

**Sequoia High School PTSA Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 5, 2013**

This meeting was called to order at 7:48 p.m.

In attendance: Alice Henderson, President, Elisabeth Stitt, VP, Cecilia Marquez, Secretary Sue Anderson, Shoko Barnes, Geraldo Cadenas, Greg DesBrisay, Julie DiBona, Andrea Dierolf, Ria Faggiolly, Rick Filippuzzi, Camille Fischer, Rebecca Flynn, Carlos Juarez, Gaby Knauth, Griselda Lopez-Juarez, Sheryl Muñoz-Bergman, Guadalupe Navarrete, Betsy Parkhurst, Lisa Pokorny, Lisa Prosch, Benedicte Richardson, Michal Roof, Marie Salama, Lillian Svec, JoAnn Velayo, Mary Vizzi-Filippuzzi, Kristine Westerlind, Julie Willett, Chris Woo

Guest Speakers: Chad Ablang—Sequoia’s Psychologist. It is his 8<sup>th</sup> year as a school psychologist. Chad did his training in NYC. Before coming here, he really loved middle school but is coming to love high school. If there is a request for special ed., Chad does the evaluations and/or interprets reports from the outside (doctors/Ed Psych, etc.). He attends Student Success Team meetings, which are an early intervention process to address academic and behavior issues that could lead to a student dropping out. His main goal is for everyone to know that he works with ALL students; would like to connect and meet as many parents as possible. Some students just drop by his office to chat not because they have any problems. His office is located in Room 100 (directly above Ms. Hansen’s office).

Guadalupe Navarrete, Head Guidance Advisor, was the next speaker. Her presentation covered what counselors do and what they would like to do better. She had two handouts: Department calendar September-June and a 4 year plan. She mentioned that Counselors are training the kids to be proactive and to verify the accuracy of their academic record, which is available through Infinite Campus (this includes grades, attendance, credit, etc.). She also described Naviance (a program to help with the college selection and application process). In the past, counselors spent more time with students when they were seniors. However, they have come to realize that the freshman and sophomores need more guidance with respect to course selection with an eye towards college admission. They don’t want students to reach their junior year and realize that the courses that they’ve been taking won’t satisfy the A-G requirements for CSUs or UCs. Freshmen, for example, had to select three universities/colleges they might be interested in going to. As they plan their course work selection for next semester/year, they will be able to check in Naviance to see if they are making choices in line with to the academic requirements of the schools on their lists. Through Naviance the kids create resumes, which will be important to document their activities for their college applications. The students update this information every year. They sign up for CSUMentor (a website that helps students and their families learn about the California State University (CSU) system.. We are starting the college application process right now in 9<sup>th</sup> grade! Our school has really blossomed. Even internationally our Sequoia students are scoring very high on their IB exams. The current counselor to student ratio is 1:430 (it should be 1:350). Colleges are looking for passion. They want to see kids fully involved in their communities. Colleges are looking for a match with their programs and organizations. As a result, the counselors encourage all students to get involved in some club or

activity either within the school or outside in the community. She ended by mentioning that Counselors are committed to writing letters of recommendation for all our college-bound students. This is a HUGE commitment. Chris Woo asked if this was a good use of their time since students can indicate that they come from a large public school with few counselors on the Common Application (this is the online application that most private colleges use). By checking this box, colleges should make allowances for generic counselor recommendation letters. Ms. Navarrete said that the counselors are committed to writing individual letters because they want to help our seniors as much as possible when they apply to college and realize the importance of these letters to college admissions staff.

### Treasurer Report

Rebecca reported that the PTSA has 217 members; this is far below our usual number, which is around 350.

PTSA received a \$13,000 grant from the Sequoia High School Education Foundation.

In October there was a cash balance of \$60,000.

Checks were ratified.

Mary made a motion to ratify checks and the motion was carried.

Rebecca made a motion to disburse \$500 for Family Support and the motion was carried.

Andrea Dierolf made a motion to disburse \$300 for turkeys for 26 families and the motion was approved.

The committee made the motion to release \$6,986 for Grad Night expenses (I think) and the motion was approved.

Shoko made a motion to approve the October minutes.

Geraldo told PTSA members about the Da Grad Night event. Students will not be going on the Hornblower this year, although this has been a tradition for more than 20 years. Instead, they will go to the Sports House in Redwood City, with over 18 activities for the students to enjoy. Students from ASB and Senior Class were okay with the idea. The other high schools don't use the Hornblower and it is always a surprise for students. Students will have 5 hours of fun versus 2 ½ if they went on the boat.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.