Said Pazirandeh, chair of Physical Sciences, reported that his department has four units (1) Physical Science, (2) Geology and Geography, (3) Chemistry, (4) Physics and Astronomy.

Said stated that as a result of doing their Unit Assessments they cancelled some sections to make their courses more efficient and the remaining classes were over 100% filled. The average class size is 30. Chemistry enrollment has been very healthy with 102 students in fall 2007 and 167 in fall 2008. They offer morning and evening sections of the most popular classes.

Said reported that their greatest strength is their quality of instruction and the culture they establish in class. They alternate their class offerings with CSUN and Valley to attract some of their students. Students have been asking for Organic Chemistry and this is a course they are considering offering in the future. The Physics and astronomy classes fulfill General Education requirements and six to seven sections are offered every semester and every seat is filled. They have been exploring offering a morning and evening class in the same semester and have found it works well; for example, Physics is offered in the morning and Chemistry in the evening. They have reduced the number of sections of Geography they are offering from five to four and it has helped the efficiency rate. One of the ways they are considering growing the discipline is by offering a course covering General Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS). In the Physical Science area Said stated that this is a mature discipline and that the number of students taking this subject area has dropped. He added that Physical Science used to be a requirement for teacher preparation. They are offering fewer sections than they used to and the sections are filling. One area they want to pursue is to establish new courses in high school and to offer some courses online in the Physical Science area as these courses do not have a lab.

One of the challenges is to keep the enrollment high and offer the courses most in demand. They are considering offering more programs and degrees and certificates in health science. About 600 students declared health science as a major but only 12 completed the major. Most are nursing students and transfer before finishing. They are thinking about reconfiguring the requirements for the degree to enable nursing students to obtain health science degrees.

The Physical Sciences Department is working on a campus design for more laboratories. Scheduling is very important to get the most out of the labs. One faculty position is open and they plan on filling it. They would like to update the technology offered in their labs. Said stated that the students can learn the basics in their present labs but they would like to have more up-to-date technology. They are using smart classrooms to bring conceptual ideas to the students. One or two classes are scheduled in computer labs. Said also submitted a CTE proposal in Forensics in conjunction with Administration of Justice. They would like to add a “Help Room” especially before exams. Abdo Malki recommended having faculty spend office hours in the lab. Said mentioned that he could use assistance finding a room and hiring advanced students to help with tutoring.

All courses have SLOs and they are on an assessment cycle. Chemistry is being assessed this semester and Astronomy and Geography also might be able to be assessed this semester. Alma Johnson asked Said if they have considered adding sustainability to their curriculum. Said commented that most courses in his area address this issue. The only area they are behind in is Geography, however, the one full-time faculty member in this area was on leave this past
Alma Johnson stated that Said had balanced the needs of the department with the needs of the institution and scheduled well and commended him for the way he has handled the department.

All agreed that the information presented about the two departments was very valuable.

Jan Silver mentioned that she had received an e-mail from Terry English and that Terry and Susan Polk would like to present a proposal for a department reorganization. Alma Johnson proposed that the departmental reorganization task force be convened for this purpose. Jan Silver said she will follow up with the email to Terry English.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23.

Minutes submitted by Pat Flood.