

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 4, 2010
238A Morrill Hall

[In these minutes: OCM overview; update of classroom scheduling initiatives and classroom projects; resolution supporting OCM funding]

[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: Susan Wick (Chair), Roberta Juarez, Michael Garza, Jeffrey Lindgren, Jeremy Todd, Michael Hannon, John Comazzi, Gordon Duke, Patricia Schaber, Kevin Smith, Keya Ganguly, Melissa Cathcart

REGRETS: Linda Jorn

ABSENT: None

OTHERS ATTENDING: None

Professor Susan Wick called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. She asked the committee members to introduce themselves. The committee approved the May 5, 2010 meeting minutes. Professor Wick reviewed the committee's charge, <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/charges/casch.html>, and introduced Jeremy Todd, Interim Director of the Office of Classroom Management.

Jeremy Todd - Interim Director of the Office of Classroom Management.

Mr. Todd provided the committee with copies of his power point presentation. His presentation introduced the Office of Classroom Management (OCM), reviewed classroom-scheduling initiatives, and provided an update on classroom projects.

Mr. Todd opened the OCM web site, <http://www.classroom.umn.edu/>, and pointed out site features such as student study space, new classroom project photos and summaries, and more comprehensive online instructions and help. He stated OCM manages 20,480 seats in 297 central classrooms in 52 buildings. Each academic year there are 35,879 course sections and 7,557 event reservations.

He went on to explain why OCM was created. He stated in the mid to late 1990's, the University realized that there was a disconnect between the University's vision for the future and the quality of the central classrooms. The central classrooms were not meeting the expectations of the students or the needs of the faculty. Following a major study, and with support from faculty and high-level administration, the OCM was established in 1999. The mission of the OCM is to be a

single point of responsibility and accountability for all central classroom issues. To implement this mission, a director was hired, the course database and scheduling functions from the Registrar were assigned to OCM, and the AV Media resources business unit was also assigned to OCM and became the basis of the technology department. Mr. Todd went on to state that OCM has a unique 360-degree perspective on classroom teaching and learning. It is the hub for support, planning, scheduling and course database, facilities coordination, and technology. This allows it to bring in the input from the faculty and staff who are using the classrooms.

Mr. Todd next explained OCM's organizational units: classroom support, scheduling, classroom technical services, classroom planning, and classroom facilities coordination. He highlighted classroom technical services. He stated it is an internal service organization that sells its services to OCM. Classroom technical service accounts for approximately half of the organization. They also helped develop the baseline standard for the laptop based projection capable classroom. He went on to state that OCM inspects 150 classrooms each morning and tries to address problems before they become a problem for the teaching environment. He also noted that the scheduling unit does the course guide and the course database. They are focused on maintenance of the institution including E CAS and PCAS. Planning and facilities coordination are a smaller part of the group.

Mr. Todd next discussed OCM's organizational placement within the University. He stated OCM is on the academic side of the organization and OCM reports to Robert McMaster, vice provost and dean of undergraduate education. In discussing OCM's methodology, he stated it is founded to establish standards and metrics, to accurately analyze data, and communicate transparent information to its constituents. Mr. Todd went on to emphasize the importance of communication. He noted that the OCM website was created to increase outbound communication, and that the University of Minnesota OCM was one of the first to deliver classroom schedules on line.

He stated further that goals for communication are for OCM to be understanding and connected to the University's needs and those of the faculty and students. But, the broad scope of OCM's responsibilities and the growing number of measures increased the complexity of communications. In response to these pressures, OCM developed the "Balanced Scorecard" to organize the metrics and performance indicators in a format that aids communication. OCM's four strategic perspectives are the financial perspective, internal process perspective, innovation and learning perspective, and stake holder perspective. Under these perspectives there are 16 key performance indicators and seven performance indicators. The balanced score card can be viewed on line. <http://www.classroom.umn.edu/scorecard-metrics/index.html>

Mr. Todd went on to highlight the classroom utilization dashboard. He explained that it is a one-page communications tool to generate reports on rooms and their utilization. Mr. Todd demonstrated use of the dashboard on the CAS website <http://www.classroom.umn.edu/scheduling/dashboard.asp> He also asked the committee for input on creating a more detailed dashboard, and indicated he would bring it back to the committee for comment later in the fall. Professor Gordon Duke asked where Saturday and evening classes appear on the dashboard, and Mr. Todd responded that the utilization metric is Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:00. Professor Patricia Schaber asked if the dashboard

included the Academic Health Center classrooms. Mr. Todd explained that this dashboard did not, but that there are departmental classroom utilization schedules. He stated further that OCM does not manage classrooms in the AHC, but they do manage the scheduling with the University Resource 25 enterprise scheduling system, and they also provide reports.

Mr. Todd stated that he believes the keys to OCM's success are its close ties to the governance committees, really listening to what the faculty need in their rooms, listening to other institutions, and maintaining a strong service orientation. He then listed a summary of OCM's initiatives and stated that even though OCM is heading into funding issues this fall, the University has been supportive of OCM and the single point of contact model. He also highlighted the major culture change in the way the University views its classrooms. Previously, classrooms were viewed as four walls and a blackboard needing little funding or management. Now, classrooms are seen as teaching and learning systems. They are technology intensive and require planning, management attention, recurring funding for life-cycle maintenance, equipment replacement costs, and staffing support. He concluded that OCM is a unique organization that has been benchmarked by other organizations as a best practice for providing accountability and excellence in support of teaching and learning.

Next, Mr. Todd discussed the OCM scheduling initiative. He began his presentation with some background information. He stated that when the University switched from a quarter system to a semester system, the course sections increased from 10,200 to 17,000 and the Central Classroom inventory reduced from 340 to 300 rooms. In the summer of 2008 OCM recognized the Twin Cities campus would not be able to place all courses for Fall 2009 due to the classroom inventory, the growing number of course sections being offered, and worsening adherence to scheduling policies. He noted that the Science Classroom Building and 1701 University were both off line for an aggregate loss of 8% of East Bank seats.

Mr. Todd went on to discuss other problem indicators and the ways in which OCM addressed them.

- The projected enrollments were too high because departments could set enrollment limits and requested room capacities based on previous term's course enrollment. OCM responded by reconciling requested room capacities for Fall 2009 courses.
- Peak times of day were being overused especially Tuesdays and Thursdays. To resolve this, OCM monitored the spread of course scheduling and notified department schedulers of courses that need to be spread to facilitate assignment of a classroom.
- Classrooms were being requested for courses that were later cancelled. OCM responded by monitoring deletions and assisted department schedulers.
- Non-conforming /non-standard courses were being submitted by departments. OCM provided departments reports that identify all course sections that are at non-standard times.
- There was underutilization of departmental classroom resources. OCM provided feedback on departmental space utilization and OCM offered the use of the scheduling optimization algorithm for departments to maximize departmental classroom utilization.

The scheduling initiative project resulted in a reduction of unplaced course sections at the time of registration. They dropped from 1000 unplaced sections in the fall of 2008 to 200 in the fall of 2009. Professor Wick asked how much requests to schedule outside of standard course time contributed to problems with placing classes. Mr. Todd responded that non-standard meeting patterns were reduced by half and that contributed to better placement. Also, some of the decrease in unplaced course sections was attributable to early deletion of courses that would not be meeting and, looking at projected seat capacities. However, he noted that there remains an overuse of peak times, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday at 2:30. Professor Wick also asked what aspects of the scheduling were computerized. Mr. Todd responded that the most of is computerized with “batch processing.” He went on to explain that the scheduling is broken into four periods. Period one roles forward previous like-semester information that is updated and validated by departments. Period two is batch processing. Period three opens up for department review and comment, and in period four OCM looks at the expected enrollment and tries to best fit the class sections into available rooms.

Next Mr. Todd reviewed highlights from the OCM October 4, 2010 memo clarifying the proposed changes to the Class Scheduling for Undergraduate and Graduate Classes policy for the Twin Cities campus. He stated OCM has worked since the fall of 2008, with staff from college dean’s offices representing the College of Liberal Arts, College of Education and Human development, College of Design, Institute of Technology, college of Biological Science, and College of Food and Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences. The group worked to create a revised scheduling policy that it is fair and equitable, reduces classroom demand for certain days and times, increases scheduling flexibility for departments, and helps ensure reasonable class access.

The issues with the current policy were:

- Hundreds of unplaced course sections
- A decrease in the quality of classroom assignments
- Decreased student course access
- Increasing classroom inventory to accommodate demand spikes leads to an inefficient use of University resources

Proposed policy changes:

- Eliminate the 60/40 guideline and peak time hours.
- Promote spreading of classes, throughout the day
 - Colleges are permitted to schedule a maximum of 50% of their classes using a Tuesday/Thursday meeting pattern, with the remaining classes using a combination of Monday, Wednesday, Friday meeting patterns. Non-compliant colleges must change class-meeting times to meet distribution requirements.
 - Colleges must distribute enrollments through out the day and the week. Looks at how to give a budget within a fair use policy. More intuitive to look towards a budget of hours rather than a percentage.
 - Fair use distributions are calculated by summing the number of minutes for each meeting pattern occurring in a standard “A” class meeting time on each weekday, Monday through Friday.
- Add meeting patterns to Standard Meeting Times:

- Additional 75 Minute meeting patterns for 3-credit course on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday and Monday/Friday
- 150-minute classes can only meet on Fridays and are required to start at a standard “A” time.
- Add link to procedures to request approval of Non-Standard Meeting Time/Day Pattern Form

Mr. Todd stated, the proposed changes are designed to give the colleges more flexibility with meeting patterns and to provide more meeting patterns. The proposed changes went to the Dean of Undergraduate Education and associate deans during the summer, and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy is currently reviewing them. Mr. Todd asked for questions about the proposed changes. Professor Keya Ganguly asked why 150-minute classes could only meet on Friday. Mr. Todd explained that in general there is no available time Mon – Thurs time for 150-minute classes. However, Monday morning at 8:00 am is available, but was not recommended. Evening classes would also be available for extended meeting patterns. Professor Schaber asked the difference between departmental classrooms and what is governed by this policy? Mr. Todd stated, for the most part, OCM tries to determine how best to utilize the available space. Sometimes, departmental classrooms are better as meeting or conference spaces. If it is a departmental classroom, it should have the technology in it to support the learning. OCM is trying to incentivize by being efficient up front, and making departmental scheduling less difficult. OCM worked with the colleges to develop a best practices approach.

Professor John Comazzi asked if classroom meeting pattern times could be mixed and Mr. Todd responded, yes, OCM works with departments on meeting pairings. It looks at what part of the pedagogy is calling for offset meeting times.

In the final section of his presentation, Mr. Todd gave an update of OCM’s Summer 2010 projects. He provided the committee with a one-page handout listing each of the projects and referred the committee to OCM’s website which has a history of campus projects and allows the user to view specific projects. For example, there is a flicker application for the website that allows viewers to see the progress on the new building at Washington Avenue and Pleasant Avenue. Mr. Todd also highlighted the work being done on the following buildings:

- Science and Teaching and Student Services (STSS)
 - Opened August 24
 - Includes 17 general purpose classrooms and 10 active learning classrooms which build on the lap top technology model
 - Second floor tiered lecture halls with hallway areas available as break out spaces.
 - Classroom space is available for interdisciplinary study
- Folwell Hall Interior Renovation
 - May 19, 2010 interior renovation began and construction will continue over the winter.
 - 30 general purpose classrooms and 1 general meeting space is being removed
 - 25 general purpose classrooms, three seminar rooms, and three study spaces are being added
 - Additional stairs and elevators will be added

- Floors two and three will have four quadrants for the languages
 - The fourth floor will have graduate student and Teaching assistant space
- Ackerman Hall
 - Fire life, safety and accessibility upgrades
 - Window replacement
 - Central heat and air
- Eddy Hall
 - Classrooms 20 and 102 off-line during annex demolition
- Bell Museum Auditorium
 - Renovation of historic fixtures and lighting
- West Bank Auditorium
 - Replace failing lighting system
- Peik Hall
 - Card readers on all classrooms and necessary service spaces
- Looking forward, there will be renovations to Northrup Auditorium, and it should be on line in 2013.

Resolution Supporting Funding for OCM

Professor Wick reminded the committee of the work that was begun last year on a resolution supporting an increase in OCM's recurring allocation in order to meet facility and technology lifecycle needs. Mr. Todd recommended that the completed letter be forwarded to the Senate Finance and Planning Committee and the Senate Committee on Education Planning. Professor Wick asked Mr. Todd if he could provide the committee with specific examples of what might happen if funding as a percentage of lifecycle requirement for classroom facilities and technologies continues to decrease in the future. Professor Wick also asked each of the committee members to consider how the letter could be strengthened. It was pointed out that a decrease in funding would degrade the learning experience. OCM could also be forced to return to a problem response approach creating down time in teaching and learning, and eliminating the benefits from the lifecycle planning approach.

Finally, Professor Wick asked the committee to check their schedules and determine if they could meet 15 minutes earlier in the November and December in order to accommodate her teaching schedule. She also requested committee members to send her any ideas for future agenda items.

Hearing no further business, Professor Wick adjourned the meeting.

Dawn Zugay
University Senate Office

Follow up: The Classroom Advisory Committee agreed to meet from 1:45 to 3:15 on Monday, November 1 and on Monday, December 6.