

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

October 29, 2012

[In these minutes: department vs. general-purpose classrooms discussion; fall scheduling policy; future agenda items.]

[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: Patricia Schaber (Chair), William Garrard, Barbara Jensen, Kevin Smith

GUEST: Sarah Kussow, course scheduling manager, OCM

OTHERS: Brad Hoff attending for Peggy McCarthy

REGRETS: Brad Cohen, Roberta Juarez, Katherine Kroph, Jeff Lindgren, Peggy McCarthy, Errin McIsaac, Christine Swartwout, Jeremy Todd

ABSENT: Aisha Ahmed, Nathaniel Anderson, Keya Ganguly

WELCOME

Professor Schaber welcomed committee members and called for introductions. She updated the committee on the outcome of the SCEP meeting she attended. The SCEP members expressed interest in a resolution from last year regarding funding for faculty development.

DEPARTMENT VS. GENERAL-PURPOSE CLASSROOMS

The topic of the funding of departmental v. general-purpose classrooms was raised by SCEP as an issue for CAS to revisit. She said she realized there are issues around the funding for classroom upgrades and where that money should come from – the department or the cost pool for general-purpose classrooms. She pointed out the overlap of departments paying into a general cost pool for classroom renovations, while also paying for departmental classroom renovations. Professor Garrard commented that the benefit to having a departmental classroom is exclusive scheduling rights. Professor Schaber stated that her department has newly remodeled spaces that are empty 80% of the week.

In response, Mr. Hoff stated that OCM excels at maintaining the technology and preventing theft and damage in the classrooms they manage. This management is one

reason for departments to consider turning spaces over to OCM, whereas more issues arise when a classroom is left empty and isolated.

Ms. Kussow stated that there are 316 general-purpose classrooms and approximately 200 departmental classrooms. This excludes labs and special purpose spaces. The quality of departmental classrooms varies greatly. Peer institutions allow departments to schedule their classrooms first, however the remaining time is given to central scheduling to reach 70% utilization. The remaining 30% can be used for departmental meetings. The policy has not been changed because the culture surrounding departmental classrooms does not allow for sharing spaces.

Professor Garrard asked if the departmental classrooms were needed by OCM. Ms. Kussow responded that it depends on the size, scheduling needs, and technology. The committee then began a discussion on active learning classrooms.

- Professor Garrard teaches a design course in STSS and he redesigned his course based on the capabilities of the active learning environment. He suggested it would be beneficial to list those instructors that want active learning environments. It would be difficult to be faced with redesigning his course two weeks before the semester to suit a space that is not an active learning environment. Professor Smith had the same issue, used OCM's website, and sought out an instructor that was placed in an active learning classroom that did not need it.
- Professor Smith pointed out that moveable chairs are often the beginning of an active learning environment and that this less expensive solution can help make a classroom more interactive.

FALL SCHEDULING POLICY - SARAH KUSSOW

Ms. Kussow began by speaking to the scheduling policy and the incorporation of classroom preferences. She used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the process of academic scheduling and the time frame.

- Currently rooms are being scheduled for summer 2013 and on November 5th they will begin scheduling for spring and fall of 2014. Instructors are asked for their preferences for resources they will need in the classroom and these preferences are entered into PeopleSoft. During batch scheduling, those that requested active learning environments are scheduled first.
- An active learning classroom is currently thought of as those in STSS that contain multiple screens, rounds, and the ability to project in multiple ways. Tables and chairs, whiteboards, DVD players, and other devices can also be requested without requiring an entire active learning classroom.
- Professor Smith added that it is expensive to build and maintain active learning classrooms, but aspects like moveable chairs, tables, and simple projectors can be cost effective solutions. Active learning does not have to be high-tech and expensive.
- Professor Schaber agreed that the issue may be in the terminology and a redefining of active learning may be needed.

Ms. Kussow explained how classroom preferences are recorded and incorporated into the course scheduling process.

- The schedule for fall 2012 will roll forward for fall 2013 so that department schedulers and administrators do not have to start with a blank slate. Additions, deletions, and instructor changes are made from this point.
- OCM only schedules the 316 general-purpose classrooms.
- Spring is scheduled especially early because students begin registering in June for freshman, full-year registration.
- Scheduling software is used to assign rooms based on the requests entered in PeopleSoft and room characteristics. The department schedulers do not schedule the rooms, only the courses.
- Every department has at least one person that can access and change the course schedules when needed. There are approximately 300 people that can make changes across campus in PeopleSoft. The data entered in PeopleSoft determines the schedule that is made by the central scheduling department.
- If the options in PeopleSoft are not meeting the needs of the classroom preferences, department schedulers can email OCM directly. Ms. Benson suggested that instructors tell schedulers their needs before January for changes to be made for the fall. A suggestion was made that OCM schedulers contact or coach the department schedulers to remind faculty to voice their classroom preferences.

Ms. Kussow used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the central scheduling process and recent changes and improvements that have been made.

- Department schedulers are instructed to use standard University times for courses and those times are distributed over nine periods in the day. The standard times are:

Minneapolis Campus				St. Paul Campus			
Period	A Times (MTWThF)	B Times (TTh only)	C Times (MW, WF, MF only)	Period	A Times (MTWThF)	B Times (TTh only)	C Times (MW, WF, MF only)
I	08:00 - 08:50	08:15 - 09:30	08:15 - 09:30	I	08:30 - 09:20	08:45 - 10:00	08:45 - 10:00
II	09:05 - 09:55	09:45 - 11:00	09:45 - 11:00	II	09:35 - 10:25	10:15 - 11:30	10:15 - 11:30
III	10:10 - 11:00	11:15 - 12:30	11:15 - 12:30	III	10:40 - 11:30	11:45 - 13:00	11:45 - 13:00
IV	11:15 - 12:05	13:00 - 14:15	13:00 - 14:15	IV	11:45 - 12:35	13:30 - 14:45	13:30 - 14:45
V	12:20 - 13:10	14:30 - 15:45	14:30 - 15:45	V	12:50 - 13:40	15:00 - 16:15	15:00 - 16:15
VI	13:25 - 14:15	16:00 - 17:15	16:00 - 17:15	VI	13:55 - 14:45	16:30 - 17:45	16:30 - 17:45
VII	14:30 - 15:20			VII	15:00 - 15:50		
VIII	15:35 - 16:25			VIII	16:05 - 16:55		
IX	16:40 - 17:30			IX	17:10 - 18:00		

- Ms. Kussow noted that St. Paul’s classes are offset by 30 minutes.
- The course scheduling policy was altered for fall 2012 to implement that departments could schedule no more than 3% of their class demand in any one of those nine periods across the day and across the week. This policy change reduced disproportionate demands and ensured classroom utilization was even across the days over the semester.
- The goal is to have classes placed by registration for fall. In a comparison, by college, between fall 2011 and fall 2012, the colleges that did the most to evenly distribute the classes amongst days and times, saw the least number of unplaced courses at the start of the fall. For example, CLA, went from 221 classes unplaced at the start of registration in 2011, to just 30 unplaced in 2012.
- OCM will need to consider how to “right-size” their classroom inventory to avoid having too many classrooms that seat 30 students and do not accommodate large lectures.
- The existing course components are: lecture, lab, discussion, rotation, field work, extra credit, independent study, lecture workaround. The course components were reduced to eight to accommodate the PeopleSoft upgrade. Most peer institutions have five or fewer components and are only viewable on the class schedule. They are not on student transcripts and are only used internally.
- Location codes were reduced from 17 to 9 across all the campuses.
- Delivery mediums were eliminated and became “instruction modes.” Instruction modes were reduced from 13 to 7. Many of the eliminations were made due to their being outdated. For example, classes are no longer taught via audiotape.

The existing instruction modes are:

- CE – Non-term based (CCE online or correspondence)
- CL – Classroom/onsite
- ID – Independent / directed study
- SA – Study abroad (international learning experience)
- CO – Completely online (no face-to-face meetings)
- PR – Primarily online (1-3 face-to-face meetings)
- PA – Partially online (greater than 3 face-to-face meetings)

These modes are related to the fees that students are charged. For instance, if a class is CO, the student will not be charged student services fees for this course because they are not utilizing campus services related to the fees, like buses. It is necessary for these ramifications to be transparent in the coding.

- The conversion involving the code reductions and changes is currently happening behind the scenes to be implemented in summer 2013.
- To aid in the conversion process, departments will be asked to confirm location and instruction modes to ensure coding accuracy.

Next, Ms. Kussow explained the aspects of Astra Schedule and how it will benefit the scheduling process.

- Astra Schedule, in conjunction with PeopleSoft, will be used to schedule fall 2013 classes and all future classes. The software is web-based and will be compatible with most devices.

- Final exam scheduling will be automated, as opposed to the current manual process. Requests will still be sent to instructors asking if they need a classroom during final exam week. The plan is to automatically assign a final exam classroom to each class that is using a general-purpose classroom. The University's final exam schedule is posted a few months before the semester begins. Currently, the final exam schedule for spring 2013 is posted. Instructors can submit a request to OCM if they need more time or extra seats.
- Professor Schaber informed members that SCEP is considering revisiting the final exam policy because some instructors accept the room assignment for the final exam, despite not actually needing the space. The policy requires instructors to give a final exam during final's week, so instructors do not report that they are violating the policy and do not need the room. OCM informally requests via email that instructors communicate that they do not need the room. They rarely get responses unless there is a conflict for the room schedule, and then an instructor will tell OCM they do not need the room.

Ms. Kussow projected and explored the OCM website with the committee.

- First, she explained the choices that are displayed for schedulers in PeopleSoft.
 - There are selections for seat type and then rooms are listed that are available with the preferences.
- Data is collected on departmental classrooms, which are assigned use code 120. OCM can only track course utilization, however events that are scheduled using different software are not reported to OCM. Professor Smith pointed out that, at the institutional level, it would be better for classrooms to be managed centrally to ensure coordination and optimization of space.
- Ms. Kussow showed a picture of a small departmental, use code 120 space that would not be useful for OCM to manage. It is not large enough to accommodate a course schedule.
- Professor Schaber asked Ms. Kussow to display one of the departmental spaces from the Center for Allied Health. There were no photos and not much information listed.
- The utilization dashboard contains data regarding how things are utilized across campus and in departmental classrooms. She emphasized that it is hard to compare utilization data of general-purpose and departmental classrooms on the OCM website because course schedules are the only data reported to OCM from the departments.
- Ms. Kussow explained that if a space is a use code 120, the schedule should not be in Google calendar, it should be on the OCM website. If it is a meeting room or a different use code it may be on Google calendar.

Professor Schaber asked if there were changes developing as a result of the new administration. Ms. Kussow responded that there has been discussion of all classrooms being scheduled through OCM. The addition of a third term would complicate the renovations that occur during the summer. Scheduling would have to be done around the renovations and larger auditorium spaces are not plentiful enough to be taken off of the schedule for even one term.

Professor Schaber added that her program now uses 40% of the classroom time as they did previously, due to the switch to a hybrid program. This evidences that a classroom shortage may not be an issue as teaching styles merge with technology and reduce traditional classroom time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

For the next meeting, Professor Schaber would like to explore renovations for active learning classrooms that involve flexible seating, not necessarily extravagant technology expenses. She then asked members if they have topics they would like on future agendas.

- Professor Smith mentioned investigating experiential learning, fieldwork, and lab space availability. These are valuable learning spaces that are not centrally managed and may not get the same attention as other spaces. He noted that this might also highlight issues of departmental management. Professor Schaber added that it might be necessary to redefine classroom space to ensure appropriate allocation of resources.
- Members are interested in the recent discussion of operational efficiency, but are not sure if this means OCM will manage more spaces.
- Professor Schaber distributed the Recommendation on Funding for Faculty Development, however, she does not feel the need to push this proposal forward because it seems outside of the committee charge and other groups are developing initiatives for the same cause. She plans to communicate to SCEP whether this will be continued or tabled. Members expressed that they believe the resources for faculty training exist but there is not necessarily interest.

In closing, Professor Schaber requested that the November meeting be switched to Tuesday, November 27th. All present members agreed to the new date and the meeting was adjourned.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate

UPDATE

Professor Schaber, Brad Cohen, and David Langley agreed, via email, that it is not necessary to pursue the Recommendation on Funding for Faculty Development. There are other subcommittees taking on the issue of faculty development broader than ALC but grounded in advancing technology in teaching. There are other topics that have stronger interest in the subcommittee.