



Home of the Bulldogs

Tracy High School

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Bulldog Pride

June 14, 2024

To: AACG Organization and Planning Committee

From: Jon Waggle, Principal – Tracy High School/Tracy Unified School District

Good afternoon,

I am writing this short letter, on behalf of students and TUSD Administration, to restate how thankful the Tracy Unified School District is for the opportunity that you so generously provided to our students. Six of our students, from Tracy and Kimball High Schools, were allowed to attend the 28th AACG Western Section Conference on Crystal Growth & Epitaxy that took place June 9–12 at Fallen Leaf Lake, CA. This event had a profound impact on our students in several ways. Please permit me to share some of my perspectives regarding the impacts felt by our students. I will also include their own, unedited perspectives (attached) in an attempt to convey the entirety of the experience.

These students came to this conference not knowing what to expect. Their views of the scientific process, and the educational pathways/requirements for learning about science, were limited by their high school experiences. It is not inaccurate to say that their views of the world of science and discovery were very limited and rudimentary. Oh, how their eyes were opened! Hearing and seeing the presentations by the researchers during the ‘talks’ showed these students what true professionals, in multiple scientific disciplines, do on a daily basis. The students were amazed at the specificity of the research topics and were clearly a bit intimidated by the unfamiliar jargon. Once the initial shock wore off, however, they began to see a new world of possibilities that they had never dreamed of. Their conversations with me after the talks were full of curiosity as well as excitement for their own futures. One of the themes that they kept repeating to me was that they were so impressed that the presenters (researchers) were ‘regular people’. This may not appear to be very profound at first glance, however, it is an indication that these students have moved beyond one of the biggest barriers that they all face at this point of their lives; uncertainty of success. They were able to see themselves in these presenters. Afterall, they were regular people, just like them.

My brief words here cannot adequately explain the profound impact that this event had on our students. I want to convey my most sincere thanks for the opportunity that you provided for our students. This experience will shape their futures and will therefore affect our community and the lives of these students. That is what true education is all about.

I have included the personal comments that each student provided to me at my request. I left them raw and unedited for your review.

Sincerely,

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