

Introduction

Include a paragraph or two summarizing the important information found in Part I and II of the completed *Initial Visit Application/School Description*.

AUP is located in Downtown Los Angeles at 3rd and Figueroa Street. The physical facilities are adjacent to a 12-story hotel (the LA Hotel Downtown). The school occupies five floors of the building; two floors are devoted to dormitory space (including a residential apartment for the Director of Residential and Student Life), two floors of classroom and administrative office space; and a “basement” that was formerly occupied by a four-theater movie complex. The basement has been converted into a student cafeteria, a student lounge/black box theater, wet and dry science laboratories, and a 165-seat auditorium.

The availability of the space and support of the building owner has made the development of AUP possible. AUP has been able to design the space “from the ground up” to meet the growing needs of the school and to accommodate the technology required for a 21st Century education.

The physical space of AUP is simply the focal point for an educational experience based on partnerships – primarily but not exclusively located in Downtown LA. For example, administrators immediately developed a productive partnership with The Colburn School, which is located within a 5-minute walk from AUP. Colburn is providing instruction and training for AUP students in a variety of music and drama courses. It is likely that AUP will begin offering some “in-house” art, music, and drama courses beginning in 2015-16. The school may very well contract with Colburn faculty (as well as other local organizations) for top-notch instruction. Similarly, AUP is working closely with the Ketchum-Downtown YMCA for access to facilities and instruction for physical education. The school has contracted with the YMCA for formal instruction for a variety of activities (e.g. tennis, spin, swimming, basketball, dance, etc.) to satisfy the school’s physical education requirement. The YMCA has five tennis courts on the roof of the World Trade Center (directly across the street from AUP). The YMCA facility is a 5-minute walk from AUP, and the Y has an indoor swimming pool, running track, basketball court, squash and racquetball, treadmills, strength-training equipment, and yoga/dance facilities. All AUP students are members of the YMCA and can utilize the facilities during specified hours.

AUP is forging potentially fruitful partnerships with a variety of other Los Angeles arts, cultural, and corporate entities – including the LA Philharmonic, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Broad Museum, Chinese-American Museum, and the East-West Players. The school’s relationship with the California Community Foundation and LA Live Talks has presented students with the opportunity to participate in presentations and discussions with Nobel Peace Prize recipient Muhammad Yunus, and with Pulitzer Prize Winner and New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. It is AUP staff’s intent to expand the network of relationships in Downtown LA and throughout Southern California to present the students with the best opportunities for social and personal growth.

Category A Organization for Student Learning

A1. School Purpose Criterion: The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophies of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted schoolwide learner outcomes that form the basis of the educational program for every student.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

American University Preparatory School (AUP) is an international boarding secondary community whose mission is to bring innovative educational praxes to advance the goals of 21st century learning. AUP strives to promote a rigorous and interdisciplinary academic program that merges with student-driven research, project-based learning, and technology literacy. We immerse students in a culture of collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking with the intended purpose of developing students to be inventors, problem solvers, and leaders in local and global spheres.

Visiting Committee comments:

It is the intent of faculty and administration to develop students holistically, attending individually and with earnest interest to their intellectual pursuits, artistic/athletic talents, emotional wellbeing, and moral development. All members of the AUP community strive to model the virtues of honesty, self-discipline, responsibility, harmony, selflessness, and respect for others in an effort to promote the common good. There are six broad areas that have been developed that express the school's schoolwide learner outcomes: Problem Solver; Independent Thinker; Responsible Individual; Academic Achiever; Technologically Competent; and Effective Communicator. Within each of these areas, specific criteria have been identified and listed that will assist in determining the extent to which students are achieving the outcomes.

A2. Governance Criterion: The governing authority adopts policies consistent with the school purpose and supports the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes for the school; it delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff, and monitors results.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

The AUP Board of Directors is comprised of the following four members/partners (Wei Huang (Shenzhen), Xia Lin (Shenzhen), Dr. Gary Woods (Beverly Hills, CA), and Dr. David Unruh (Los Angeles). These four individuals comprise the LLC that oversees the development and management of all elements of the school – including facilities and operations.

Board of Directors:

- Mr. Wei Huang, Investor and Real Estate Development
Shenzhen, China (majority shareholder)
- Mr. Xia Lin, Financial and Investment Consulting
Shenzhen, China (minority shareholder)
- Dr. Gary Woods, Superintendent, Beverly Hills Unified School District
Beverly Hills, CA (minority shareholder)
- Dr. David Unruh, Head of School/CEO, American University Preparatory School
Sherman Oaks, CA (minority shareholder)

Visiting Committee comments:

Communication and consultation among the directors is routine and conducted by email, videoconferences, and face-to-face meetings as the situations might dictate. All partners are satisfied with the nature and extent of communications regarding the formation, implementation, and day-to-day progress of the school.

An AUP Academic and Community Advisory Board has also been formed to bring in a variety of experts from the Southern California area to enrich the perspectives, resources, and director of the curriculum and related activities. Meetings with the board, to date, have generally been with individual members, or in small groups.

A3. School Leadership Criterion: The school leadership makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes; it empowers the staff and encourages commitment, participation, and shared accountability for student learning.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

Head of School/CEO

- David Unruh, Ph.D. in Sociology, University of California, Davis; Postdoctoral Fellowship in Mental Health Evaluation Research, UCLA; Associate Provost for Academic Program Development (30 years), UCLA.

Visiting Committee comments:

The commitment and responsibility for student learning comes from all administrators, faculty, students, and families. All stakeholders are continually encouraging (and assessing) the school's progress at this very early stage.

A4. Staff Criterion: The school leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities and are committed to the school's purpose. School leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

AUP has a ratio of 2.6-students-to-1-faculty at this point in time. This is necessary in order to properly teach the full range of courses offered for 9th and 10th grades through 2014-15. As we grow in student numbers, as well as adding grades 11 and 12, it is clear that this ratio is unsustainable. We are striving, however, to maintain a ratio of no more than 12:1.

Visiting Committee comments:

The school continues to develop and revise its professional development efforts. The approach to professional development prior to the beginning of the 2014-15 was rather formalistic. Now that the administration and faculty all know one another well, the approach to professional development has become a bit more informal and conversational. Several days are set aside each semester for faculty to engage specifically in this activity. In addition, AUP provides modest financial support to faculty and key administrators who seek to participate in professional conferences, workshops, and other activities.

A5. School Environment Criterion: The school has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school’s purpose; it is characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

The following is a list of the primary means by which these goals are accomplished:

- The first half hour of each day is devoted to “home room” where students can collectively and individually talk with the faculty. These conversations are often devoted to matters of adjustment and relationships.
- Each student has been assigned a faculty mentor who has the responsibility of working with the student to understand and address academic and social issues.
- An active Student Council was formed early in our first semester. The leadership of the Council meets weekly with the Head of School to discuss concerns and to engage in the planning of future academic and social activities.
- We hold monthly all school assemblies where students, faculty and staff are able to discuss issues and topics of concern.
- The Director of Residential and Student Life lives on site with all students and maintains close contact with them individually and collectively.
- A small number of students living on site have families who live locally. These parents occasionally drop in for visits with their child, and they schedule update meetings with various faculty, the director of residential and student life, and the head of school.
- Parents who live long distance routinely stay in touch by email and/or Skype.

Visiting Committee comments:

A boarding school provides many formal and informal opportunities for communication and understanding. As a new school, administrators and faculty are especially sensitive and attentive to the needs of the students. This first cohort of AUP students have taken a bit of a risk in attending the school, so administrators and faculty want to ensure that student needs and expectation are being met or, at the very least, that they and their parents are brought into the conversation regarding the school’s continual efforts to improve.

A6. Reporting Student Progress Criterion: The school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the school’s schoolwide learner outcomes, and student progress is reported to the school community.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

As a boarding school, we collect (and are interested in) an array of data:

- Attendance, tardiness, excused and unexcused absences
- Class participation
- Study hall attendance and participation

- Quizzes
- Homework completion
- Examinations
- Research papers
- Internet usage (when the situation requires it)
- Participation and attendance in school excursions and extra-curricular activities
- Project based assignments

Visiting Committee comments:

Parents are provided online access to the *Powerschool* portal that allows access to student grades as they are in process. Many parents are interested in specific details or questions regarding their child's progress. Teachers and administrators communicate with them individually in person, by telephone, email, or Skype as appropriate.

A7. School Improvement Process Criterion: The school leadership facilitates school improvement driven by plans of action that enhances quality learning for all students; has school community support and involvement; effectively guides the work of the school; and provides for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

... the faculty and administrators work together informally each and every day to monitor implementation. Weekly faculty meetings are a more formal mechanism by which the larger plan is monitored along with a roundtable discussion of upcoming assignments to facilitate collaboration and integration.

Visiting Committee comments:

Because of the unique configuration of AUP, there will be multiple opportunities for students, faculty, and administration to meet and collaborate on the development and implementation of the schools action plan for improvement. It will not be uncommon for daily and weekly conversations between the various stakeholder groups to be held regarding improvement plans and procedures. This plan is proposed to be developed by December 2015 once sufficient data is collected and will be modified on a yearly basis as a result of performance data conclusions.

Category B Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

B1. What Students Learn Criterion: The school provides a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes through successful completion of any course of study offered.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

All students are required to take the following core courses for a letter grade: (Graduation Requirements)

- 4 years of Mathematics (16 units)
- 3 years of Science with lab (12 units) (4 years recommended)
- 4 years of English (16 units)
- 3 years of Social Studies (12 units)
- 2 years of Foreign Language (8 units) (3 or 4 years recommended)
- 2 years of Global Studies with integrated research projects (8 units)
- 1 year of Digital Media Arts (4 units)
- 1 year of Computer Science (4 units)
- 1 year of Creative Arts (4 units)
- 1 year of College Preparation (4 units)*
- 2 years of Physical Education (with integrated Health Education) (8 units) (students will register for courses at the YMCA)
- 6 year equivalents of academic electives/internships (24 units)

Visiting Committee comments:

The school is in the process of developing a written curriculum for all courses. The summer professional development workshop (Appendix 5 of the school's Initial Visit Report) represents the first stage of this. Since AUP is now in the first semester of operation, this is clearly a work in progress. However, it should also be noted that the launch of this curriculum and the continual monitoring of implementation is, according to staff, always under evaluation and revision.

B2. How Students Learn Criterion: The professional staff uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning. The professional staff designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

AUP utilizes lectures, discussions, case studies, writing, individual and group projects and presentations, use of multimedia and independent student projects as a way to effectively engage students in learning. The 12:1 teacher/student ratio provides intensive opportunity for systematic

engagement. Specific staff development plans will emerge in our second semester of operation. As previously mentioned, the AUP administration is fully supportive of staff development activities through conferences, webinars, workshops, and formal instruction.

Visiting Committee comments:

Since AUP is now in the first semester of operation, curriculum development and assessment are clearly works in progress. However, it should be noted that the launch of the school's curriculum and the continual monitoring of implementation is always, according to staff, under regular evaluation and revision.

B3. How Assessment Is Used Criterion: Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. Assessment results are the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the schoolwide learner outcomes; are the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction; and are the basis for the allocation of resources.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

Comment on the degree to which the written and taught curriculum results in student achievement of the school's purpose and the school-wide learner outcomes (if developed).

It is too early for us to be able to assess.

Visiting Committee comments:

An anecdotal example of how assessment is used is that during the first semester the math faculty member discovered in the classroom (and through a variety of assessment instruments) that there is a much wider range of student abilities than anticipated. He utilized an assessment test prior to the beginning of the semester to facilitate placement, although in-class capabilities of several students seemed to be lower than assessment test results would indicate. He has engaged in significant changes to the delivery of content – in many instances, engaging in individualized instruction to help some of the faltering students succeed. AUP administration has also provided resources and support to engage tutoring from an undergraduate student from USC to work with students during their study hall hours. Because the school is so new, schoolwide curriculum assessments to determine student achievement are quite limited.

Category C

Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C1. Student Connectedness Criterion: Students are connected to a system of support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

A member of the faculty teaches the “college readiness” courses, oversees the writing center, and monitors tutoring. She is also preparing to launch (in January, 2015) a “student success center” that brings together our existing activities while providing a platform for expansion. The “center” will have a physical location that will allow for student drop-in, as well as scheduled workshops and activities. There is also a licensed therapist employed by AUP. She meets with students one-on-one (as needed) in the evenings during mandatory study hall. Her work bridges academic concerns with the social, emotional, and psychological issues students confront. It is essential that we, as a boarding school, make this resource available since students do not have immediate access to parents and family.

Visiting Committee comments:

The Downtown Los Angeles location of AUP provides relatively easy access for students to engage a larger community of learners outside the classroom. All AUP students are required to participate in one course offered by The Colburn School (music and drama) in order to satisfy graduation requirements. Several students have opted to take additional courses at their own expense. The Downtown YMCA provides facilities and programming resources for AUP physical education requirements. Several students have chosen to engage above and beyond these requirements for tennis, yoga, dance and other extra-curricular activities. AUP routinely provides transportation and access for students to go to local theater productions, museums, and lectures related to the school’s curriculum. Students have expressed an interest in more formal athletic activities than the school has been able to provide for them this first semester. They are in the process of preparing a proposal for the Head of School to consider for second semester.

C2. Parent/Community Involvement Criterion: The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school’s established support system for students.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

We are in the process of conceiving a parent-teacher group that will serve as a network of information and support for our families who are located in many different countries. Our connections with community resources during this first semester are widespread. We have had

distinguished guest speakers from USC and from the Hollywood entertainment industry (an Emmy recipient). We have also taken all of our students to hear Nicholas Kristof (NY Times columnist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner) discuss non-profit organizations and giving back to society. A subset of the student body went to hear Muhammad Yunus (Nobel Peace Prize recipient) discuss micro lending and the support of female entrepreneurship. These activities will be continued and undoubtedly expanded in our second semester and beyond.

Visiting Committee comments:

Open houses and orientation session for parents were conducted prior to the beginning of first semester. Because of AUP's unique model, there are also numerous recruiting events/strategies utilized throughout the year to bring awareness and attention to the positive benefits of an AUP education. AUP has created a coherent message about AUP that is woven throughout an institutional website, social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook), print materials, and public presentations. Administrators note that it is not always easy to obtain as much parental involvement as they would like since the school's families are dispersed across the U.S., Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Category D Resource Management and Development

D1. Resources Criterion: The resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school program and are effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

The school intends to eventually rely solely on tuition to cover operating expenses. The LLC ownership is currently providing all necessary financial support.

Visiting Committee comments:

Administration has not developed a specific budget for textbooks and instructional materials for year one. They have issued each student a new iPad and keyboard, along with subscriptions to the necessary electronic textbooks and applications. Then, when it became apparent that hard copy textbooks might be required for certain classes, they immediately ordered them so they could be distributed to students as quickly as possible. AUP's approach has been to allocate whatever resources are required in order to meet the school's stated educational objectives.

D2. Resource Planning Criterion: The governing authority and the school execute responsible resource planning for the future.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

We intend to increase from our current enrollment of 24 students to 150-180 within the next four or five years. This growth matches the availability of our current facilities.

Visiting Committee comments:

It is projected that the curriculum and course offerings will expand alongside enrollment growth. It is essential that AUP continue their curricular and co-curricular offerings at a faster rate. The plan is to add grade 11 in 2015, and grade 12 in 2016. It is vital that AUP continue down the path of offering and developing not only essential courses but also an innovative and exceptional curriculum that addresses physical, social, emotional, and academic growth for all students.

Other Areas to Which the School Has Responded

Admission Procedures and Records: The school has responded appropriately to the questions in this section.

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

All candidates start by either submitting an online inquiry or completing their profile, which includes basic biographical information (name, address, date of birth, gender, etc). The enrollment management office follows up by email to ensure that candidates finish the essays and parent statement before scheduling a Skype or in-person interview. The candidate is responsible for requesting teacher recommendations and transcript(s), uploading a writing sample or digital media art portfolio, and registering to take the standardized exams.

Once the application is complete, the enrollment management committee creates a list of qualified candidates and meets with the business office to determine how much financial aid or scholarship funds are available to give families that have completed a financial aid application and/or scholarship application. Accepted students receive an acceptance letter, enrollment contract, and matriculation packet that gathers information such as immunization records, insurance information, and emergency contact information. The matriculation packet is also used to disseminate pertinent information such as the student-parent handbook, acceptable use policies, permission authorizations, statement of intent, and suggested items to pack. Most students are required to remit deposit and tuition fees online.

Visiting Committee comments:

AUP is committed to transferring permanently housed records/transcripts directly to parents in the event AUP discontinues its operations. Paper copies of files will be kept in a secure location and will be sent to requesting parties in a timely manner. The AUP website will contain information on how to access permanent records/transcripts for at least 12 months in the event a decision is made to discontinue operations.

Any Other Area(s):

Selected statements from the school application (optional):

American University Preparatory School (AUP) is an international boarding secondary community whose mission is to bring innovative educational praxes to advance the goals of 21st century learning. AUP strives to promote a rigorous and interdisciplinary academic program that merges with student-driven research, project-based learning, and technology literacy. We immerse students in a culture of collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking with the intended purpose of developing students to be inventors, problem solvers, and leaders in local and global spheres. We develop our students holistically, attending individually and with earnest interest to their intellectual pursuits, artistic/athletic talents, emotional wellbeing, and moral development. All members of the AUP community strive to model the virtues of honesty, self-

discipline, responsibility, harmony, selflessness, and respect for others in an effort to promote the common good.

Visiting Committee comments:

The American University Preparatory School's Science Initiative, ASI, is a joint collaboration between AUP, scientific researchers from leading research institutions worldwide, the CK-12 Foundation, and the Encyclopedia of Life at Harvard University. It is anticipated that ASI will give students a head start into understanding the importance of science, and the effects science will have on their lives. ASI will be the cornerstone of the "STEAM at AUP" program.

Ongoing School Improvement

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. Implemented a successful 1:1 iPad program
2. Successful established communication channels to parents via Powerschool, Newsletter, direct contact, and in-person meetings
3. Students are creating artwork using top of the line professional computer hardware and software programs
4. All students have manually coded their own website using HTML and CSS
5. All students have worked hands-on in dismantling and reassembling a computer
6. Development of *Profiles in Science*, with publisher sponsorship through the CK-12 Foundation.
7. Successfully forged partnership with Downtown YMCA to accommodate the diverse sporting interests of students with expert mentorship and coaching
8. Integrated math projects with subject matter taught in other courses (English, Global Studies)
9. Integration of Global Studies and Digital Media Arts programs.
10. Collaboration with renowned Colburn School to provide access to the arts
11. Created unique opportunities to meet innovators and entrepreneurs in diverse fields with school trips to the Human Genetics Conference, to see Mohammed Yunus speak, and attend the premiere and meet the filmmaker of “Intore” at the Pan African Film Festival.

Critical Areas for Follow-up

1. Perfect admissions requirement for each of the next five years
2. Create curricular programs for 11th and 12th grade – all subjects
3. Create a robust physical education/athletics program focusing on 3-5 sports (volleyball, golf, tennis, basketball)
4. Develop a student leadership/community service program
5. Promote student internships with neighboring businesses
6. Create a speech and debate program that competes at a state and national level
7. Establish an academic advisory team including a number of stakeholders
8. Establish an academic decathlon team that competes at a state and national level
9. Promote advanced learning partnerships with local universities
10. Create a robotics/coding/math application program to emphasize STEM initiatives
11. Recruit and hire the most effective teachers possible and then provide continuous professional development and personal growth opportunities