

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 24, 2003

[In these minutes: Facilities Management Update, Approval of December 16, 2003 Minutes, Funding for Classroom Technology, Classroom Utilization, Classroom Accessibility]

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

PRESENT: Jane Phillips, chair, Steve Fitzgerald, Bernard Gulachek, Roberta Juarez, Steve Spehn, Denise Guerin, William Hanson, Kenneth Heller, Joel Weinsheimer, Nancy McGlynn

REGRETS: James Perry, Nelson Rhodus

ABSENT: Joyce Weinsheimer, Steve Sperber

I). Jane Phillips called the meeting to order.

II). Ms. Phillips noted that rumors have been circulating that 3<sup>rd</sup> shift custodial services will be eliminated as a result of budget reductions. She raised the concern that this could have a profound impact on classroom maintenance issues.

Associate Vice President of University Services, Steve Spehn, responded by stating this is not entirely true. Mr. Spehn stated that Facilities Management has not yet been notified about its second wave of budget cuts. Therefore, at present, there are no plans to reduce service or standards in terms of maintenance or custodial support. The plan is to maintain the same service with fewer resources. In order to accomplish this, it will be critical to match the right people to the right job. Mr. Spehn added that in light of the magnitude of the budget reductions it is inevitable that Facilities Management will experience reductions. Based on current projections, there will probably be 100 fewer custodial positions over the next couple years than there are now. As a result, rather than being asked to clean 25,000 square feet per 8-hour shift/per employee, custodians will be required to clean 28,000 square feet which is still considered reasonable.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) has for a long time advocated on behalf of FM for funding to permit custodial services in classrooms be up to the level mentioned in the Brenner Report. The recent Custodial Improvement Program is a commendable effort by FM to deal with a resource problem by better efficiency, performance and quality of work. If it comes to the point whereby budget reductions will impact FM's ability to provide adequate custodial support on campus

then, instead of a horizontal, across the board cut in service, OCM would recommend that classrooms and public spaces be given a higher priority than other types of spaces.

Mr. Spehn noted that the University pays a premium for its 3<sup>rd</sup> shift employees. At this point, while there are no plans to eliminate 3<sup>rd</sup> shift, ideas are being explored to consolidate the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift as well as instituting different types of shifts e.g. 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., etc.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that OCM would welcome the opportunity to have discussions with FM if it is forced to make radical changes in its service delivery based on budget reductions.

Although Jane Phillips supports the idea of permitting food and drink in the classroom, she commented that it might be necessary to enforce a no food and drink policy in classrooms because there is an obvious cost associated with doing so.

To conclude, Mr. Spehn stated that while there will be a reduction in custodial headcount, FM plans to save money by reducing its administrative costs, have less reliance on supervisors and more reliance on lead workers, and in the long term look to more aggressive energy conservation measures as a means to cut costs.

III). The committee unanimously approved the December 16, 2002 minutes.

IV). Funding for Classroom Technology: Ms. Phillips distributed a draft letter on classroom funding issues to members. She noted that Professor Gary Jahn, Chair, STCFSS, Professor Martin Sampson, Chair SCEP and Professor Chuck Speaks, Chair, SCFP have reviewed the letter and agreed to endorse it on behalf of their respective committees. It was further noted that the Academy of Distinguished Teachers drafted a separate, but similar statement.

After much debate, it was ultimately decided that two separate letters would be sent to President Bruininks and EVPP Maziar, one from the Senate governance committees (CAS, SCEP, STCFSS and SCFP) and the other from the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. By sending the letters under separate cover, support for funding for classroom technology would be coming from two distinctly separate directions and hopefully have that much more of an impact.

V). Utilization of Classrooms: The classroom utilization letter crafted by CAS representatives requests EVPP Maziar and Vice Provost Craig Swan enforce the current policies on classroom utilization by offering department's incentives and disincentives when it comes to classroom scheduling. Both CAS parent committee chairs, Professor Martin Sampson and Professor Chuck Speaks suggested that before the letter is sent that an informal meeting with EVPP Maziar and Vice Provost Swan be set up to discuss the issue. This would give them an opportunity to think about the issue and offer a thoughtful response rather than just sending a formal letter, requesting a formal response

and putting them on the spot. The committee debated which approach would be most effective.

Steve Fitzgerald distributed to members a summary of the Classroom Utilization Report that is being released tomorrow. The report will also be available on the OCM website at: <http://www.classroom.umn.edu/scheduling/utilization/fall01-spring02/index.html> The University continues to be faced with classroom scheduling inefficiencies that cause it to not be able to maximize the utilization of its classrooms. Because utilization of classrooms cannot be maximized it reduces the OCM's flexibility to put incentives in place. In addition, to the inefficiency problem there is also a supply and demand problem due to the tremendous growth in the number of sections that are taught since the semester conversion. Now these problems will be compounded by a funding shortage problem. The Classroom Utilization Report shows that while improvements have been made, the OCM is still below the Provost's goal in terms of utilization of classrooms.

Discussion highlights regarding classroom utilization issues included:

- Changes are being made to the automated scheduling system to allow for greater sophistication in dealing with scheduling issues such as department-projected enrollments.
- A member expressed the opinion that the idea of a joint meeting with CAS, SCEP, SCFP, EVPP Maziar and Vice Provost Swan would be a good idea. Jane Phillips agreed but noted that logistically it would be impossible to schedule such a meeting. As an alternative she suggested that a meeting with the chairs of CAS, SCEP, SCFP, EVPP Maziar and Vice Provost Swan be set up and invitations extended to members of each of the respective committees for those that are interested and available to attend.
- Another member disagreed about the need for a meeting because this is a very black and white issue. It was noted that CAS has identified that classroom utilization rules are not being followed and, therefore, causing classroom scheduling problems. The options are twofold, have the administration enforce the utilization rules or decide the rules need to be modified and forward the matter to SCEP who is responsible for setting educational policy.
- The intent of the letter and/or meeting with EVPP Maziar and Vice Provost Swan is to request that the administration provide departments with incentives and disincentives in order to enforce existing classroom utilization and scheduling rules.
- The utilization issue needs to be presented to the administration as part of an overall strategic plan.
- Consider the trade-offs between offering trimesters or enhanced summer school sessions; two entirely different approaches.

- Incent students by offering lower tuition during the summer.

VI). The committee's April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting was postponed to the following Monday, April 28, 2003 from 2:00 – 3:30. This will be the last meeting of the academic year. There will be no CAS meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

VII). Steve Fitzgerald distributed a handout that outlined different talking points on classroom accessibility. Presently, only 27% of the University's 300 general-purpose classrooms are fully accessible. The OCM has submitted project proposals to Higher Education Asset Preservation and Restoration (HEAPR) Funding in an attempt to secure capital to correct some of the easier to fix classroom accessibility problems on campus. By definition an easy to fix problem is a building that is accessible but within the building there are classrooms that are not accessible. The primary reason classrooms are not accessible is because door widths are too narrow and/or the doors, door hardware and/or the door operating mechanisms fail to meet the requisite criteria for accessibility. It has been estimated that the cost to correct 93 classrooms with 6,542 student seats would be \$694,000. Unfortunately, OCM was unsuccessful in securing funding for the entire project, however, another proposal requesting \$200,000 to make 38 classrooms accessible is on the table awaiting funding. A member noted that it is likely the University will receive \$200,000 per two-year cycle until accessibility problems are corrected.

Mr. Fitzgerald requested the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee's on-going support to increase the number of accessible classrooms. He also noted that the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan focuses on accessibility issues as well.

The committee agreed that its support for increasing the number of accessible classrooms on campus would be expressed in its final report.

VIII). Hearing no further business, Jane Phillips adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate