

The Value of PACE ...continued from page 1

The reality is that PACE students, multi-talented as they are and having a broad variety of interests, are the most active students in high school. They simply learn to manage their time such that learning at advanced levels, as well as engaging in their many activities, becomes habitual. Up to 60% of PACE seniors play a sport all four years, the orchestras, bands, and choral groups are overflowing with the our students of every grade, and many PACE students are the newspaper editors and writers, yearbook staff, student commission officers, International Ambassadors, and club presidents. Forgive the fact that I have omitted numerous other important activities where PACE participation predominates, but suffice it to say, the stereotype could not be less accurate.

This is not to say that the life of a PACE student cannot sometimes, perhaps often, feel overwhelming. We are asking these students to reach high levels of achievement in seven different classes each year. Sometimes the timing of exams, essays, and project deadlines collide, and students stay up late at night trying to get it all done. And yes, there are meltdowns. It is always advantageous for PACE teachers to be aware of the many demands on the time and lives of these young people who are not yet adults, so encourage your student to speak to his or teachers if it all gets to be too much. It also never hurts for students to be aware of the fact that "multi-tasking" is not really what takes place when a student is studying while simultaneously on his or cell phone and repeatedly checking Facebook or Instagram. What actually occur are rapid and repeated shifts in attention, requiring constant refocus. Continuous distraction interferes with effective study. I have had students tell me that the amount of time their homework took decreased dramatically once they elected to leave their phones on the kitchen table and sign out of Facebook when they walked into their rooms to study. It is something I wish now I had insisted upon with my own children. Their effectiveness could have been vastly improved, leaving them with much more time to spend in pure recreation.

A PACE education can be transformative and can make an enormous contribution to the lives of young people. False stereotypes and nonsense horror stories that prevent students from choosing PACE for their high school experience potentially rob these wonderful young people of a tremendous opportunity. It is important that our students let their friends in other schools know that they value the education they receive here. Equally important are our parents letting others know how valuable they find the PACE program. Only through our collective efforts can the rumors and falsehoods be effectively countered. Just today I received a thank you note via email from a former student now at UCLA who was chosen as one of ten out of 250 applicants to be part of UCLA's Emergency Medicine Research Associates. She wrote to say that the experience of having participated in the PACE Biomedical Research class, as well as the excellent academic preparation she received from all the PACE teachers, has helped her thrive at UCLA and made an enormous difference in terms of the opportunities that have subsequently been available to her. It's an endorsement that rings far truer than the silly stereotypes. Yes, the program's demands are great; but yes, the rewards are commensurate with the effort.

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**Long Beach Poly High School PACE Parent Support Group**

Fall 2015

The Value of PACE

Dr. Michelle Aberle
PACE Facilitator

PACE is in the midst of our annual recruitment season to secure the incoming 9th grade class for next year. It seems that the CHOICE process begins earlier and earlier every year, with the CHOICE Fair on October 28th and the regional informational meetings in progress as this is written. One highly beneficial outcome of visiting the middle schools to tell our story is that it reminds me of exactly who we are and what we do. Patrick Gillogly has contributed immensely to our efforts by contacting and engaging both current PACE students and alumni who have come to the meetings to share how PACE has contributed to their lives. Sitting back and hearing what these students have to say about adjusting to the workload, about learning to juggle the academic, extracurricular, and social aspects of being a PACE student, and about the scaffolding that takes place along the way brings a smile to my face and feelings of satisfaction and profound gratitude for the many contributions of our PACE faculty.



In PACE, students are asked to focus forward, to learn how to think analytically and critically, and to reason in a way that will be required in higher education. But we also realize that 14-year olds coming to us fresh from middle school are not expected to have in place all the time management skills or techniques for the deep study that they will need in PACE. PACE teachers carefully design class assignments to maximize effect and impact, guiding the students to better time management and organization. It does not happen in the first couple weeks of the 9th grade. Learning how to coordinate their learning and study time with their many other activities is something that happens with guidance and practice. The seniors and alumni speaking at the informational meetings all say that taking four to six Advanced Placement classes senior year is not a stretch since they have been introduced to that level of rigor gradually and are prepared each year for the increasing academic demands. An AP class is simply one more PACE class, and one they are prepared to tackle with confidence.

I am also reminded of some of the stereotypes out there about PACE students. Rumors have it that all PACE students complete six to eight hours of homework every night; they are all uniformly miserable; they have no friends; and they do nothing apart from study, study, study for exams. When I reported this to my current chemistry students the morning after hearing this again, my students laughed out loud.

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Celebrating 40 Years of PACE

Brigitte Bigham, President
PACE Parent Support Group

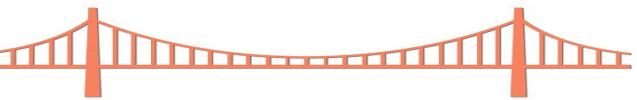
Forty years ago, PACE was little more than Nancy Gray, a dream and a few students. In 1975 she designed and helmed the Program of Additional Curricular Experience (PACE) where she served as coordinator and teacher until 1983. It was during those eight years that Nancy placed her stamp of excellence on the program and gave it both the direction and backbone it needed to travel on a course that has not wavered from the vision of excellence. As we celebrate PACE's 40th anniversary and its history of educational excellence, there can be no doubt that the very best program can be traced back to Nancy's legacy.

After forty years of excellence, I can't even begin to imagine the discoveries and achievements made by our alumnae and wonder where the next forty will take us. One thing of which I am confident, our Poly PACE students will make a positive difference. I am the parent of a junior and have enjoyed seeing her growth through the program. She is excited about her future knowing that her opportunities are endless. I have met many Poly PACE parents, students and faculty and have witnessed their enthusiasm and optimism. In this issue and forthcoming issues of the Harebrain, we will include reflections from some of our PACE scholarship winners. It is worth taking the time to read their messages. If your student ever feels overwhelmed, these letters will serve as encouragement, these students survived, and yours will too.

This is my second year serving on the PACE Parent Support Group. Last year I was the discretionary treasurer. In my role of treasurer, I handled the incoming funds from parents, grandparents and alum and distributed monies to the program as budgeted. Last year we received sufficient income to cover our expenses, however, it was tight. I recently met with Dr. Aberle to discuss the 2015-2016 budget which was later presented to and approved by the PPSG board. Now it is up to your generous donations to ensure that we will once again be able to support our PACE teachers and administrators. Please take a moment to complete the envelope and send in your donation. We gladly accept donations from company matches, grandparents, alumni and anyone that is willing to offer their support.

At our recent board meeting we discussed providing two PACE parent educational sessions to provide you with relevant information and the opportunity to meet other PACE parents. We are also considering hosting a 40th Anniversary PACE celebration next year and plan to update our website. Feel free to email us with suggestions that you may have for guest speakers, if you are interested in helping us with the website or if you would like to get involved with the 40 year celebration. We would love to hear from you.

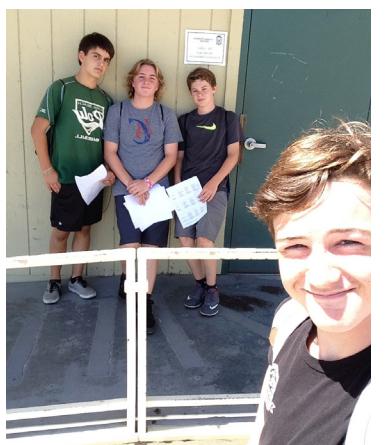
PACE Freshman



Summer Bridge

The past two summers have given the PACE program the opportunity to meet our incoming freshman at the PACE Summer Bridge Program. Although not every freshman was available to come, a majority were here to begin the experience that is Poly PACE. PACE Summer Bridge is a week where our incoming ninth graders get to meet each other and begin to create the lasting and significant relationships with their classmates that they will fully develop over their next four academic years. Nothing is more fun for the PACE teachers than getting an initial glimpse of the talented, eager freshman that will populate their classes come fall.

During the Summer Bridge, students are introduced to the nuts and bolts of their freshman year and, to some degree, they learn what to expect from their entire time at Poly. They learn about the different pathways available in PACE and the exciting opportunities they will have in the program to help them visualize their futures. The summer curriculum focuses on icebreaker games, team-building exercises, reading, writing, and thoughtful discussion. In preparation for a substantial group project they will complete their freshman year, Project ECHO, the students have time to work in groups, planning together for presentations of their work. One of the highlights for the students is the opportunity to meet PACE alumni and hear their stories as they journeyed through PACE and beyond. Our hope is for the students to walk through the doors on the first day of school feeling comfortable, empowered, excited, familiar with the campus, recognizing friendly faces, and planning on having the best four years possible.

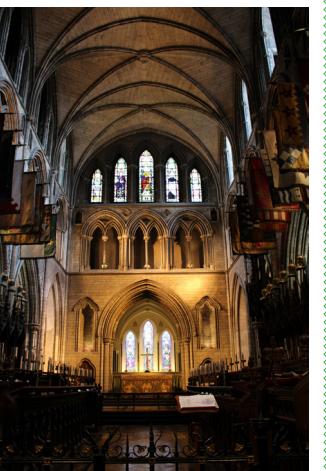


First Ever PACE Literary Tour June 2016

"When you stand inside the 900-year-old St. Patrick's Cathedral in the center of Dublin, you almost forget there's a modern city buzzing right outside. From around the Irish capital, through Shakespeare's Stratford and into London with its iconic Big Ben, every moment brings a better understanding of life on the British Isles, both past and present."

Location First, "Dublin and London Tour"

Thirty three students will kick off summer 2016 by experiencing a literary tour of Dublin and London, accompanied by PACE English teachers Ms. Beebe, Ms. Schol, and Ms. Floto. The trip is made possible through Education First, a long-standing educational travel company used widely throughout the district. Travel dates are June 16-24, 2016. For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Beebe at jubeebe@lbschools.net.



PPSG Info Night for Parents, Students & Teachers

Psychologist & Author
Dr. Reggie Melrose
presents

The High-Achieving Student: Relief, Success & Joy

Wednesday
December 2nd
6:30-8:00pm

Dr. Melrose is a well-known international speaker and consultant specializing in the application of neuroscience to educational practice and parenting. Further details to follow via School-Loop. Exact location at Poly TBA.

Reflections from PACE Scholarship Winners*

Mara Koval, Columbia University

It's hard to believe how much I've learned in only a few months. Attending school at Columbia in the city of New York has taught me so much about other people, the world around me, and myself. Whether it's listening to an ambassador from the UN, attending a private movie screening, or seeing a show on Broadway, every day at Columbia has been an adventure, and I've loved every second of it. Alongside exploring the city I've had to manage my rigorous class schedule. Columbia's core curriculum covers a breadth of topics and is taught in small seminars. The intimate class setting of fewer than twenty students allows for intellectual debates over everything from Herodotus to Kanye. Although this small setting is quite different from Poly's sprawling campus and student-body, the skills I learned in high school equipped me to make the most of my experiences here. Foremost, PACE teachers and faculty imbued in me a love for learning. Although Columbia is extremely rigorous, and the workload can be overwhelming, I am constantly motivated by my appreciation for the educational process that I gained at Poly. Alongside time management skills (an essential when you have three papers due in one week) and studying techniques, PACE provided me with the confidence to know that I can tackle any academic challenge. Amid a sea of intelligent and overwhelmingly impressive freshmen, confidence has been pivotal to my success. I'm now sitting in classes with students from around the world, and am constantly in awe of the various perspectives they each bring to class. Poly taught me the importance of an education interwoven with diversification, and I've learned as much from my classmates as I have from any of my classes. Looking back on this past semester, I can say without a doubt that Columbia is the right fit for me. I've been exposed to so many experiences that I never could have imagined, and I owe all of these to the doors that PACE opened for me.



Travis Sosa, Stanford University

In college the weeks turn into days and the days turn into weeks. There's always something to do! For me that has been, among many other things, endlessly refining papers, politely begging our alum for money as a "Cardinal Caller", and going to see SpaceX/Tesla CEO Elon Musk deliver a surprisingly dull speech. Also college can be weird. I've seen a sea of fully nude and barely clothed students making out in the main quad at midnight in a school-sponsored event called Full Moon on the Quad. On that note, in college you meet people from around the US, even the world, and everyone has an interesting story to tell and/or ability to show off. It's truly inspiring to be around such accomplished, talented individuals. It really pushes you to find your niche, work at it, and be the best you can possibly be. It goes without saying that the incredible PACE teachers prepared us not to survive but to thrive in college academics. I may not remember every lecture, but I do remember almost all the jokes and great stories our teachers had to share. I'd need way more than 400 words to give every impactful teacher his and her well-deserved shout out. As I've noticed in my time here, there are tons of high schools in the nation that prepare their students for the academic rigor of college, but what makes PACE better than the rest is the faculty's ability to offer this exceptional education in a real, truly diverse high school. The fact that Poly isn't some prep school in a privileged community speaks to the heart of what our school is about. This unique environment continually produces well-rounded, intelligent individuals with an understanding of how the real world works. Plus, YG came to our school! While I couldn't ask for a better first month of college, I miss Long Beach and Poly. I have some great

memories from last year. Enjoy senior year and, although it can be overwhelming, don't stress too much over the college application process.

Emily Chun, University of Southern California

As I packed my bags and an assortment of boxes on the hot August day before move-in, I knew I was about to embark on an epic personal journey that was going to change my life forever. As cliché as that sounds, attending the University of Southern California has really changed my life. For the few short months I've been at USC, I've already found my home here in the heart of Los Angeles. Everything from joining one of the biggest sororities on campus, to living in a dorm with hundreds of other people, to getting to take part of professional research on plant growth in the Catalina Islands has made life at USC an incredible experience.

Although there are a lot of aspects of the hectic and overwhelming college life that no one could possibly prepare for, Poly PACE has really primed me for the rigorous academics at USC. PACE's onerous workload and increasingly demanding classes has taught me many lessons: time management, effective study methods, how to build good relationships with teachers, and how to pull all-nighters and still stay awake during first period AP Euro (because sometimes we're human and procrastination gets to us). Above all, one of the qualities of PACE I miss the most are the amazing teachers. All of the teachers in PACE truly love to teach, and they are very passionate about making sure their students excel. Even though the workload got gruesome at times, any teacher was there to support you through any personal grievances you had. In the midst of all the thousands of students most professors have, it's very difficult to build personal relationships. Even the learning environment is much different; because of how competitive USC is, the atmosphere is slightly more hostile than the small learning community of PACE. But, the rigors of PACE has prepared me to be a competitor in the fast-paced life at USC, and I feel just as academically adequate as any other student there. I would definitely put PACE as the reason for all present and future academic achievements I reach in college.

