

Professional Development Committee

January 30, 2007, 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.
Room 103

Members Present: Kate Kodros, Elizabeth Purcell, Hillary McKinney, Paul Molinelli, Justin Christensen, Patty Zatkan, Kevin Quattrin, Steve Bluford, Grace Curcio

Excused: Charlie Dullea, Susan Lee

After an opening prayer, Paul reviewed the purpose of the meeting, which was for the members of the Stressed Out Students (SOS) team to provide the Professional Development Committee with an overview of the Stressed Out Students (SOS) program at SI, and to elicit feedback from the Professional Development Committee about how to structure the March 8 In-service. This in-service is being dedicated to Stressed Out Students, and it will be facilitated by Denise Pope, founder and director of the SOS Program.

Mike Thomas then introduced the SOS Team, which includes Kelly Conley (student representative), Fred Piazza (parent representative), Todd Bank, Patricia Kennedy, and Mike Thomas. Other members of the team were not present (Charlie Dullea, Rita O'Malley, Ted Curry, Jack Casey [student representative], and Eliza S.).

Mike Thomas asked Kelly Conley, student representative, to give the Professional Development Committee a brief introduction of the Stressed Out Students Program at SI. Kelly talked about the inaugural conference held last summer at Stanford, attended by teams from 15 other schools. Together, these school teams worked to identify causes of stress, in and out of school, and each school developed mission and vision statements. This process led SI to adopt the *cura personalis* theme for the current school year.

SOS's primary goal for the first year is to gather data, investigating the sources and root causes of stress in students' lives. During Community of Concern meetings last fall, parents explored these sources of stress in small groups. The essential outcomes for this parent meeting were to include parents in this important conversation, to provide parents with the opportunity to speak about their concerns regarding student stress, and to provide us with some sense of parents' awareness about issues of student stress.

Parents' small-group responses have since been categorized and tabulated, and analysis of student survey results will soon be completed. Denise Pope will use this data when she speaks at the March 8th in-service. Patricia Kennedy provided initial results of the parent data. During this analysis, several patterns have emerged regarding what parents perceive as sources of stress. Todd Bank has been generating descriptive categories for these responses.

Justin Christensen voiced his hope that the faculty would be informed regarding the overarching plan and/or any important items for discussion. Kevin Quattrin added that we should be sure the faculty is aware that the in-service is primarily a listening exercise, not a time to begin solving the problems of stress. Elizabeth Purcell echoed this sentiment by saying that this year is about evaluating the nature and scope of stress issues among our students. Fred Piazza said that it was also explicitly stated that parent meetings were brainstorming sessions, not solution sessions.

Elizabeth Purcell suggested that a preliminary faculty survey ought to be conducted before the in-service. The online survey should also be clear about our goals, that we're simply brainstorming and not yet discussing solutions.

Justin Christensen noted that we should do whatever we can to make the conversation accessible to the entire faculty, not just those already plugged into or aware of SOS. This will be important if we hope to encourage open and sincere conversation in small groups.

The Professional Development Committee and SOS team members used the remainder of their time to discuss the general structure of the ministry morning and in-service day. Since Denise Pope is available until 1:00 p.m., the Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of ending the day with the prayer service rather than beginning with it. Elizabeth Purcell suggested that we maintain the current order of an opening prayer service, followed by breakfast, the in-service, then officially finishing the day at 1:00 without supplying staff with a formal lunch. While it might prove beneficial to wrap-up with the prayer service and thus maximize our time with Denise, it was agreed that beginning with the prayer service has the benefit of setting a peaceful and prayerful tone for the day.

Kevin Quattrin noted that we will not be able to resolve or have complete agreement upon a "definition of success" particularly not during a one-day in-service. Everyone has a different idea of success, and no blanket definition exists for everyone. Todd Bank added that stress is itself only a symptom of students' inappropriate, amorphous, ambiguous definitions of success.

The SOS team will meet again very soon to plan the in-service in more detail, once Denise Pope has had the opportunity to respond to parent and student data.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: February 27, 2007