A Message from Our Past President

Seeing the NEED for ACUBE

What have we seen with ACUBE in the past 5 years? We have seen an increase in membership, an increase in contact via email newsletters with the membership, and an increase in submission of articles to Bioscene for publication. People continue to come to our annual meetings because of the group’s friendliness, collegiality and reasonable cost. Others enjoy meeting with other dedicated biology teachers, learning from them and stealing their ideas for their own classroom. The informal presentations with discussion afterward are very useful to classroom teachers at these meetings because we face similar challenges in our classrooms daily. It is an energetic group that is run by enthusiastic volunteers that have fun together. Many people find ACUBE an encouraging group to meet with and learn from.

All these encouraging signs say to me that there is an increasing NEED for this organization in today’s college biology educational system. We are the ONLY group in the country that specializes exclusively in helping people teach biology in college more effectively. The need IS out there and in my opinion, we need to respond by increasing the accessibility and visibility of our organization to all biology educators.

We need people to know that when they decide to do something different in their classes that there is a group that can help them with taking that risk, with solving new problems, with finding a better way to teach more effectively. We as a group and as individuals must encourage people to move out of their “little teaching boxes” into our community of people in this group, of their colleagues who have tried new things with various levels of success but have learned some valuable lessons along the way.

ACUBE can be and should be THE lead group in college biology education. We should be talking constantly among ourselves about how ACUBE can foster and promote teaching effectiveness. How can we open up to include more people in the discussion? Here are some of my wild ideas:

1. Maybe we should try regional meetings at set locations so everyone goes to the same place every other year and then have these big meetings on alternating years at larger universities or cities that have easy transportation access (like Chicago will next year)? Would that encourage more participation and access? I think it would.
2. Or maybe we should sponsor traveling teaching workshops like Bioquest does where a team of biology educators could sponsor workshops on various topics across the country? Would this encourage participation and access? I think it would.
3. Maybe we could select 4-5 “Master Educators” from our group that get some money from this group to travel around the country to various college classes of ACUBE members (or not) and observe, consult, steal ideas, solve problems and have the give their reports at our annual meetings. What did they see, what were some problems, what are the current, essential needs for biology educators right now and how can ACUBE help them? Would this increase accessibility? I think it would.

I continue to encourage you to spread the word about ACUBE and help us build this group for the future. This group has been a tremendous help for me in my teaching. I am constantly asking myself is my teaching helping them learn? How do they learn best? What do I have to give up or change to induce some student enthusiasm and ownership of class material and experiences? So, I have offered some ideas and I hope to continue to help this organization be an effective player in the game of biology education. Thanks for everyone’s help in the last year to help get ACUBE where it is today.

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