

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2005

[In these minutes: Academy of Distinguished Teachers Letter, Classroom Security Issues, OCM Updates – Scheduling, Classroom Support, Technology Upgrade Plan, Classroom Design]

[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, Bernard Gulachek, Roberta Juarez, Joyce Weinsheimer, John S. Anderson, Donald Brazeal, Daria Courtney, Denise Guerin, Ken Heller, David Dierauer

REGRETS: Steve Spehn, James Perry, Andre Prah, Meghan Jensen, Jamie Larson

ABSENT: Michaelen Fox, Hassan Abdi,

GUESTS: David Crane, Jim Gregory, Toni Pangborn, Nancy Peterson, Jeremy Todd

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

II). Announcement: Professor Weinsheimer reported that the Academy of Distinguished Teachers wrote a letter to President Bruininks and Provost Tom Sullivan supporting both the mission and the remarkable job of the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) in terms of upgrading and maintaining technology enhanced classrooms on the Twin Cities campus. The letter also stressed the importance for on-going funding as equipment reaches the end of its useful lifecycle. Professor Weinsheimer forwarded this letter to the chairs of SCFP and SCEP, who distributed it to their respective members.

III). Steve Fitzgerald reported that there have been an increasing number of security incidences in classrooms on campus e.g. equipment theft, vandalism, etc. These events have prompted discussions around the issue of central classroom security. Because classrooms are general-purpose, their doors are required to remain unlocked. Classroom security, therefore, is only as good as the building's security. To the extent that a building's security is adequate, classrooms are likely to be more secure; however, on the other hand, vulnerable buildings lead to vulnerable classrooms.

In an attempt to resolve this problem, the establishment of building hours is being discussed. University Police, however, indicate that in order for this solution to work, there must be an administrative policy in place that clearly states the University's hours, which they can cite. Without such a policy, the Police do not have legal justification to

approach people that are in buildings at odd hours. There is a collaborative effort underway between University Services, the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and OCM to establish such a policy.

Technologies as well as administrative and physical procedures are being explored in an attempt to make general purpose classrooms more secure.

IV). Nancy Peterson provided members with a scheduling update. She highlighted the following:

- ECS has been upgraded. Overall, department schedulers are very happy with this software and its capabilities.
- R25 is in the process of being rolled out to the University community. Currently, 30 departments are using R25 to schedule departmental space. Once OCM hires a R25 Coordinator, this software will be rolled out to remainder of the University community.
- OCM is participating in the committee that is examining creating a University office and mechanism for handling all aspects off-campus requests for University event support space. This is contemplated as a ³one stop² office, focused on conventions and events.
- OCM anticipates adding modules to its R25 system to support invoicing and other features that would be necessary to support the ³Convention/Event One Stop² concept.

V). Toni Pangborn shared information on classroom technology support. She noted that the OCM ☎hotline¹ is now staffed from 7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. These extended hours are designed to support faculty teaching in the evening hours, within OCM's budgetary constraints.

Over the past three years, the number of ☎hotline¹ calls into OCM has decreased dramatically. Reasons for the decline in ☎hotline¹ calls include:

- Faculty are using the OCM website to obtain the basic classroom information they would previously call for e.g. what technology is in a particular classroom, etc.
- The ³Projection Capable Classroom technology equipment in central classrooms is well maintained and reliable.
- The equipment and operating protocol in all technology-enhanced central classrooms is the same ³Projection Capable Classroom² standard system. Faculty understand how to operate the standard system and have confidence in it. Today, the UMTC campus has approximately 275 central classrooms, plus another 100 departmental classrooms that all use standard ³Projection Capable Classroom² protocol and all operate the same from room to room.

Ms. Pangborn added that, by design, the Technology Upgrade Plan is lap-top based rather than being based on an installed permanent computer. (This was based on the benefits of having individual faculty members able to control, manage and operate their own laptop, as well as the major cost savings of not having 300 computers out in classrooms).

Approximately 10% of the ☎hotline¹ calls received have to do with laptop problems. In

these instances, instructors often have not properly set-up their laptop. Local resources available to the instructor for laptop set-up include departmental and college IT staff. OMC Faculty Support Coordinator, John Knowles, can help with in-classroom demos and assistance.

VI). Next, Jim Gregory provided members with a technology upgrade update. In addition to the comments he shared below, he used the technology in the classroom where the Subcommittee is meeting today, #255 Blegan Hall, and his laptop to convey more information concerning the Technology Upgrade Plan.

- Since the inception of the Technology Upgrade Plan, approximately 77% of all Twin Cities classrooms have been upgraded to the ³Projection Capable Classroom² standard.
- The Tech Upgrade may be accomplished as a stand-alone installation with annual funds for this purpose, or included as part of capital-funded new construction or renovation of academic buildings.
- OCM attempts to use economies of scale in how it approaches production and maintenance of classrooms.
- The current (second generation) of the Tech Upgrade includes networked control systems that allow the Classroom Tech Services staff and Hotline operator to remotely monitor the technical health and performance of the system. The University has one of the largest automated classroom help line operations in the United States.

Questions/comments from members:

- Will student response systems be installed in central classrooms soon? According to Mr. Fitzgerald, this has been a subject of a lot of study. Currently, the technology for student response systems (SRS) is not particularly mature, however, this is changing. Mr. Fitzgerald referenced a white paper dealing with SRS issues, which can be found at the following URL: http://www.classroom.umn.edu/notes/support_srs.html
- The proliferation of the number of ³clickers² or responders that students have to buy is already getting out of hand despite the relatively small number of faculty that use SRS. The University should decide, in consultation with early SRS adopters, to use a type (IR, RF or wireless WI_FI/web-based) and/or a particular brand of SRS to reduce the number of different responders students have to purchase. OCM believes that it is premature to select a system until the technology and marketplace sort out the different systems.
- Invite Richard Brown from the College of Pharmacy to demonstrate a web-based SRS he is working on.

VII). David Crane and Jeremy Todd, using a PowerPoint presentation, depicted the steps and design objectives used in the Blegan Hall renovation project. It was noted that OCM and Facilities Management use the ³Classroom Appendix to the U of M Facilities Construction Standards², also known as Appendix DD, for all new classroom and remodel projects.

Comments/questions from members:

- Can benches be placed in the hallways to accommodate students waiting to enter a classroom rather than having students sit on the hallway floor? Benches could possibly be put at the end of the halls, however, the width of hallway needs to be kept clear to allow for adequate passing distances and to comply with fire codes. Adjacencies to classroom clusters are looked at differently today than they were in the past. This is a valid concern that OCM considers, but is not always able to address, especially in older buildings.
- OCM's attention to acoustics in the classrooms was commended.
- Are hallways under the jurisdiction of OCM? No, the official boundary for OCM is the classroom door. However, OCM has provided input regarding student space adjacent to classrooms.

In closing, Mr. Fitzgerald addressed the funding issues faced by OCM. He noted that Capital Project monies are the primary means used to fund massive, very expensive projects to update the University's teaching and learning infrastructure. Another means is the Systemwide Classroom Improvement Projects money, which is a series of \$4 million per capital cycle projects designed to target projects that are too small to qualify as capital building renovation projects and too big to be paid for from the operating budget. Mr. Fitzgerald is concerned about the funding the University will receive from the State legislature this session, but noted that OCM is making progress in spite of the limited amount of money it has to work with.

Professor Weinsheimer thanked the OCM staff for their presentations.

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

Renee Dempsey
University Senate