

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NOVEMBER 21, 2005

[In these minutes: Office of Classroom Management Updates, Nicholson Hall Update and Tour]

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

PRESENT: John S. Anderson, chair, Caroline Rosen, Steve Fitzgerald, Rachel Hartreeve for Michaeleen Fox, Bernard Gulachek, Jeffrey Lindgren, Steve Spehn, Jay Hatch, Ken Heller, Jean King, Lindsey Kamp, Josh Kasprzyk, Vaidyanathan Raghavan

REGRETS: Andre Prah, Roberta Juarez, Denise Guerin, Roger Miller, Noelle Moncada

ABSENT: James Perry

GUESTS: Office of Classroom Management representatives Jim Gregory, David Crane and Jeremy Todd

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

II). Members unanimously approved the October 17, 2005 minutes.

III). Steve Fitzgerald, director, Office of Classroom Management (OCM), provided members with an OCM update, and highlighted the following:

- Under the new budget model, classroom costs will be attributed separately from other costs at the University. The model will afford opportunities for incentives in terms of how central classrooms are positioned. For example, under the new model, departments and colleges will be more responsible for funding their departmental classrooms, which will likely incent them to participate in OCM's pre-existing programs that encourage departments to turn over their classrooms to OCM.

While the cost attribution formula for classrooms under the new model is fairly complex, to simplify, it is designed to share the cost for central classrooms across the institution. Parallel to this is OCM's detailed, lifecycle cost methodology that addresses all aspects of classroom equipment maintenance and replacement. The OCM lifecycle budget has been significantly under-funded e.g. FY 04 OCM received 35% of its lifecycle funding requirement and in FY 05 it received 58% of its lifecycle funding requirement, a significant improvement.

The increase in lifecycle funding between FY 004 and FY 005 is in no small measure attributable to statements of support from CAS, SCEP and Finance & Planning, which were sent to the Provost. Recently, OCM's focus has changed from installing technology in classrooms to sustaining technology in classrooms. Hopefully with the new budget model in place and other on-going initiatives that are underway, OCM will receive more secure, sustainable funding for central classrooms.

- In terms of classroom utilization, there have been successes in three primary areas:
  1. Enrollment over-projections - OCM reports indicate that enrollment over-projections are running at about 17%. While this is still above the +/-10% standard, it represents a significant improvement over previous years.
  2. Over-use of central classrooms during peak hours – This problem area has witnessed a marked improvement at the macro campus-wide level. The Twin Cities campus is on track to meet the 60/40 standard, which stipulates that departments should teach no more than 60% of its courses during peak hours. A downside to achieving this goal has been the creation of a new peak time problem at 2:30 p.m. on Thursdays, but secondarily on Tuesdays. There are still individual problem areas.
  3. Excess course cancellations – OCM reports indicate a dramatic decrease in the number of excess course cancellations, down from an average of 20% to approximately 7%.

A problem area that continues to be a challenge for OCM is non-standard courses. Non-standard courses are those that do not start and end at prescribed times and/or do not follow the day pattern policy. OCM will continue to be focusing on this problem area.

Overall utilization hours are up on the Minneapolis campus, but continue to be down on the St. Paul campus. The demand for classrooms on the St. Paul campus is simply not high enough to match the inventory. As a result, OCM is exploring the possibility of purging classrooms from the system in order to avoid renewal costs of equipment maintenance and replacement. The utilization goal for classrooms is 71% time utilization and 65% seat occupancy. Currently, the Minneapolis campus is virtually at this level, however, the St. Paul campus's utilization averages in the mid-40s in terms of both time and seat occupancy.

Questions/comments from members:

- With respect to department's over-projecting a class size, wouldn't it be worse to under-project a class size? Mr. Fitzgerald stated that OCM has provided departments with ECS reports as a means to empower them to hone their enrollment projections. By in large, more departments overestimate a class size than underestimate. The entire institution benefits when estimates are more accurate.

- With the reorganization of the College of Biological Sciences (CBS), a significant number of large enrollment biology courses were moved from the St. Paul campus to the Minneapolis campus. If these courses were shifted back to St. Paul it would improve classroom utilization on the St. Paul campus, but may overload the Campus Connector.
- Consideration should be given to adding more Campus Connectors assuming additional classes will be held on the St. Paul campus in the future. According to Mr. Fitzgerald, in a perfect world classroom inventory would match the demand established by faculty and students. While it would be possible to engineer a system to transport students to the St. Paul campus, it is unclear whether this solution would satisfy the demand by faculty and students in terms of where they want classes located. Mr. Fitzgerald added that there exists a strong link between classroom inventory and where colleges and departments are located.

Members concluded their discussion around classroom utilization issues, and turned to the next agenda item, an overview of the Nicholson renovation, followed by a tour of this facility.

IV). Steve Fitzgerald reported that the Nicholson Hall and Jones Hall renovations continue a trend, which started a couple years ago, and this trend is a reduction in classroom inventory while improving the quality of classroom space.

A member asked what is the University's philosophy with respect to the total number of classrooms that are needed. Is OCM included in building plans to increase the number of classrooms as opposed to decreasing the number of classrooms? Mr. Fitzgerald stated that OCM works closely with the Provost's Office, Space Management, and Capital Planning and Project Management (CPPM) in classroom design and delivery projects. In recent years, OCM has also been involved in pre-design discussions, which puts OCM in the position of being the classroom space advocate during the early planning stages. Mr. Fitzgerald added that since OCM was established six years ago it has, in consort with Facilities Management (FM), developed Classroom Design Standards, which are referenced religiously during the planning phase of classroom space on campus. Unfortunately, OCM does not always get the number of classrooms it would like, but in recent years the quality of new/renovated classrooms has improved greatly.

A member questioned whether CAS should voice concern about the need for a policy that provides for an adequate number of classrooms on campus, since, after all, it is not optional that the University have enough classrooms for its students. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that he would welcome such input from the committee.

If the use of Resource 25 (R25) is mandated, would this impact classroom utilization? According to Mr. Fitzgerald, the use of R25 on a required basis for scheduling departmental classrooms would provide transparency and visibility in terms of departmental classroom utilization as well as maintain a department's autonomy and control of its departmental classrooms. At present there exists a lot of opportunity to improve utilization of departmental classrooms. Currently, there exists a shortage of

smaller (< 30 seats) central classrooms, which is exactly the typical size of most departmental classrooms. There are many benefits to using R25, but probably the biggest benefit is that departments, colleges and central administration will have a better understanding of space utilization across the entire institution. R25 provides an opportunity for the University to optimize the use of all its classrooms – central and departmental.

Before touring Nicholson Hall, Jeremy Todd distributed two handouts detailing the Nicholson Hall renovation and highlighted the following information from the handouts:

- The Nicholson Hall renovation is still under construction. At present the University has a temporary certificate of occupancy.
- The building will house 12 new, well-equipped, high quality, general-purpose classrooms that have a seating capacity ranging from 30 to 178 persons. Each of the classrooms is Projection Capable, and built to meet classroom specifications and Appendix DD performance standards.
- The building will house two academic departments from the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and two CLA student service units.
- Nicholson Hall was initially built in 1890. Originally the building had two turrets, which were used as staircases. One of the turrets was added back in during the renovation as a structural element. Also, under this renovation project, the 1925 east wing addition was demolished.

Members spent the remainder of the meeting on a guided tour of the facility.

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

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate