

UNIS PTA Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2008@ Library Meeting Room 8:30-10 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks: Robin Hendra, PTA Vice Chair M/HS
Robin Hendra, PTA Vice-chair (MS/HS) welcomed everyone. Changed agenda, reversing Harry Bennett and Alun Cooper to accommodate Mr. Cooper's meeting.

Building Plans for Phase II: Mr. Alun Cooper, Head of School (HoS)

HoS reviewed the timeline of construction at UNIS.

2004 - began building new campus.

May 2005 – held 3 hour community meeting to update on what had been done to date and what should be happen in the next phase. Approximately 60 parents attended + Daryl Jackson (architect) and John Hollenbeck (friend of UNIS).

Phase 1 had been scaled back. There was no swimming pool.

The outcome was (in priority):

1. School needed to balance arts and sport before 450-seat arts/music center/auditorium was built. (This will be built between ECC/ES)
2. Science and tech building should be doubled in size. (Built between MS/HS and admin building)
3. Construct sports hall (2 full size basketball courts with AC/heat + retractable stage, which would provide auditorium setting for 1400+ (Will be built next to existing sports area/faculties building)

Design sketches by Mr. Jackson in Australia. Received price quotes and sent to BoD. BoD passed to Building and Facilities Committee to elaborate upon. (For example, include green technology.)

May 2008 – There is sufficient capital to stand as collateral for loans. The green technology has become clearer. 1. Elaborate for construction designs, so it can go to Hanoi People's Committee for review and permits. 2) Need construction management team.

The big problem is that any construction will impact upon daily activities.

The Art/Music Center will impact ECC/ES; the Science and Tech will impact the Ms/HS. The two options are 1) build everything at once. 2) Drip feed so it impacts less at any one time.

HoS will report to BoD next month.

Parent Questions to HoS:

1. After this construction, will School expand?

A: Could add in 50-60 additional students. The art rooms will be moved to art center, will allow more space. 11/12th grade could be made separate as well.

2. Why is there no industrial kitchen?

A: It was not considered in 2002. There is no documentation of it. Plan was modified at last moment to make it as it currently is.

UNIS Portal Presentation: Dr. Harry Bennett, Technical Director

Robin introduced Harry who does all the network/computing within the school. The Portal is the “face” to his work.

Harry demonstrated what the portal looks like, and said it has existed for 5 months. Parents should expect it to be the central location for UNIS information; they will need to go to find documents. He will be moving more and more information off the public website onto the intraschool portal – to insure more vital information and more confidential.

Harry said this year there is a common password for all parents to access the portal. Next year there will be one given to each family. Information will be customized.

There is commonality in how the portal works. Clicking on header shows all items. There are breadcrumbs, which can show you where you are within the portal – in relationship to your starting point.

He showed the ECC/ES and MS/HS pages – and noted all pictures have email addresses embedded within them.

Parent Q: Are individual teacher bios linked to their pictures?

A: Will happen over summer.

Demonstrated the photo library of events, training courses/videos available.

Parent Q: After logging in, I get repeated requests for my password. Why?

A: Different areas have different authority. Must put in full name and password.

Parent Q: What is a wiki? I see them all over the website.

A: It is a webpage that people can edit online (parents can’t edit yet) and add hyperlinks to. It’s a way to visually present material. It’s an easy way to have a website. You can add photos. Teachers are increasingly using them.

Parent Q: How can I send a picture from the portal?

A: Copy it, right click, save as, and then send it anyway you way (depending on the email program.)

Parent Q: First the portal is fantastic. But, my issue is compatibility with my systems at home.

A: Review the information provided by Tech Director in TinTuc. Will help. 2007 is a new file format. It is ½ the size of the old and not as corruptible. The old programs don’t read the format without an add-on. You can get that online. Mac users have a compatibility pack that has just been released.

Parent Q: I've done that and it does not work for PowerPoint.

A: Some functions in the new 2007 PP just don't exist in the old one; therefore while the file opens, the function can't transfer.

Parent Q: Doesn't the compatibility pack come with the automatic updates?

A: No, automatic updates deal with security and performance problems.

Parent Q: What information about the portal can be given to new parents. Coming to the school, not necessarily with a working Internet connection, can be a stressful time.

A: He will talk to Jessica Pidgeon in Admissions.

Parent Q: In future, will every student get his or her own laptop?

A: We are moving in that direction. The HS, likely the MS. Younger kids will get the older machines. So students can have access to special software; buying legal software for all would cost as much as the laptops.

Harry demonstrated a tablet PC and said that many teachers are working on them. They weigh less than 2 kilos. Have no cd/dvd, so a second battery can be installed. They last about 7 hours, which makes it one school day. The primary difference is that the screen swivels down so it can be written on (hence the name). Whatever you can do with a pen and paper, you can do with a Tablet. It allows students to be more natural in working with information. (Physics and math on a keyboard is hard).

Red pen eliminates the inefficiency of printing multiple copies of documents throughout the revision process.

The entire campus has wireless access.

Parent Q: Is there a particular model recommended?

A: The school will issue as equipment. There are 5 manufactures with similar prices (Fujitsu, Toshiba, Dell, HP and ?). The 10th and 11th graders will get them this August and the rest worked in gradually.

Parent Q: Is this the trend in Asia?

A: Yes, all the largest top schools in Asia are doing this. It is also a trend in national schools.

Parent Q: What about damage to school property (computer)?

A: The issue has to be worked out by someone else. There is a 3-year warranty.

Parent Q: What is the cost per unit?

A: About 2000 USD. The price will drop.

Parent Q: Are they for school use only?

A: Need to be pragmatic. Can't forbid them to not visit sports sites or add music, but they can't install software.

IBO Diploma Self Study process: Ms. Lesley Peacock, Principal MS/HS

The self-study: every 5 years, the IBO Diploma program is reviewed. Last year the MYP was reviewed. The information has just been received and will be summarized. A self-study reflects the strengths and weaknesses of a program. Teachers discuss approximately 15 different standards. It is legitimate not to meet standards because that gives recommendations to work toward on the next 5 years.

Teachers' collaborating groups are new and a major change. The 10th and 11th grade teachers are getting 1.5 hours per month training in advance.

In 2006 27/27 students and in 2007 19/19 students passed the IB. The review process is similar to MYP, requires less documentation, which they are still collecting. She and HoS will report and it gets sent to IBO in mid-March. Please see TinTucs for further information.

Ms. Peacock also asked that posters not be hung on glass windows as the safety film covering the window gets destroyed. Teachers are not allowed to hang posters either. Please also don't poster on painted walls, as the paint comes off. Also posters get pulled off by the wind and create a messy campus. Old posters are often not removed. Use the MS/HS notice board.

There is a grade 8 meeting on Thursday at 8:30. Narrative reports will go home on Jan 22nd. Trip Week is coming up in March. Expect notices in TinTuc.

Parent Q: Can visitors, who used to attend UNIS, participate in Trip Week?

A: Unfortunately No, as the teacher/student ratios are carefully balanced and there is no more budget for adding extra teachers.

UNIS Communications: Ms. Jolee Mosher (appointed in December/07)

Jolee discussed the new ComEd brochure and courses. She will be doing an assessment of ComEd to see what can be added and improved upon.

She talked about Photo Week and said that subsequently photo IDs will be issued. In Fall 2008, family photos for ID will be required. Perhaps taken at Orientation.

The TinTuc will be shorter. Several parents commented in favor and against this.

Saturday soccer – registration will be taken all week, not just on Saturday. Will know about any available spots soon.

Yearbook – Emma Burns is in charge. Will send for photos.

She also added that she will be doing outreach to organizations that don't know about UNIS or ComEd. Please pass along any names that might be useful.

Update from UNIS BoD: Jackie Kearns, BoD rep

She reiterated that BoD is concerned with financial management and is not spending cash freely without careful review. She reviewed the strategic plan and its goals. She said that the BoD Building and Facilities Committee had gone to HCMC to review buildings in person that were built by proposed construction company and noted their concerns.

Parent Q: When is Strategic Plan document going to be available?

A: Hoping for it to be out at next BoD meeting (in a week) or perhaps next one in Feb. After that, it will be distributed to wider community.

She said that Board meetings are open to UNIS community and invited interested people to attend – please RSVP to HoS secretary. Packets of information will be made available for your review during BoD, but you may not take them away nor speak unless asked to answer a question. Next meeting is Tuesday at 5:30.

She said that her seat next year will be available and she feels strongly that she be replaced by an active/involved parent. Her role is unique in terms of her contacts/expertise and that really brings something to BoD discussions.

Parent Q: How will seat be filled?

A: Election in May.

Parent Q: Are Board packages available for review?

A: Not yet, goal was to get a portal. Strategic plan and HoS search took priority. You can access them via the HoS secretary.

Parent Q: I heard that Conal Atkins, the ECC/ES principal might be leaving. If true, is there anything we can do to keep him?

A: The BoD has only one employee – the HoS. While the Board is always informed by the HoS on management issues, it is HoS's responsibility to employ and manage all staff and to announce important news, such as whether a Principal is leaving.

It was suggested by Robin Hendra that because this information is a rumour only that the parent go speak to Conal directly.

A parent raised the issue of Lesley Peacock's departure. It is known to the teachers, but not officially announced to parents.

(9:08-9:13) Upcoming Social (Social Committee; Annie Hirabayashi)

Date has been changed from Feb 1 to Friday, January 25 at 8:00-9:30, Vine Annex, Xuan Dieu

(9:13-9:18) Upcoming Spring Fair (Events Committee) –Saturday, April 19 from 10:00-2:00

Robin and Sarah invited people to send their ideas for the upcoming Spring Fair, including what didn't work. Will be starting committee to plan; invite people to join.

Parent Q: What is the role of class parents?

A (from a class parent): ECC/ES class parent traditionally are responsible for their classes game and organizing supervisors of game.

Other parents raised issues of insufficient toilets and sign postings. Recommended to put up signs in Korean and Vietnamese or even use pictures.

PTA Treasurer's Report: Annie Hirabayashi

Balance is \$14, 105. 20% less because money has been transferred to Liz Druitt of CAS, to support CAS's charity work.

PTA Committees Reports:

1. **Boutique** (Mayumi Kobayashi)

New items are PE shorts in larger sizes and Hoodies. Will put in TinTuc with pictures.

2. **Class Parents** (Sarah Garner/Robin Hendra)

MS/HS will work on job description. We will review their role for addition in proposed bylaws.

3. **Food Services** (Susanne Gromotka)

There will be new changes in prices. All round figures. Sample portion sizes to be provided. Other recommendations have been made. Will see about implementation. Request for better ingredient listings – i.e. often seafood in chicken fried rice.

Parent Q: about improvements

A: During summer, contract will be renegotiated.

Suggestion to make clear who is responsible onsite – post a picture of manager.

Parent Q: Suggestion for Aden staff to supervise use microwaves.

A: They don't know any better than the kids.

Q: Do they specify colorants and MSG?

A: They don't use MSG; it is unknown about colorants.

Q: Do they use powdered chicken stock (if so, likely has MSG in it)?

A: Don't know. Likely.

Q: What happens to unsold food?

A: Often sold out and there is not much leftover.

Robin noted the dedication of the Food Committee and thanked them for all their hard work and effort, which everyone appreciates so much!

4. **Funds** (Hilda Pillay Cajon)

Since October, Fund Committee has \$4,625. In December, the Committee approved \$250 for Christina Powers to buy a new rug; she is trying to make it more comfortable for 10th/11th grade kids.

\$150 was approved for starter money for fundraising of Habitat for Humanity/Rob DeAbreu

\$500 was approved for start up funds to help raise money for HS prom, which is for the entire HS.

5. **Snack Sale** (Mika Ishii)

Date of next snack sale changed from Feb 1 to January 25th. The classes are PK-E, 1R, and KF. The 4th snack sale raised 3,393,700 VND by selling snacks contributed by 3R and 4N as well as some donated extras. There are two new members of the Committee: Noriko Takahashi and Joanne Paul.

7. **Welcome** (Terina Brown)

There are 32 new kids this semester already and about 10 new parents and 20 old parents came to the recent Welcome Coffee. She thanked everyone for coming. There was some discussion about what time is better for people – 8 or 10 am.

8. **Bus Committee** (Sarah Garner/Margret Reder) There was a transition meeting scheduled to reanimate the Bus Committee, but nobody attended. The consensus was not to continue if there was insufficient parent involvement.

PTA Secretary Vacancy was reminded and Tracy Lynn volunteered.

Next PTA Meeting: Tuesday, February 19 – the special topic UNIS Counselor Program – ES, MS, HS. Following meetings are proposed to include CAS and music examinations.

UNIS website: www.unishanoi.org PTA email: pta@unishanoi.org

Minutes by Sarah Garner, PTA Co-Chair