



APPROVED Minutes
Education Committee Meeting
Forum
2500 West Broad Street

April 20, 2023
1:30 p.m.

Present: Cristina Ramirez, Dr. Denise Walters, Elsa Falls, Fran Bradford, John Benton, Lauren Mathena, Patricia Nicoson, Dr. Rodney Berry, and Suri Ganeriwala.

Staff Present: Timshel Purdum, Rich Conti, Ali Mayer, Ada Sue Siler, Drew Hodge and Ash Harris.

Other Attendees: Adam Kane, Office of the Attorney General
Alex Kurland, Charles Valentine

Dr. Berry called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Berry welcomed everyone and asked for everyone present to review the meeting minutes from the January 19, 2023 Education Committee Meeting. Dr. Berry asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2023 Education Committee meeting. The motion was called by Ms. Falls and seconded by Dr. Walters. A vote was taken by verbal affirmation which passed unanimously without objection.

Education Team and Inspiration Index

Ms. Purdum shared the highlights and accomplishments of the Education Team from the past three months.

- The education team has been busy with school groups and group planning.
- Numbers are getting better and better, group attendance is at 35K YTD.
- Group attendance is at 63% compared to the same period in FY19, a peak attendance year.
- Total lesson attendance is at 11,856, 71% of FY19.
- Digital demo attendance is at 2,671.
- The recent Family Curiosity Camp-In sold out and was very well received.

- Science After Dark monthly after hours programs are performing phenomenally well.
- GLOW was an outlier with over 3K in attendance in the span of 3 hours.
- Given GLOW's popularity, the Museum is exploring ways to expand the event to a Saturday and spread out the attendance across the full day.
- The MiXX is also seeing great participation and is planning 10 weeks of summer programming.
- The Forge hosts a community group, Famigos, every month.
- Dome upgrades are planned with work starting in September after the summer busy season.
- New staff hired to devote to Science Within Reach and community science programming.
- Next Minds of All Kinds evening is scheduled for May 17, 2023.
- Pilot program is in development to train and equip teachers on STEM topics.
- The Museum hosted a community science hub meeting with community partners.
- The partners shared, connected and gathered information utilizing SWOT analysis and recent experiences.
- The Experience Development Team hosted a recent NOAA gathering event with representatives from across the region to discuss climate issues in Richmond from different perspectives.
- Dr. Hoffman is presenting on his climate justice work at many local and national events.
- Dr. Hoffman will be leaving the Science Museum to join Groundwork USA as the director of climate justice.
- His last day is May 19, 2023.
- Upcoming programming includes: Earth Day April 22, Science After Dark May 5, Que Pasa Festival May 6, Minds of All Kinds May 17, opening of Space: An out of Gravity Experience on May 27, and the first Camp-Out June 10.
- Summer Camps start in July.

Dr. Walters asked about Science After Dark Revenge of the 5th. Timshel Purdum noted that staff will be dressing up, if they want, for the event.

Dr. Berry commenced on the successful numbers and programming. Ms. Purdum mentioned that GLOW night was its own thing, and it has out grown the Science After Dark format. Dr. Berry asked about themes for SAD. Ms. Purdum reviewed the methodology for developing and choosing themes for SAD.

Ms. Falls asked about the city nature challenge. Ms. Purdum responded that it is a collective effort in the region to catalog and share plants and wildlife found in your backyard and community. The hope is to spread awareness and increase participation.

Ms. Bradford asked about tracking the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Mr. Conti said that the Museum does track the effectiveness of marketing efforts and digital is the most cost efficient and effective method.

Sunrise Science, Adult Focused Programming

Ms. Purdum introduced Ali Mayer, Education Experience Coordinator.

- Ms. Mayer shared some of her experience and background.
- The Museum is looking to include options for adults: laser shows in The Dome, Science on Tap, and a new lecture series.
- The new lecture series would replace the former Lunch Break Science.
- The new program is called Sunrise Science: Wake Up to the Science Around You.
- Fewer lectures, better topics and more quality is the focus.
- The hope for this series is to be more elegant and elevate, perhaps coffee and light breakfast is provided.
- The series would be quarterly.
- The Secretary of the Interior is a potential first speaker.
- Ms. Mayer asked the Trustees for their input and suggestions:
 - Ms. Rameriz mentioned the topic of artificial intelligence, companies like Google and Twitter, and the Medical College of Virginia.
 - Mr. Kurland asked what the audience would be.
 - Ms. Purdum said professionals and adults.
 - Ms. Falls asked how long the program will be. 1 hour.
 - Mr. Conti suggested the University of Richmond Basketball coach and team nutritionist as a speaker idea.
 - Ms. Mathena suggested reaching out to the RVA Tech Counsel and Todd Waldo.
 - Dr. Berry suggested reaching out to NASA.
 - Mr. Valentine proposed reaching out to the Mars Rover Team, chatGPT and LEGO.
 - Ms. Bradford mentioned Dr. Art Evans as a possibility.
 - Ms. Mathena requested that this same program be brought to Danville Science Center as well.

Dr. Berry inquired about follow up surveys or data collection efforts after large events such as GLOW. Ms. Purdum replied that data is collected periodically

from multiple sources including social media. Mr. Benton offered some resources to utilize to collect data.

Ms. Nicoson asked for further clarification on what GLOW is. Ms. Purdum explained that it is an after hours program featuring a massive dark space to feature glow-in-the-dark activities and explorations of the science of light. Ms. Nicoson also asked for further information on the LEGO grant received by the Museum. Ms. Purdum said the grant is funding field trips for schools, workshops in the Forge, staff time to reopen the MiX, and buses for school groups.

New Business

Dr. Berry asked for any new business with nothing heard.

Dr. Berry invited all committee members to join Ms. Purdum on a tour of the newly installed exhibition Playing with Light.

Adjournment

With no further business Dr. Berry asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Walters made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Ramirez. Dr. Berry called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection and the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

The Education Committee will meet again on April 20, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.