

**Proposal to Pasadena City Council**  
**City Commissions**

**Proposed Action Item:**

Approve adding student intern positions to City Commissions.

**Introduction**

This proposal is written by students at John Muir High School. We call ourselves ***A Young Woman's Voice***. We would like to introduce ourselves:

- We are all members of Mustangs on the Move. We are Student Advisors for Mustangs programs that are offered on campus after school, which means that we are student leaders.
- We are all residents of Pasadena and Altadena. We live near John Muir High School.
- We are intelligent young adults trying to get a point across.
- We are trying to make a difference in our community.
- We want to make a voice for youth.
- We are trying to pave the way for classmates to be heard.

We are proposing that City Council add student intern positions to each city commission. These would be positions to learn, not to make commission decisions.

**Background**

We think that city commissions are very important because:

- Commissioners are representatives for people who live in the community.

- Commissions help make very important decisions that effect our daily lives and how we live.
- Commissions help make decisions that organize our community and create an orderly way to make decisions with input from the community.

Students feel this way:

- Left out.
- Unimportant.
- Like we should have a voice and input in our own lives.
- Confused because we are not informed.

Students want to be taken seriously and want respect. We want to be involved in our own community.

### **Proposal**

We are proposing that City council add intern positions to each city commission for these reasons:

- We want doors opened for us earlier.
- We want to learn how our community works – who makes decisions and why decisions are made.
- Young people want experience.
- It would benefit the community to educate youth.
- Including us would pave the way for students who may want to become council members in the future.
- Including us would make students feel valued.
- Students are open-minded and are very intelligent.
- Adults will learn student perspectives.

- We want to learn how the commissions and council work.
- City Council would benefit from knowing what students need.
- Including students would allow us to participate and show that we care.
- Including students would allow us to make a difference.

We studied the commissions, and we made an assessment of each commission:

Accessibility and Disability Commission (Corlette Thomas)

This commission is committed to accessibility for all people, especially people with disabilities. Student interns would learn a lot about the challenges of people with disabilities and how the city is making the community accessible to them. Students who have family members with disabilities could particularly benefit from this experience. Students could contribute by telling accessibility problems going on in their neighborhoods.

Arts Commission (Corlette Thomas)

The arts commission gives advice to City Council on promoting the work of artists and art groups. The arts commission gives advice to City Council on appreciating ethnic diversity and the arts. Student interns would learn about assistance for artists and about arts programs, especially for youth. Students interested in the arts could especially benefit from this experience. Students could contribute by giving advice to help adults work with youth.

Code Enforcement (Denise Dedeaux)

The code enforcement commission holds hearings and rules on violations of the code to keep buildings maintained. Student interns would learn about codes, rules and regulations that are being enforced. Student interns would learn that there are people that care about our community and want to make it well maintained and safe, and we could be a part of that. Any student could benefit from this experience. Students could talk to other young people, since most people trying to keep our community clean and safe are adults. Therefore, more youth could be involved in keeping our community maintained and safe.

### Commission on the Status of Women (Denise Dedeaux)

This commission advises City Council on the special needs and concerns of women of all ages, races, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religions, and social and economic circumstances. A student intern would learn about the positions of women and the roles that women play in our city. Female students could particularly benefit from this experience. As young women, we can contribute a young woman's voice.

### Community Development Committee (Jacqueline Hernandez)

The purpose of this commission is to review projects and recommend approval or changes. A student intern would learn what projects are being proposed and what type of details make up a good project. This would be a particularly good experience for a student in the ACE (Architectural, Construction & Engineering) Academy. A student could contribute by giving ideas on what may be wanted in the community.

### Design Commission (Mikala Benford)

The purpose of the design commission is to advise City Council on design standards, criteria, concepts and policies for development projects. The commission reviews plans to make sure design is compatible and to ensure the community has projects with excellent design. Participating on this commission would help students learn how design decisions in our community are made. Students would learn what considerations are made to decide what actually fits in the community's setting. Students will also learn the commission's importance in achieving an attractive community. Also, students that are interested in architecture would benefit greatly being on the design commission. Students could contribute their input about what their community looks like and provide a voice because they know their community and what people would like to see because they are actual residents.

### Historic Preservation Commission (Jade Saucier)

This commission advises City Council to promote and protect Pasadena's cultural resources. The commission recommends the designation of landmarks and landmark districts and prepares brochures and other materials to promote the community's awareness of Pasadena's heritage. Students would learn about their community's importance and its history. Any student could benefit from this experience, and students interested in

architecture and history could especially benefit. Students could help by making sure that buildings that are historic or may be forgotten in their community are recognized and appreciated.

Human Relations Commission (Ashley Youngblood)

This commission engages in activities designed to eliminate prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against individuals and groups. A student would learn moral values and intelligent ways to eliminate different forms of discrimination. Any student could benefit from this opportunity. A student can contribute broader views on how discrimination affects today's youth, considering that students are around discrimination and prejudice everyday at school.

Human Services Commission (Ashley Youngblood)

The human services commission advises and makes recommendations to City Council regarding the human service needs of people of all ages in our community. Student interns would learn what services we have, what services are not offered and what services are being proposed. Any student could benefit from this experience. Students could contribute by telling experiences going on in their neighborhood.

Library Commission (Jacqueline Hernandez)

This commission advises the City Council on issues and matters related to the public library system so that the library is kept in order. A student would learn about how the library system works and how it is funded. Any student could benefit from this experience. Students could contribute by providing ideas in which the library system could be managed, considering that the library is a vital place where students seek information.

Northwest Commission (Ashley Youngblood)

This commission advises on just about everything that happens in the Northwest. A student would learn more about the community and what is planned. Students who live in the Northwest could especially benefit from this experience. A student could contribute information from a youth perspective.

### Planning Commission (Corlette Thomas)

The planning commission advises City Council on the preparation and review of the General Plan, which is the plan for the entire city. The planning commission also advises City Council about the adoption or implementation of programs and where to spend money on capital improvements. A student would learn where City Council is spending the money and about zoning regulations. Students interested in becoming city leaders could especially benefit from this experience. Students could contribute their input about what we need to improve.

### Recreation and Parks Commission (Denise Dedeaux)

The purpose of this commission is to keep parks looking well maintained and up to date and to create recreation for youth. A student would learn how to keep our parks and communities looking attractive, welcoming and well-maintained. A student would contribute to this commission by letting Council know the truth on where drugs are being sold, where graffiti is being done and how children are being deprived. Students who live around parks or work in parks would particularly benefit from this experience. We could contribute by inputting a young person's point-of-view.

### Senior Commission (Jade Saucier)

The purpose of this commission is to advise the City Council on the needs, concerns and quality of life of all seniors. Students would learn how to make the living conditions of senior citizens better. They would also learn how to tend to their needs and come up with ways to banish the concerns of many senior citizens today. Students who are interested in careers in senior care or nursing would particularly benefit from this experience. With students having a bond with their grandparents, they can contribute ways to solve the many problems senior citizens go through day-to-day.

### Transportation Advisory Commission (Ashley Youngblood)

This commission advises Council concerning policies affecting the city's transportation system. Transportation is very relevant to students, and students would learn about the community's transportation. Students who use public transportation would particularly benefit from this experience. Students could contribute input regarding ways to help the system.

### Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (Mikala Benford)

The purpose of this commission is to advise and make recommendations to the City Council relating to the city's master street tree plan and to review plans about public trees to make sure they follow the plan and to make sure they are protected. This commission would give students understanding about the tree plan and about protecting this important resource. Students who are interested in the environment could especially benefit from this experience. Students can be a powerful voice for their community, including people who can't necessarily speak for themselves, and students could advocate for trees in neighborhoods that need them.

### **Structure for Student Participation**

Each commission is different. We recommend that each commission develop criteria and structural details for student intern positions. They know more how student participation would work for their commissions. We recommend this approach so that commission can be a part of the decision making and so that commissioners will be comfortable with student participation. Here are some of our suggestions to commissions:

- Have two student interns for each commission so that students will be comfortable.
- Student interns should be in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Students who live in Pasadena and Altadena should be included. Altadena students go to school in Pasadena, shop in Pasadena, and work in Pasadena. They feel like members of the Pasadena community and want the opportunity to learn about how decisions are made.
- Commission chairs should make a special effort to meet with students regularly to see how we are doing in our intern positions.

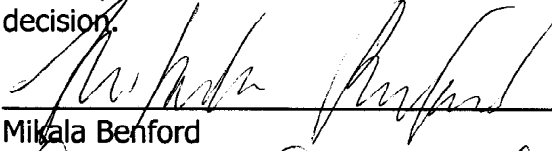
### **Evaluation and Adjustments**

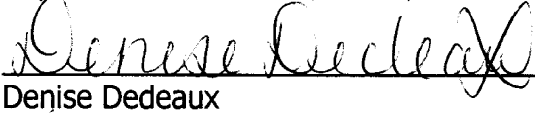
We recommend that after one year student intern positions be evaluated and that adjustments be made to make the system good for commissioners and students. We recommend these ways to evaluate:

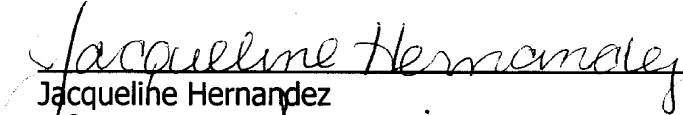
- Meetings with commissioners and students.
- Surveys and interviews.

**Conclusion**

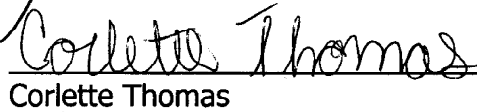
A Young Woman's Voice thanks you for the opportunity to present our proposal and express our ideas and concerns. We trust that you will make the right decision.

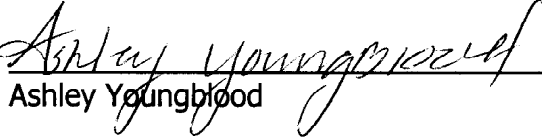
  
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