CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING
September 23, 2013

[In these minutes: SCEP Update; Charge Review; Future Topics Discussion; Active Learning Classroom Discussion; OCM Update.]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Patricia Schaber (Chair), Brad Cohen, Barbara Jensen, Jeff Lindgren, Daniel Orth, Maria Sera, Connor Schaefer, Kevin Smith, Susan Staats, Jeremy Todd, Thomas Wolfe

REGRETS: Roberta Juarez, Peggy McCarthy, Christine Swartwout

ABSENT: Christopher Isett, Katherine Kroph, Errin McIsaac

WELCOME

Professor Schaber welcomed those present and called the meeting to order.

SCEP UPDATE

Professor Schaber shared the following information from the SCEP meeting she attended in September:
- 43,000 undergraduates applied to the University and 5,500 were accepted.
- Effort is being made to improve diversity ratios and enrollment management.

The following topics were discussed at the meeting:
- Positioning the University within the national higher education landscape.
- A constant movement towards being a highly select university.
- Graduate rates related to advisement efforts.
- Career outcomes of students.
- Increasing 4 and 6-year graduation rates.

CAS CHARGE REVIEW

Professor Schaber reviewed the charge with the members and explained that the committee is a standing subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP). She noted that it is difficult to avoid overlapping other committees' initiatives when considering matters outside of the traditional four walls of a classroom. Classrooms are increasingly involved with technology and occupy a virtual space as well.

FUTURE TOPICS

After reviewing the charge, members discussed the future potential topics:
- Informal areas of learning, labs, study spaces, etc.
- How do we define learning spaces?
- How does the increase of eLearning change the way classrooms can/should be scheduled? How are classrooms being used differently and are traditional models of scheduling still relevant?
- Who is in charge of deciding where classrooms are built? Institutionally, how is space managed? What is the current practice or policy?
  - Professor Sera informed members that the faculty of the Institute of Child Development are in need of a classroom within their department building. There is value lost when research labs are located in a completely separate building from the classrooms. Undergraduates should not be left out of the vision for this building.
  - Mr. Todd stated that University Services and are part of a larger capitol oversight group that implements the six-year planning process. They receive feedback from Capitol Planning and Project Management. He suggested consultation between the dean and Capitol Planning could shed light on this issue.
  - There has been an increase in alternative workspace solutions. Is it necessary to have an office if a lab is primarily used and technology and infrastructure allows for access to information and meeting spaces?
- Mr. Cohen noted that there is duplication of effort in the management of departmental and general-purpose classrooms. There is an opportunity to save operational costs if more departmental spaces are managed by OCM. He explained that the effort to reduce operational costs is a mandate from the legislature.
  - Professor Smith noted that there are more benefits beyond reducing costs and these benefits should be made known to the faculty and departments. This can
  - Mr. Lindgren suggested incentivizing the release of departmental spaces to OCM. Gathering best practices would also ensure equity between departments of different sizes and ease fears they might have about releasing the management of their spaces.

ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOMS (ALC) DISCUSSION

Members discussed the following topics regarding Active Learning Classrooms.
Mr. Cohen explained that a study was conducted and revealed that when the spaces are utilized fully, student achievement is increased, the achievement gap is obliterated, and professors were inclined to change their pedagogy in response to the available resources.
  - The rooms in STSS are not currently restricted to certain disciplines.
  - In Iowa, faculty are formally restricted from scheduling the ALC until they have obtained certification.

- o Priority is given to courses that have been taught in the classrooms previously.
  - o Classroom.umn.edu contains a link to the learning and research evaluation teams, their tools, and their publications.
  - o Mr. Schaefer explained that as a student employee in STSS, he has observed the positive and lasting impression that the building leaves on potential employers that visit the University. This positive experience leads to these employers returning to the University and providing more opportunities for students. He personally experienced one of the ALCs during his orientation as a first year student. He noted that the room aided in large and small group conversation.
  - o Mr. Orth is a student member and he currently has a class in an ALC in STSS. The technology makes the content more engaging and encourages participation from all students.
- What will be the response of the University to the changing pedagogy of instructors using ALCs?
  - o Mr. Cohen explained that some departments have pursued a dual-track solution: creating separate positions for teachers and researchers. Other departments have become committed to faculty development. There are experts available in the libraries, departments, and specialists that can collaborate with instructors.
  - o Professor Schaber announced that she would be the opening plenary of the 2013 AOTA/NBCOT Education Summit. She sees this as a result of the growing enthusiasm of faculty for teaching.
- Do certain disciplines have optimal learning space characteristics?
- How can an existing space be converted into Active Learning Spaces? What are the guiding principles for such a transformation?
  - o Mr. Cohen explained that round tables and the absence of a "front" and "back" of classrooms destabilizes centers of power and promotes relationship building student-student and student-faculty.
  - o The recommended size of a round table seats 9 and allows for students to break into smaller groups of 3. Professor Schaber emphasized that flexibility has been most important in her classroom.

OFFICE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (OCM) UPDATE

Jeremy Todd, director, OCM, distributed a handout and provided the members with an update. Mr. Todd presented the following topics and members discussed:
- OCM website: www.classroom.umn.edu
- Why Classroom Management
  - o In the mid to late 90's there was a general realization of the disconnect between the University's strategic vision for the future and the quality of central classrooms.
- OCM Organizational Placement
  - o OCM reports to the Director of Academic Support Resources who reports to Vice Provost.

- OCM Organizational Synergy
  - Scheduling
  - Classroom Technical Services is an ISO that charges departments equally for their services
  - Operations, Maintenance & Project Coordination
  - Classroom Support
- Classroom Technical Services
  - Internal Service Organization providing audio/visual:
    - Design and Installation Services
    - Maintenance Services
    - Digital Signage – Departments control the content of the signs
- Waypoints – Student Study Space
  - 2009 – OCM tasked by provost to manage centrally controlled study space without additional funding
  - General Purpose Study Space (GPS) Waypoints- yellow push pins on campus map that identify study spaces across campus. The map will automatically center to your location.
- Room Scheduling: A history
- Astra Schedule
  - 2013 Astra Schedule will completely replace R25 and work in conjunction with PeopleSoft
  - Implemented on all five, system campuses
  - Scheduling has been successful thus far and final exam scheduling can be examined. This process is no longer manual, unless there is a room conflict. UMD was the first to implement this process.
  - Departmental classrooms are included in the system. Departments have the option to add their spaces to the system for more efficient management. Professor Smith noted that his department has labs and greenhouse spaces that would benefit from being managed within Astra. Mr. Todd explained that the department may see more requests for the spaces because they would be visible, however the department can deny requests.
- OCM Identifiers
  - Signage used to convey to users that they have ownership of the spaces and should treat them respectfully.
- Comments and Feedback Welcome
  - Mr. Todd encouraged member to provide feedback.

A member asked if Mr. Todd could highlight specific points that could be brought back to a faculty meeting. His response included:
- Astra Schedule has been implemented.
- It is easier to reserve a space if you know your meeting time. The system will display all of the spaces available at that time.
- Display the website: www.classroom.umn.edu
- Professor Schaber commented that she found the GPS Waypoints to be a very useful tool.

Mr. Todd was asked to explain the term "off-grid."
- He explained that there is a standard meeting pattern at the University. An example of an "off-grid" meeting would be starting a course 5 minutes later than the regular pattern. Off-grid meeting times can block a student from a course that begins in the next 50-minute block, and the instructor form teaching in the next block.

Members agreed that the next meeting should be conducted as a tour of STSS or other Active Learning Spaces. Mr. Todd will help to arrange the tour.

Hearing no further business, Professor Schaber adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate Office