

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 13, 2004

[In these minutes: Fall 2004 Scheduling Update, 3-Semester Subcommittee Update]

[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, Bernard Gulachek, Jane Phillips, Andre Prah, Joel Weinsheimer, Katie Herbert, Rachel Long

REGRETS: Roberta Juarez, Steve Spehn, Joyce Weinsheimer, Donald Brazeal, Denise Guerin, James Perry, Jennifer Peters, Marco Perzichilli, Nancy McGlynn

ABSENT: William Hanson, Gina Meyers

I). Professor Heller called the meeting to order.

II). Professor Heller asked members for any new business items they would like to bring forward. Below are the comments/questions that were raised:

- A member asked for clarification between departmental classroom space and general-purpose classroom space. Director of Classroom Management Steve Fitzgerald explained the difference. He noted that departmental classrooms provide colleges with teaching space that can be more specific and narrowly focused in its teaching infrastructure than central, or general purpose classrooms, which are designed to meet the broader needs of the entire University community.
- A member asked whether removing the Academic Health Center classrooms from the central classroom pool affected final exam space. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that perhaps mathematically this is possible, but he is not aware that this problem is any bigger than usual. Large auditorium classroom space,

Comment [RD1]:

which permits alternate seating during final exams, has been an on-going challenge. As a direct result of this problem, OCM has recommended and requested, that all large auditoriums classrooms built in the future have at least some of its seating configured with folding tablet arms. The cost of this in new construction is nominal, and it would provide the University with flexibility if it needed to ³surge² seating for classes, exams, meetings or other uses.

III). Director of Classroom Management Steve Fitzgerald provided members with a fall 2004 scheduling update. He highlighted the following information:

- There continues to be an increased demand for general-purpose classrooms. Comparing fall 2003 to fall 2004, the number of sections requested to be scheduled grew by 1,332. This is a trend that has been continuing since the conversion from quarters to semesters.
- Inefficiencies caused by departments over-projecting their enrollment is one of the factors that is pushing up demand for central classrooms. The Office of Classroom Management is adding and canceling approximately 17% of the requests it receives by the end of the second week in the semester. The new Electronic Course Scheduling system¹s (ECS) presents the department scheduler with the last equivalent semester actual enrollment so that large differences in the current semester projected/requested enrollment is highlighted. The standard is that the actual enrollment of a course should not deviate from the projected enrollment by greater than +/- 10%. The system has provisions to attach comments if the department in fact has a need for greater deviation.
- Fall 2004 will be the first semester that Nicholson Hall and Jones Hall will be off line for renovation. This translates into a loss of 19 classrooms/991 seats.
- The unplaced course problem has been a challenge every semester since conversion, and this trend continues.
- Schedulers, for the first time, have successfully assigned classrooms for all courses requiring 100 plus seats prior to the start of registration. This is a major accomplishment over previous semesters. Implementation of the policy, which discourages non-standard or excess 60/40 courses, has helped make this possible.
- On the downside, currently there are 857 courses with a seating requirement of less than 100, which are unplaced. This number includes 361

unplaced non-standard or excess 60/40 courses that have been approved at the college level for space in central classrooms or for assignment in departmental classrooms.

- As a result of the new automated PeopleSoft/Resource 25 interface, the scheduling staff is able for the first time to use PeopleSoft to view scheduled course activity in departmental classrooms. Schedulers will try to use these vacancies to help manage the unplaced course problem.
- Once the scheduling staff finds a solution for an unplaced course, this will be communicated to the department. If the department decides, for one reason or another, that the space is unsuitable, then the department will need to find its own solution to its unplaced course problem. A member stated that it is likely that departments will respond by canceling courses.
- Overall, departments are reporting a positive experience using the Electronic Course Scheduling (ECS) system, which allows department schedulers to input scheduling data directly into the system via the web as opposed to using the cumbersome CSTD paper process.
- There are some PeopleSoft/ECS interface problems. Discussions are underway to resolve these issues.
- ECS reports appear to be useful to departments, but currently they are not particularly well formatted and do not aggregate well. It is OCM¹'s objective to make the reports generated by ECS as available and useful as other data that is available through the data warehouse.
- OCM, through ventures with various departments/colleges, is attempting to come up with innovative solutions to the limited classroom space problem.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the ECS system is a work in progress, and that this complex system will continue to be fine-tuned as time goes on. Professor Heller applauded Mr. Fitzgerald and the Scheduling Unit on launching this system, which has performed very well.

IV). Professor Heller reported that the purpose of the 3-Semester Subcommittee was to look into the feasibility of putting the University on a year round teaching schedule as opposed to having a lull in the summer. Over the past academic year the Subcommittee met to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of doing so.

Professor Heller said that although no final report has been issued, the 3 Semester Subcommittee has come to the general conclusion that no insurmountable institutional barriers exist that would interfere with the

University instituting a 3-Semester system, should it decide to do so. However, members believe that if the University decides to move forward with a year round schedule, implementation should be gradual and driven by market demand. By moving slowly, more thought can be given to removing the barriers e.g. financial aid, etc. associated with a year round system. All in all, the Subcommittee liked the flexibility that adding a summer schedule would permit.

A member noted that besides some of the considerations that were already mentioned, a year round schedule would have an impact on Facilities Management as well as Classroom Management. This same member stated that there is the misperception by many that the University does not have a lot going on in the summer, and this is definitely not the case.

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

Renee Dempsey
University Senate