. Pay dues (may be waived) and
 2. Attend 4 annual Steering Committee meetingsUnanimous vote to join

Natalie will attend the meetings

Gillian expects a statewide fall retreat and suggests PHENOM participates

13. Ken proposed we talk with Fred Clark and consider taking the state to court over funding for higher ed the constitution says something about 'equitable'
Ferd said that Ira R. from Springfield Tech is interested in this. **Natalie** will talk with them.

14. Board elections

with one nominee per position, the motion was made to vote on accepting the full slate
vote was unanimous: the board was re-elected and Christine Lowe filled the vacant Clerk position

15. FY 2015 PHENOM Budget

Ferd presented it and it was approved

16. Colleen proposed these dates for General Assembly meetings

Oct 4, Nov 22, Feb 14, June 6

Colleen will set up a doodle poll

17. Gillian made a pitch for everyone to commit to a fundraiser of some type this year

Possible ideas: house parties, a "main event," phone bank night

SALSA can do auctions and monthly "sustainer" payments – **Ken** can help get donations; **Natalie** will work on this.

An annual drive/sustainer campaign – **Ken and Gillian** work on individual donor strategy

Get involved with Valley Gives

Be more intentional around COMECC and UMACC (campus campaigns/payroll deductions) - **Ferd and**

Gillian will work on strategy

Natalie will work on overall fundraising calendar

18. Natalie spoke to growing our social media presence

facebook, twitter, and webpage

and need for good relations/contacts with traditional press

Dale and Kim will work on this with **Natalie**

3:30pm - End.