

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2004

[In these minutes: Review Subcommittee<sup>1</sup>'s Charge, Brainstorm Agenda Items for 2004 - 2005, Classroom 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: Joel Weinsheimer, chair, Steve Fitzgerald, Michaeleen Fox, Steve Spehn, John S. Anderson, Ken Heller

REGRETS: Roberta Juarez, Donald Brazeal, Denise Guerin, James Perry, Jennifer Peters

ABSENT: Bernard Gulachek, Joyce Weinsheimer, Andre Prahl

OTHER(S): Nancy McGlynn

I). Professor Weinsheimer called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II). Professor Weinsheimer provided members with an overview of the Subcommittee<sup>1</sup>'s charge. Regarding the Subcommittee<sup>1</sup>'s membership, members voiced the importance of student representation on the Subcommittee, and that the P&A membership should preferably include individuals involved with classrooms in one way or another e.g. classroom scheduling, teaching, etc. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, noted that Committee on Committees makes the P&A appointments, however, if members know of P&A employees that are interested in serving on the Subcommittee they should encourage these individuals to complete an on-line application at: <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/conc/commdescription.html>

III). The Subcommittee brainstormed agenda items for the 2004 - 2005 academic year. Ideas that were generated included:

- Evaluate the performance of the Electronic Course Scheduling (ECS) system. Does the system need to be <sup>3</sup>tweaked<sup>2</sup> to make it more effective?
- Receive a report on departmental adherence to classroom scheduling policies now that several Senate committee<sup>1</sup>'s have reaffirmed these policies.
- Discuss new technologies in classrooms e.g. student response systems, etc. Will each college need to move forward independently in terms of implementing student response systems or does the University plan to have a University-wide policy to guide departments on this matter? Members agreed this issue has some urgency because several departments are seriously considering purchasing such systems.
- Receive periodic reports on classroom renovations and new construction plans.
- Conduct a future CAS meeting in a technology enhanced classroom.
- Discuss classroom design issues e.g. building classrooms of the future with more flexible space.
- Discuss the University<sup>1</sup>'s lack of a mechanism to maintain its aging labs. Should labs be taken over by the Office of Classroom Management (OCM)?
- Continued discussion on central space versus departmental space as it relates to IMG funding. How would classrooms be funded under the newly proposed budget model?

Professor Weinsheimer encouraged members to email him with any additional agenda items they may think of.

IV). Next, Steve Fitzgerald, OCM Director, provided members with a classroom update. He highlighted the following information:

- Great strides were made in terms of classroom technology in fiscal year 2004. During fiscal year 2004, 46 classroom renewals were completed and 15 new technology enhanced classrooms went on-line. More resources are being devoted to maintaining the status quo as classrooms that went on-line five years ago attrite from the system and fewer resources are being devoted to making additional progress.

- The original goal was to complete the Technology Upgrade Project by end of fiscal year 2004, however, 100 rooms remain unfinished. The project deadline, therefore, has been pushed back to 2006.
- Seventy two percent of classrooms currently meet the projection capable standard criteria. By the end of fall semester 2004, 75% of all general-purpose classrooms will be technology equipped.
- Technology enhanced classrooms are reliable, cost effective and user friendly and this can be attributed, in part, to technology standardization across classrooms, meeting rooms, etc. on campus. In addition to the 210 central classrooms that have been upgraded to the <sup>3</sup>projection-capable classroom<sup>2</sup> standard, various departments have purchased nearly 100 standard system installations from Classroom Tech Services ISO for use in departmental spaces. All of these rooms share the same operating protocol and benefits.
- Besides classroom scheduling and utilization, OCM is also responsible for the course database and what is being taught throughout the University. The Scheduling Department within OCM has been very busy with the implementation of a series of new systems (see below):
  - Transactional Interface - an on-line interface between PeopleSoft and the scheduling system.
  - ECS (Electronic Course Scheduling system).
  - ECS Upgrade Project - this upgrade allows departments to view information on their performance as it relates to classroom utilization e.g. compliance to the non-standard class times policy, compliance to the policy that prohibits a department from scheduling more than 60% of its courses during the peak hours of 9:00 & 2:00, enrollment projections, and the number of courses cancelled.
  - Departmental Resource 25 - OCM is making a user-friendly version of its R25 scheduling software available for departments to use on a voluntary basis in scheduling their own departmental classrooms. This will extend added value of the scheduling system that Nancy Peterson uses to the departments, while preserving the department<sup>1</sup>'s autonomy and control of their rooms.
  - Electronic Course Authorization System (ECAS).
- A record number of freshman were admitted to the University for fall 2004, and, as a result, the course scheduling office received a

record number of requests to schedule course sections. The number of unplaced courses for fall 2004 increased from 800 to over 950.

- The partnership between OCM and University Services is vital and strong.

Questions/comments from members:

- Does the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) track the use of technology in the technology-enhanced classrooms? OCM is able to track the use of technology in its second-generation networked classrooms. These networked rooms include the capability of monitoring tech performance as well as hours of usage. This is valuable in both corrective and preventative maintenance programs.
- Are collegiate offices being asked to be more involved in the enrollment projection process? Yes, projections are a major issue at the departmental level because projected enrollment at the individual course level drives the size of the room that the scheduling system tries to assign. UMTC overprotects individual course enrollment by about 16% and this is a significant part of the unplaced course problem. It is difficult to get accurate projections from departments with respect to course enrollment. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that one of the new reports generated by the ECS system focuses on projected class enrollment versus actual class enrollment achieved in the previously corresponding semester on a department/course basis. The new ECS reports will help departments monitor and manage this. He noted that in the aggregate, this is also a University-wide issue and admitted that there is no mechanism in place to deal with the larger issue at this point. A means to collect this information, to at least some degree, is in the early stages of being discussed. OCM is working hard to put information out which will assist departments with their enrollment projections. Recently, policies and systems were put in place to help departments make more accurate enrollment projections, however, they were not instituted in time to influence the fall 2004 semester projections.
- Please define an "unplaced course"<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that an "unplaced course"<sup>1</sup> is a course without an assigned room once the scheduling algorithm has been run.
- A member proposed CAS craft a statement in support of more classrooms to meet the ever-increasing demand. Steve Fitzgerald

noted that while quantum gains have been made with respect to the quality of classrooms, renovation and new construction have reduced the quantity of classrooms and the average classroom size. If the University wants to grow in terms of programs it will need to give serious thought to adding more classrooms to its inventory.

V). Steve Fitzgerald distributed to members a handout drafted by him and Professor Weinsheimer, which outlined thoughts on facilities and core infrastructure issues and trends for a SCFP discussion on strategic planning and positioning. The document noted the lack of recurring funding for life cycle replacements and recurring maintenance in the technology-enhanced classrooms is creating serious vulnerabilities in our teaching and learning infrastructure in classrooms. He noted that while tremendous progress has been made in central classrooms, it has primarily been based on one-time funds, with the expectation of recurring funding following later. Later is now, Mr. Fitzgerald noted. We are now seeing the first large numbers of the tech upgrade classrooms reaching their end-of-service life, and we have four years of replacement funding set-asides that have been deferred. The faculty that have invested their intellectual energy in developing technology based instructional pedagogy have the most at risk.

Professor Weinsheimer reported that at the SCEP retreat there was some discussion on whether faculty enthusiasm for technology in classrooms had reached its apex and begun to wane. He was surprised to hear these comments, and suggested the Subcommittee discuss this issue further. Steve Fitzgerald added that there probably is less discussion on this issue now that almost 75% of central classrooms are technology enhanced. He added, however, that it is important to remember that technology breaks and that it has a finite life cycle.

VI). Hearing no further business, Professor Weinsheimer adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate