

AAPT-CPS

Report of the Two-Year College Representative

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The National Organization is continuing to ask TYC to act as hosts for the US Physics Team Physics Olympiad exam. This was the third year my college took part and it was again very successful. This is a great way for TYC to interact with their community schools. Cooperation will lead to better relations with the community, which is so important in these days of funding cuts by local school boards for the CCs. As I've said in the past, it also gives a chance to show off your school to the local teachers and make it attractive to their students for their first two years of college. Contact me for more information on having your college set up as a host for this.

As for funding cuts, many school districts are looking to reduce or eliminate their funding for the community colleges. HACC's local districts have reduced funding and are trying to eliminate it entirely in two years. Towards this end, there has been a move by districts to have the laws requiring community colleges be partly funded by their community to be repealed. HACC is fighting this, as are other schools. This struggle is continuing and we all need to watch it closely. Losing community funding would be devastating to the CCs. I urge you to contact your state representatives and express your opinion. The school district contribution to the CCs is typically a very small percentage of their total budget, in our case less than 1%, but it is significant to the colleges. Working more with the community should help them to see why their money is a good investment.

We've linked many colleges and high schools on our web site, as well as some national and regional organizations. If your school is not linked let us know by sending e-mail to the webmaster. We also ask that you link our site on your department web pages, if your school allows.

Last year I discussed that my college was putting new restrictions on class sizes, increasing the minimum number of students for a class to run to 12. I've heard from a few other professors that their schools are also increasing minimum class size. Now some schools, including my own, are trying to increase the maximum class size. I believe maximum size is a pedagogical issue and we need to work to ensure faculty makes this decision. Don't forget, one of the advantages of a TYC over a four-year is our lower student/teacher ratio.

An additional problem is with instructors not really qualified to teach physics and lab or demo equipment that is not college level. I have reports of college physics labs running with equipment designed for K-12 applications. We have to maintain our standards and I ask all TYC professors to stay on top of this. The national organization holds that a physics department's advanced courses, whatever they are, be taught by full-time, qualified instructors. For TYC that means our calculus physics and any others beyond that. I would make the case that our algebra/trig course should also only be taught by a full-timer. At my college we have a modern physics course that is our most advanced. We managed to run it this year for the first time in several years.

If you are running into any of these issues at your school, and need help to address them, contact me. I can give you information from the general organization and suggestions on how to approach your administrators.

My school is looking to switch from a 15+1 week schedule to 14+1. This hurts the science departments, forces us to eliminate one lab session, and compress our lessons. The idea of adding 6 minutes to each class to make the semester contact minutes work out the same is ridiculous in my opinion. I ask other TYC professors to contact me with what their schools are doing, and if on a 14 week schedule how it's working out.

HACC is always looking for physics adjuncts. We feel the problem is with advertising and we're looking for new tactics. I'm suggesting to the executive board that we add a section to our web site where colleges could post a notice looking for adjuncts, or adjuncts could post looking for a position. Some feedback from the membership on this idea would be nice. If anyone is local to any of HACC's 5 campuses, contact me if you're interested in working for us.

Respectfully Submitted

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Two-Year College Representative