

NSTA SC Minutes
9/25/03

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with Rebecca Wenning presiding. In attendance were two additional association members (Tom and Melissa) and the faculty advisor, Carl Wenning. Following a brief discussion about the lack of attendance for the past two weeks, it was the consensus of the group that the meetings should:

- 1) take place every two weeks instead of every week, and
- 2) focus only on activities at regular chapter meetings.

It was agreed that perhaps it would be best to hold business meetings outside of regular meeting time, and that at the next meeting on Thursday, October 9, elections for offices would be held. Officers would tend to the business of the chapter, but that the entire membership would be welcome to attend the planning meetings.

Carl Wenning then provided comments about the new content-area and pedagogy exams. His comments have been inserted into the record below. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Carl J. Wenning
Secretary Pro tem

**New State Content-Area Exam for Science
Comments by Carl Wenning 9/25/03**

The new Science Content-Area Test that will be available after July 1, 2004.

- 1) The level of difficulty is not high – at least in relation to the physics and core areas. Questions in both are at the introductory level, and represent problems typical of which students might actually encounter in introductory high school courses.
- 2) Anyone with a general understanding of the major findings of the disciplines of physics, chemistry, biology, earth & space science, and environmental science will be well prepared to take the test.
- 3) The core area (65% of a 100-question test) for all science teachers probably will present the most difficulty for teacher candidates as it covers all areas noted above.

I recommend the following improvements in the way we prepare teacher candidates:

- 1) Science teacher educators need to prepare their students by addressing the vocabulary and nature of science. I currently incorporated activities in PHY 310 (Nature of Science) that admirably prepare physics students for this section of the test. Feel free to make use of the materials I have prepared if you decide to take the test prior to taking PHY 310.
- 2) I plan to work on developing a unit of technology for inclusion in PHY 310.

The best way to prepare for the test would probably be the following:

- 1) Establish and maintain a long-term habit of regular reading of such publications of *The Science Teacher* or *Science News*.

- 2) Regularly review the major findings of the various disciplines: physics, chemistry, biology, environmental science, and earth & space science (e.g., geology and astronomy) prior to taking the test.

Now, who needs to take this new test? You need to take it if you will receive your teaching certificate after July 1, 2004. It is required that you take and pass the content-area exam by September 1 of the year prior to the spring semester during which you plan to student teach. The current content area exam will disappear with the new version when it becomes available. Some current juniors might get caught in a trap that results in taking both of the content area exams -- old (for admission to Teacher Education) and new (for the teaching certificate itself).

Assessment of Professional Teaching

281 students took draft exam on July 26, 2003. The pass rates have been set in such a way that 95% of all students who take the exam will pass it the first time. This assumes a minimum score in both of two areas: multiple-choice and constructed response sections.

80% of exam score will be based on multiple-choice questions; 20% of the exam score will be based on constructed response. There are 104 multiple-choice questions on the exam, and 2 constructed-response questions.

Minimum scores ostensibly will be 11 out of 13 on the constructed response section, and 66 out of 104 on the constructed response section.