

San Diego Mesa College

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS & NATURAL SCIENCES

Building Committee: A Brief History

San Diego voters, in November 2002, passed Proposition S providing funding for many new facilities within the San Diego Community College District. One of many projects approved as part of Prop S was a new Mathematics and Science building at San Diego Mesa College to include all facilities for the departments of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physical Sciences as well as School administrative offices.

The Academic and Classified senates of Mesa College formally approved the initial membership of the New Building Committee (Math and Sciences) in February 2003. The committee membership has continuously been composed of faculty members and laboratory staff of the four departments included in this project. The Committee began meeting immediately and discussing the needs for the new facility. By summer 2003, the committee had compiled an initial report of the departmental and school-wide needs. A comprehensive report was issued in August 2003 and provided to the College's senior administrators. During the next academic year, 2004-2005, further studies took place to refine stated needs and more specifically define common areas of the new facility. In spring 2005, a sub-committee of this group (professors Donna Budzynski, Steven Siegel and Leslie Seiger) applied for a District strategic planning grant and was awarded \$5000 to design a logical planning process which could be utilized not only for this building, but for other College and District facility planning purposes.

In summer and fall 2005, significant research was undertaken by various members of the committee in identifying critical issues and viable solutions in educational building planning. The outcome issued in a comprehensive report in December 2005 covered guidelines for: committee formation and participation, planning timeline, needs analysis, site visit questionnaires, planning questionnaires, space planning forms and a significant number of example documents. During this same period, the Committee met with nationally recognized external experts from Earl Walls Associates and DPR Construction. These meetings provided an excellent outside perspective on directions taken by the committee and the types of needs and processes which need to be considered. Another major effort of the committee in this period concentrated on finding meetings and workshops relevant to the planning process at hand. As a result, two major meetings were identified as necessary for the committee: Labs 21 Conference and Project Kaleidoscope (P-KAL) workshop.

Professor Don Barrie attended the Labs 21 Conference in Portland (Oregon) in October 2005 where he gained significant information and guidelines on sustainable development and green technologies in educational buildings and science laboratories. Five individuals (Professors Donna Budzynski, Jerry Schad, Paul Sykes and Will Tappen as well as Saeid Eigahy) attended the P-KAL meeting in March 2006 for several days of

intensive planning and hands-on work. This meeting was a major turning point for the committee's planning efforts and one of the many beneficial outcomes has been the drafting and finalizing of a 'vision statement' for the new facility. Formal presentations of both meetings have been made to the wider committee, school-wide meetings and Mesa's senior administration. Late in spring 2006, the School was informed that Prop S funds were no longer adequate for this project and further sources of funding will need to be identified. While this was not a positive development, College and District administrations have continuously expressed a top commitment to this project.

As a result of these efforts over the past three years, need for a specialized consultant to help solidify our plans was identified in June 2006. Upon meetings with President Cepeda, Vice Presidents Armstrong and Perez and Vice Chancellor Davis, a small sub-committee has been formed to work with District staff in facilitating the hiring of this consultant. The committee has clearly identified a crucial requirement for the consultant to be a specialist in "academic science teaching buildings". This sub-group will work with College and District staff in writing a request for proposals (RFP) identifying needs and qualifications. Subsequently, this same group will review RFP's received and select the successful consultant for this work.