Adult Advisory Board Meeting

September 26, 2013

Alabama Museum of Natural History

Summary

**Introduction:**

Fifteen representatives from the Tuscaloosa community, including the city schools, the University, the Tuscaloosa Public Library, the Girls Scouts, teachers, parents, and grant partner from the UA Department of Geography and the Alabama Museum of Natural History were present. The Teen Advisory Board meeting was held concurrently in the GeoTech Lab.

For several of the attendees, this was their first advisory board meeting. Allie Sorlie was introduced as the Museum’s new Education and Outreach Coordinator. Three of the GeoTech Mentors, Alex Adams, William Hampton and Xuehan Jing were introduced to the board before they joined the Teen Advisory Board meeting across the hall. After introductions of everyone else present, Allie Sorlie and Linda Watson gave a brief PowerPoint presentation outlining the lab’s progress since the April advisory board meeting.

**Highlights and Progress**

* Naming the lab by the summer teen focus group
* Summer and fall open labs
* Pop-ups and demos at the Tuscaloosa Public Library
* Incorporation of technologies into the Museum’s Summer field science Expedition:
  + - <http://amnhprograms.weebly.com/>
* Creation of virtual spaces
  + A GeoTech website is in development and should be published soon.
  + Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GeoTechLab/>
  + Twitter [www.twitter.com/GeoTechLab](http://www.twitter.com/GeoTechLab)
  + Gmail Account : [learninglab.amnh@gmail.com](mailto:learninglab.amnh@gmail.com)

**Input from the Group**

After the brief presentation, attendees were asked to provide input on the following issues:

1. Attracting teens to the open labs- especially girls

* The Girls Scout representative expressed an interest in developing programming with them
* Working directly with a school or schools, such as the Magnet schools
* Talk to clubs and organizations in the school
* Working with a school, such as Central High School where the students could walk from the school to the Museum
* Bringing mentors to the schools for demonstrations and pop-ups similar to last summer’s work with the TCPL

Background checks would be necessary for the mentors

* Advertising the program at UA Days and Homecoming

1. Recruiting mentors (especially females)

* Advertising at homecoming and UA days
* Contacting the American Society of Women Engineers
* Service Learning programs

1. Scheduling the open labs

* There was no consensus on the best day of the week to schedule labs.
* A suggestion was made that the hours which are currently 4-6 PM should be changed to after school. From September 27th on, the lab will be open from 3:00 to 6:00pm every Tuesday and Thursday.
* Saturdays were discussed as possible days for open labs, but everyone agreed that during football season this is impossible. The lab will experiment with open labs on Saturdays in the spring.

1. Transportation to the open labs and parking on campus

* Suggestions were made that students could ride the city bus
* Trying to get parking passes for visitors so that parents don’t have to pay $5 each time the teen comes to the lab
* The YMCA has a shuttle, and it was decided that we should contact them and discuss the possibility of them coming to our programs

1. Structured programs for the “Geek Out” portion of the Grant

Participants were asked to fill out a brief survey to determine perceived value of different program possibilities for the teens. Results of the survey are attached separately.

Several of the members had to leave, so the meeting was concluded. Many of the attendees remained to tour the GeoTech Lab and others discussed other issues important to the lab, such as sustainability and the US2020 City Initiative as a means of eliciting community-wide support the continuation of the effort to integrate informal, technology-based learning into the fabric of the community.