Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS)
February 20, 2017
Minutes of the Meeting

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.

[**In these minutes:** Chair's Report; Capital Planning; Brainstorming Session]

PRESENT: Maria Sera (chair), Ryan Bean, Mark Bergen, David Crane, Elise Eckert, Mike Hofer, Kent Kirkby, Jeff Lindgren, Thomas Michaels, Christine Peper, Peng Peng

REGRETS: Donalee Attardo, Roberta Kehne, Jeff Lindgren, Ali Sweidan

ABSENT: Suvadip Sinha, Susan Spanovich, Mary Steffes

GUESTS: Monique MacKenzie, director, Planning and Space, Capital Planning and Project Management

1. Chair's Report
Chair Maria Sera reported that she had attended several meetings where classroom planning and space emerged as a priority. The Student Governing Council provided some good ideas, such as separating the locations from classroom properties. At a meeting of the directors of undergraduate studies, adequate classroom space was a major area of concern, as well. Thomas Michaels, who was at the same meeting of the directors of undergraduate studies, added that Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Bob McMaster had said that the active learning classrooms in Bruininks Hall were already out of date and scheduled for upgrades. Michaels wondered how technology upgrades are balanced with other needs. David Crane said that there is a list of priorities, and that right now, technology is prioritized over physical needs. Old chairs, for example, might not look nice, but they meet the pedagogical needs of the University. Outdated technology that is no longer reliable takes priority because if it is not reliable, it is not useful. Kent Kirkby pointed out that many non-tech aspects of classrooms do not currently meet the pedagogical needs of instructors, and that moveable furniture would make a big difference in a lot of courses. Crane acknowledged the point and said that such adjustments are being made gradually, as things need replacing anyway.

2. Capital Planning
Sera introduced Monique MacKenzie, director, Planning and Space, Capital Planning and Project Management. She gave MacKenzie some background on the learning space issue, much of which MacKenzie was already aware, and asked how the need for space planning can be addressed at the capital planning level. MacKenzie said that the planning process relies on information that shows the big picture of needs across the campus. There is no comprehensive background information for learning space, she said, so planning for learning space tends to happen on a project by project basis rather than in a more strategic campus-wide manner. One way to ensure that learning space is considered in the planning stage would be to insert a step

into the process requiring planning for any new building to include consultation with the collegiate unit(s) it will serve, the Office of Classroom Management (OCM), and the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), she said. She also suggested connecting with the Capital Strategy Group, which includes the provost, the vice president for research, the senior vice president of Health Sciences, the vice president of University Services, and the chief financial officer. This is the group that builds the six-year capital investment plan.

Peng Peng asked how much of the current plan involves the St. Paul Campus. MacKenzie said she appreciated the comment, and recognizes that there is a travel penalty for students who take classes on the St. Paul Campus. In this year's state requests, there are two big investments in the St. Paul Campus. These concern research spaces, though, not classrooms. There are also smaller projects funded by units and colleges in the works. Sera asked if there were any plans for a building with active learning classrooms, and Crane responded that they are looking at putting active learning classrooms in the Learning and Environmental Sciences Building, and MacKenzie said that there are active learning classrooms in the Veterinary Medical Building as well.

Related to the travel penalty, Sera pointed out that many faculty spend a lot of time traveling between buildings, and sometimes from East to West Bank or East Bank to St. Paul, to teach classes. She wondered whether the University takes this into account when planning. MacKenzie said that it is not a huge factor, but that it is discussed.

Ryan Bean reminded members that there had been talk in previous years of encouraging departments to cede departmentally-owned classrooms to central management, and wondered about the current status of this initiative. Crane said that there is a good mix of departmentally-owned classrooms, which often meet departments' very specific needs, and central classrooms. However, he said, there is an open offer to all departments to centralize departmentally-owned classrooms, which would allow OCM to invest in and help manage these spaces. Sera asked how many of each type of classroom there are, and Crane said there are about 330 general purpose classrooms and 200 departmental classrooms. He mentioned the initiative out of University Services (US), which seeks to refine the roles and responsibilities of department coordinators interacting with US staff. For OCM, he said, this formalized, building-level interaction of stakeholders and potential development partners presents a great opportunity to highlight their value where they support academic activity. MacKenzie said it would be useful for inventory awareness purposes to know the size, location, layout, capabilities, etc. of the departmental rooms, as well as how and how much they are used. She suggested that this initiative could help answer those questions, and Crane said that he can provide data as well.

Kent Kirkby said that he liked the idea of adding a formal learning space consultation step to the planning process. For example, he said, in the Tate Hall redesign, all of the classrooms seat at least 32 people, but in many of the courses that the departments that will be housed there teach have very small class sizes. Kirkby said that consulting students will be key, because department chairs, administration, and even faculty, have a tendency to focus on research, rather than undergraduate education. Crane added that often new buildings end up with a net negative in seat numbers, because the focus on research is so pronounced. MacKenzie explained that when big projects are in the planning process, the primary users are the ones who put together the advisory

committees, and that they tend to appoint faculty and administration. She said that adding students and facility leads to these committees would be a good way to ensure input. Mark Bergen suggested making a resolution asking to update the current capital project process. She suggested including instructors' points of view in the process, as well. MacKenzie said that Bruininks Hall came to fruition in large part because there was an individual in the provost's office championing the cause. She said that underlines the need for input and vision beyond the departmental level.

Bergen asked what information would be helpful in planning for learning spaces. MacKenzie said that time and seat utilization data is helpful, as well as an idea of what developments are on the horizon for teaching and learning, although she acknowledged that the latter would be hard to predict. Bean suggested that units could have some idea of developments happening in their fields, and that asking the question across units may reveal patterns emerging. To this end, Bergen suggested coming up with a short survey to send to units. Crane suggested looking at college/unit level compacts. MacKenzie said that compacts often don't include instructional considerations. She said if the compact process could be updated to solicit that information, the information could then be aggregated, which could also reveal patterns. Members agreed that both were good ideas.

Sera thanked MacKenzie for her time, and MacKenzie departed.

3.   Brainstorming Session

Sera asked members to brainstorm questions for the aforementioned survey, as well as places where feedback could be injected into the current process. Bergen suggested asking a question such as "what is the edgiest thing you think you will need in terms of teaching and learning in the near future?" Members then agreed that it would be more effective to brainstorm via a Google Doc, to allow for time to think.

Bean said that it would be useful to know what questions are in the current compact, and Sera suggested that members should all ask their deans and department heads this question in preparation for the next meeting. Crane suggested inviting Joe Schultz, deputy chief of staff in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, who can provide insight on the compact process as well.

With no further discussion, Sera adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office