

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 14, 2003

[In these minutes: Approval of 9/9/03 CAS Minutes, Tri-semester Subcommittee Update, Update on March 24, 2003 Recurring Funding for Classroom Technology Memo to EVPP Maziar, Scheduling and Non-Standard Class Times]

[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: Ken Heller, chair, Steve Fitzgerald, Steve Spehn, Joyce Weinsheimer, Donald Brazeal, Denise Guerin, William Hanson, Jennifer Peters, Jane Phillips, Joel Weinsheimer,

REGRETS: Bernard Gulachek, James Perry

ABSENT: Roberta Juarez

OTHER(S): Nancy Peterson, Office of Classroom Management

I). Professor Heller called the meeting to order.

II). The Committee unanimously approved the September 9, 2003 minutes.

III). OTHER BUSINESS: A member requested an update concerning the 3-Semester Subcommittee. Professor Heller announced that he has agreed to chair this Subcommittee, the purpose of which is to look into the practicality of offering a year round teaching schedule. The Subcommittee, although it has not met yet, has been asked to provide a report to Executive Vice President and Provost Christine Maziar by May 2004. Professor Heller asked members to let him know if they are aware of other institutions that have either successfully or unsuccessfully moved to a year round teaching schedule.

Another member asked for an update on the March 24, 2003 memo to EVPP Maziar concerning recurring funding for classroom technology in central classrooms. Professor Heller has not yet found out anything about this matter. Professor Heller suggested that if necessary he and Jane Phillips draft another letter asking for a reply from the administration.

Professor Heller asked Mr. Fitzgerald how receptive he would be to suggestions to modify the Classroom Utilization portion of the Office of Classroom Management website in order to make its impact greater. While Mr. Fitzgerald noted he is always open to entertaining new ideas and suggestions, at present the department is fully tasked with ECS implementation and other pressing initiatives. They will look into other ways to post future utilization reports, and welcome Committee input and ideas that would help make this (or other) parts of the classroom website better. Professor Heller proposed setting aside time at the November 11, 2003 meeting for suggestions to increasing the impact of this site.

III). SCHEDULING AND NON-STANDARD CLASS TIMES: To begin, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that non-standard class times for today¹'s discussion includes non-standard class times (both hours of the day and days of the week) as well as the excess teaching that is done during the peak hours of the day. Mr. Fitzgerald asked that members think of today¹'s discussion from a global, campus-wide perspective versus from the position of a particular department. Next, Mr. Fitzgerald provided members with an overview of the issues affecting standard meeting times.

Members discussed the scheduling issues resulting from non-standard class meeting times. Ideas and comments generated from today¹'s discussion included:

- Professor Heller stated that CAS may want to look into the fact that there is no current policy currently that addresses a class meeting for more than its credits. For scheduling purposes, in an environment of limited classroom space, perhaps a specific justification is needed similar to when a class has less hours than credits. The impact of hours per credit on scheduling, according to Mr. Fitzgerald, affects courses that require more hours than credits because this places an

- extra scheduling demand on the system. This issue probably has a cost as well as an educational impact to the institution that needs to be pointed out and discussed further.
- One member noted that pressure from Deans to retain and even increase their enrollments is one reason many departments schedule their courses during the peak hours of the day. Mr. Fitzgerald discussed the continuing problem of departments requesting to teach too many courses in the peak time of the day. The space and time available in this period has a finite limit. A key reason that the Provost specifies that a department not teach more than 60% of its courses in this limited period is to allow all departments to equitably share the available classroom resources in this limited period of the day. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that if departmental behavior does not change by fall 2004, the scheduling system will be forced to cancel or move courses because there will not be enough classrooms to meet the demand during the peak hours of the day. A member asked that whatever solution to this problem is put in place needs to be done in a way so as not to disproportionately harm one department over another.
 - A member noted that sometimes the nature of learning, which combines clinical experience with classroom experience, does not permit adherence to standard class meeting times. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that clinical based courses in AHC have always been treated as a special case and that AHC classrooms have now been segmented from the general-purpose classrooms. This will allow the AHC to further specialize on the clinical requirements that are substantially different from the general purpose classroom requirements and standard scheduling practices. Thus AHC classes are not held to the campus central scheduling standards.
 - Nancy Peterson from the Office of Classroom Management stated that she meets with departmental schedulers on a yearly basis and that she frequently communicates with all schedulers on a wide range of scheduling matters. Ms. Peterson believes that the departmental schedulers understand the ramifications of scheduling non-standard class meeting times, but they do not set teaching policy for a department. A suggestion was put forth to involve department heads more fully in the scheduling difficulties.

- Several members commented that non-standard class times influence student access to courses outside of their college. This argument alone should motivate departments to abide by the standard class time scheduling policies.
- It is anticipated that the Electronic Course Systems Project (ECSP), assuming all goes well, will be rolled out in time to do fall semester 2004 scheduling. This program has a feature that warns departments if they are attempting to schedule more than 60% of their courses during the peak hours. In addition, there will be a non-standard class time report built into the system.
- A member noted that a policy that does not allow for exemptions and flexibility would be impossible to administer. There are genuine and educational rationales that justify deviations. A procedure to request an exemption would allow departments to make requests when necessary. It was suggested that CAS devise an exemption procedure. University of Minnesota Morris sets a precedence for not permitting non-standard class times within the U of M infrastructure. University of Minnesota Duluth has an exemption procedure - all non-standard class time requests must be approved by the vice chancellor.
- Several members commented that an important argument that needs to be addressed is cost. The University has a limited number of classrooms. If colleges try to maximize their student enrollment thereby generating more tuition revenue there is a cost to the University for more classroom space that should be included in the accounting. To accomplish this, noted one member, there could be a tax on a college for scheduling a room during peak hours. This approach would link the University¹'s resources to the scheduling issues. Courses that stress the scheduling system would bear the cost by paying a tax. A differential tax could be imposed based on non-peak scheduling and non-standard hours scheduling depending on which has a greater negative impact on the system. A member suggested instituting such a tax only if the exemption process does not solve the problem. Another member stated that both the special exemption process and the tax should be implemented simultaneously so that the tax will be viewed as a cost, not a penalty.
- According to Nancy Peterson, associate deans work with the departments directly during the scheduling process. Mr. Fitzgerald added that active involvement by associate deans and department

chairs is vital to an effectively operating academic scheduling system. For example, he stressed the importance of proactive work by associate deans and department chairs to reduce the adverse effects that two practices have on classroom scheduling. Those practices are:

- Inflated projected enrollments by departments.
- Excess changes or cancellations to initially scheduled courses, especially the addition of sections late in the schedule production cycle.
- A member noted that departments are reluctant to change their course offerings out of peak hours because the new times may conflict with other courses that are necessary for students. A method for departments to access this type of information is necessary.
- Various Committee members noted that increasing section sizes is one way for departments to respond to decreasing budgets. However this has a cost implication for the University. It is much more difficult to accommodate larger section requests than smaller section requests. Larger classrooms are a prime example of limited classroom resources, noted Mr. Fitzgerald. Multiple departments cannot teach in the same large classroom at the same peak time of day.

A member asked that today's key discussion points:

- Submission of non-standard scheduling requests to a person yet to be determined for exemption approval, and
- Instituting a tax for scheduling an excess number of classrooms during peak hours and scheduling non-standard class times.

be agreed in principle so draft policy language can be crafted prior to the next CAS meeting on November 11, 2003 meeting. An ad hoc committee (Joel Weinsheimer, Jane Phillips, Donald Brazeal and Steve Fitzgerald) was formed to draft such language. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, was charged with setting up a meeting with these 4 volunteers within the next 1 1/2 weeks.

IV). Hearing no further business, Professor Heller adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate