CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 17, 2006

[In these minutes: Resource 25 Implementation Update, Capital Funded Central Classroom Projects and Issues, "Low-End Asynchroneous Video Streaming" Pilot Project Demonstration]

[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, Ray Voelker, Bernard Gulachek, Roberta Juarez, Jeffrey Lindgren, Ken Heller, Jean King

REGRETS: Andre Prahl, Jay Hatch, Josh Kasprzyk

ABSENT: Steve Spehn, Roger Miller, James Perry, Vaidyanathan Raghavan

GUESTS: Office of Classroom Management (OCM) representatives David Crane, Jim Gregory, Toni Pangborn, Nancy Peterson and Jeremy Todd

I). Professor Anderson called the meeting to order.

II). Steve Fitzgerald and Nancy Peterson from the Office of Classroom Management provided members with a Resource 25 (R25) departmental implementation update. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that R25 is an initiative that OCM has been working on for the past three years. This committee as well as SCEP has previously endorsed this initiative. R25 is the software used by OCM for scheduling general-purpose classrooms, and which is being rolled out to departments for scheduling departmental classroom space. Recent system improvements allow R25 to interface with PeopleSoft.

The development last year of the automated interface between PeopleSoft and the Resource 25 scheduling system allows course activity in departmental classrooms to be visible. However, prior to the voluntary rollout of R25 to departments, events scheduled in departmental classrooms were not visible in the system. Departments are being encouraged to take advantage of this proven scheduling product. Thirty-two departments are currently using R25. The objective behind using R25 at a departmental level is to make a better business process for departments when scheduling departmental classroom space and to understand space utilization levels both at a department and collegiate level.

Based on recommendations from several committees, the Administrative Task Force has also been exploring requiring adoption of R25 by all department for scheduling departmental classrooms and other instructional space. Ms. Peterson added that OCM is taking steps to facilitate the campus-wide adoption of R25 by departments. The OCM

website will soon have a page that summarizes the R25 implementation process and will provide working aids for department schedulers. OCM will provide departmental schedulers with R25 training. Also, a schedule viewer enhancement will be made to the system in the not too distant future,

A member asked whether it would be possible to use R25 to schedule TAs. Ms. Peterson stated that the system could likely be used to schedule any ÒresourceÓ or ÒassetÓ, be it a room, an equipment cart or any other physical entity. As noted in the discussion, however, there are differences in the requirements of personal calendaring systems versus asset scheduling systems. Ms. Peterson and Mr. Fitzgerald agreed to explore this idea further after the initial departmental and event R25 implementation. A member noted the distinction between personal scheduling/calendaring in the UMCal system and resource/asset scheduling in R25. The University already has a calendaring mechanism in place for faculty and staff. Mr. Fitzgerald acknowledged this comment.

A member asked what is being done to encourage departments that are not using R25 to do so. Ms. Peterson stated that hopefully the ProvostÕs Office will send a letter recommending the campus-wide adoption of R25 in the not too distant future. Mr. Fitzgerald added that OCM is pleased with the amount of enthusiasm R25 has received by departments that have voluntarily elected to use the software. However, the voluntary adoption of R25 by departments has not been an efficient way to rollout this initiative, particularly as it relates to training and to realizing the campus-wide benefits of adopting the system.

System enhancements to R25 that have been made since the initial rollout to departments include:

- Capability to accommodate Macintosh users.
- Conversion of the system from a client to a terminal server for ease of loading the software onto departmental computers and for maintenance purposes.

A member commented that he hopes the campus-wide adoption of R25 will make it easier for the University to host more conferences. Currently, it is extremely difficult to find out about available space on campus. To clarify, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the use of R25 by conference and event groups on campus will as a second phase next year after the departmental implementation has been completed.

In closing, Mr. Fitzgerald thanked the committee for their longstanding support around R25.

III). Mr. Fitzgerald introduced David Crane and Jeremy Todd from OCM who were invited to provide information on capital funded central classroom issues and projects. Mr. Fitzgerald prefaced their presentation by noting that the improvement of physical classroom space at the University is dependent on both Capital Project monies, which are the primary means used to fund massive, very expensive projects and Systemwide Classroom Improvement Projects money. Systemwide Classroom Improvement Projects money 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 but yet too big to be paid for from the operating budget.

Currently, there are two capital projects underway:

1. Hanson Hall (CSOM expansion building).
2. Science Teaching & Student Services Center.

A handout describing each of these projects was distributed to members for their information.

A member asked why both projects are calling for the use of tiered classrooms as opposed to more innovative types of classroom space such as studio classrooms, which are less restrictive in how they can be used. New construction projects should not be forced to use outdated pedagogical paradigms. Responding to this comment Mr. Fitzgerald noted that a lot of discussion went into the classroom design of both projects, which factored in each collegeÕs unique needs, desires and budgetary considerations.

In response to a question by a member, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that taking the Science Classroom Building offline to build the Science Teaching & Student Services Center (ST&SS) will be challenging. He stated that before a final decision was made to move forward with this project, a great deal of time was spent negotiating with affected parties the logistics, which would be required to make this project doable.

A member raised the issue of classroom and building accessibility, which segued into OCMÕs current Systemwide Classroom Improvement Project initiatives, which include:

- Accessibility and security upgrades.
- Upgrades to McNeal and Smith Halls.

Pending 2006 Systemwide Classroom Improvement Projects awaiting funding include:

- Additional East Bank accessibility and security upgrades.
- Correct major Ackerman Hall infrastructure issues.
- Remedy infrastructure problems in EE/CSci.

In terms of agenda items for next year, Mr. Fitzgerald recommended the committee revisit the Capital Projects and Systemwide Classroom Improvement Projects strategies to determine their viability. For the past two budgetary cycles the ÒSystemwide Classroom Capital Improvement ProjectsÓ have not been legislatively supported.

Members proceeded to discuss on-going classroom issues. A member mentioned that being cost efficient in terms of classroom square footage today may not be the most cost efficient strategy in the long run. Classroom space should be reconfigurable and at a reasonable cost. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed that this is indeed a valid point. Square footage specifications as outlined in the Minnesota Facilities Model are too small and do not meet national benchmarks. He added that increasingly the trend nationally is not to build a 50-year building, but to build a 12-15 year building, and when it reaches the end of its lifecycle to tear it down and build a new building. From an architectural and construction viewpoint many believe that this is the most cost effective approach.

The suggestion was made that the committee put on its agenda next year to develop a statement of principles around building new classroom space. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that this committeeÕs charge is to advise OCM in its role as the provost agent for taking care of classroom space, and commented that this is an extremely important and useful role. Discussion of classroom designs, standards, principles and pedagogical needs would be valuable. However, it might be outside the committeeÕs role to approve or review capital programs or the work of Capital Planning and Project Management (CPPM). With this said, Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that the committee spend time discussing classroom design issues with a particular focus on new and emerging pedagogical requirements for classrooms that might warrant inclusion in new capital projects.

In closing, Professor Anderson noted that there exists a certain level of inertia in the University system that argues for the status quo. As a result, it would be good to have a very adaptable space that could be used for exploring new classroom design options. Mr. Fitzgerald supported this idea and suggested this committee work with space management to identify such a space. This type of space could be used to demo new technology, furniture, etc. This could be a space to demonstrate new capabilities to faculty, to allow faculty members the opportunity for some Òhands-onÓ experimentation in a classroom setting, and for OCM to benefit from their feedback.

IV). Professor John Anderson invited committee members to a demonstration of the "Low-End Asynchroneous Video Streaming" pilot project that he has been using in teaching his course this semester.

The system is the result of a joint project between OCM and CBS to evaluate the concept of adding modular technology to the standard U of M Projection Capable Classroom system that would provide faculty with the capability of capturing and asynchronously streaming classroom activity without the requirements of an additional operator. The system was designed and built by Classroom Technical Services, and uses server support from CBS. Additional information regarding this project is available at: http://www.classroom.umn.edu/index.asp?sid=114

Professor Anderson will host the demonstration at 4:00 PM on both Friday, April 21 and Friday April 28. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, was asked to send out this invitation via email.

V). Mr. Fitzgerald thanked Professor Anderson for chairing the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee during the 2005 – 2006 academic year. In turn, Professor Anderson thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for all the work he puts into making the meetings informative and productive.

Hearing no further business, Professor Anderson adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate