

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 4, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome, Approval of February 18, 2002 Minutes, Committee Updates, What Can be Done to Make the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan a Budget Priority for the Administration, Future Meeting Dates and Topics].

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

PRESENT: Denise Guerin, Chair, Bobbi Cordano, Steve Fitzgerald, Bernard Gulacheck, Steve Spehn, Kenneth Heller, James Perry, Jane Phillips, Martin Sampson, Ryan Osero

REGRETS: Nelson Rhodus, Micah Johnson, Jonathan Suk

ABSENT: Janice Smith, William Hanson, Steven Sperber

OTHER(S): Nancy McGlynn

GUEST(S): Executive Vice President and Provost Robert Bruininks and Associate Vice President and CFO Richard Pfutzenreuter

I). Professor Guerin called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

II). The Committee unanimously approved the February 18, 2002 minutes.

III). OTHER BUSINESS: Professor Guerin informed members that she sent thank you notes to both Vice Provost Craig Swan and Associate Vice President Robert Kvavik for attending the Committee's last meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup> and for their good advice. Vice Provost Swan in a later conversation with Professor Guerin was extremely complimentary towards the Committee and was impressed with the number of members present at the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and the breadth of the Committee's membership.

With respect to today's meeting with guests Executive Vice President and Provost Robert Bruininks and Associate Vice President and CFO Richard Pfutzenreuter, Professor Guerin suggested following a similar format to the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting but reminded members that today's guests are the actual decision makers. Using an advocacy approach, Professor Guerin stated that the Committee should put the same questions forward and solicit their responses. Professor Guerin announced that she plans to report to them the Committee's intention of inviting Donna Peterson, Associate Vice President of University Relations, to a future meeting.

At the request of Professor Guerin, Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, explained that she had made contact with the Alumni Association and distributed information to members concerning its Legislative Network. Those interested in volunteering were instructed to contact the Alumni Association's Legislative Network for further information.

Professor Guerin suggested the establishment of a small Subcommittee to meet with a representative from the Alumni Association to discuss the possibility of 'named classrooms' in hopes of getting some classrooms funded through this means.

Members continued to debate the feasibility of approaching the Alumni Association on securing funds for the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan. Supposedly, it has been the view of the Alumni Association and the Foundation that donors do not like to deal with 'brick and mortar' or infrastructure matters. Most members believed that the Committee should still approach the Alumni Association and solicit their expertise and creativity in an attempt to help secure some funding for upgrading classrooms. There was, however, a dissenting opinion that viewed this approach as politically dangerous. In this member's opinion, if the Committee approaches the Alumni Association, it is basically saying that the University's leadership has failed.

To rebut this concern, a member outlined four reasons why the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee should approach the Alumni Association for funding assistance:

1. It is not the administration that has failed but rather the legislature.
2. The Alumni Association adheres to donor's requests.
3. There is a growing trend in major research universities that are trying to 'stay alive' to rely more and more on private funding sources.
4. The University of Minnesota has examples of private funding already on campus e.g. Law School and the Carlson School of Management.

Because there were conflicting opinions amongst Committee members, Professor Guerin suggested asking Executive Vice President and Provost Bruininks and Associate Vice President and CFO Pfitzenreuter their opinions on whether this avenue should be pursued.

Professor Guerin updated members on a conversation she had with Shirley Baugher, Dean of the College of Human Ecology, regarding the Dean's perspective on the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan. Dean Baugher recommended that the Deans meet again with Steve Fitzgerald, Director of the Office of Classroom Management, and urged the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee to bring forth a specific plan to secure funding for the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan. Professor Guerin reported that according to Dean Baugher, the Deans are unaware that the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan is not on schedule and they may be willing to pay higher taxes because they really want classrooms upgraded.

Steve Fitzgerald made sure members focused on the recurring funding issue. To update, the Office of Classroom Management continues its leveraged funding efforts with

Colleges and Departments. As a result, in the last few weeks EVPP Bruininks has put forth one-time monies to make sure additional classrooms can be upgraded this summer. On the negative side, this means that while several classrooms will be upgraded this summer, it will be done with no recurring funding. Despite efforts by EVPP Bruininks to get support in place, the Technology Upgrade Plan continues to be under-funded, even with the leveraging activity. The purely narrow technology upgrade life cycle cost to maintain and replace equipment is approximately \$5,000 per classroom per year. The total one-time cost for upgrade installations in all 300 general-purpose classrooms is \$7 million.

IV). Professor Guerin welcomed EVPP Bruininks and Associate Vice President and CFO Richard Pfutzenreuter to the Classroom Advisory Committee meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to ask questions and solicit input on what can be done to make the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan a budget priority for the administration.

Professor Guerin provided the Committees' guests with some background information on what the Committee has been doing over the last few years and shared some steps the Committee plans to take in order to secure funding for the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan:

- Invite Donna Peterson, University Relations Associate Vice President, to talk to the Committee about what it can do to secure funds during the next legislative biennium request.
- Approach the Deans again and continue to gain their support.
- Consider inviting the Alumni Association and get their input and perspective on raising funds for specialized or unique classrooms.

The real issue before this Committee is the University's infrastructure and how classrooms are funded. There is no systematic, recurring funding for this program.

EVPP Bruininks stated that in the past 4-5 years the University has moved "light years" in terms of the classroom issue and the University's actions speak for themselves:

- First, the University declared the need to coordinate the management of classrooms and made them a priority.
- Next, the University hired Steve Fitzgerald, Director of the Office of Classroom Management.
- Under Mr. Fitzgerald's leadership the University has developed a great strategy for implementing a project of this magnitude.
- While the financing of this endeavor is a priority, it remains challenging.

EVPP Bruininks stated that the administration has tried to make classrooms a priority in every biennium request he has been a part of. This year there is a \$4 million dollar request for classrooms in the capital budget. The problem comes when the legislature only provides a portion of the funds requested.

EVPP Bruininks believes that the funding of the University's core 'academic infrastructure' needs to be a priority e.g. classrooms, the Libraries, the training and development of the University's human resources, etc. The University plans to set aside an undetermined amount of money to address these issues, and priority will be given to making sure that classrooms receive recurring funding. For the Committee's information he went on to say that all new capital projects have allocations for classrooms. Naturally, this will need to be accomplished over a period of time. EVPP Bruininks argued that in order to properly fund the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan the University must:

- Establish a recurring/permanent funding stream.
- Bring this matter before the State so it gets the legitimate attention it deserves.
- Be creative with regard to funding options.

EVPP Bruininks agreed with the Committee that there is tremendous potential for raising private money for classrooms. To raise private funds the University will need to make the offer attractive. One idea would be to make sure that private donations are matched with public monies to capitalize the University's classrooms.

EVPP Bruininks is against the idea of earmarking funds, instead he suggests building a solid budget and being creative in the use of revenues and fund-raising initiatives. Earmarking assumes that the University can predict with absolute certainty how much money it will receive each year, and that obviously is not the case.

EVPP Bruininks committed the administration to putting some recurring monies into classrooms as well as non-recurring funds. Although the exact amounts have not been determined, it will be substantial.

Besides focusing solely on capitalizing and supporting classroom equipment, the University needs to look at issues surrounding classroom utilization and scheduling. Some of the utilization rates raise questions in terms of how the University can better leverage the classrooms it has.

For fiscal year 2003, Associate Vice President and CFO Pfutzenreuter stated the request for more money to cover life cycle replacement costs will be challenging given the fact that the State has cut the University's budget request by \$23.6 million. There is a lot riding on both the \$4 million capital request that is in the current Senate bill as well as the House bill that the University will get a glimpse at later this week. The University plans to keep pressure on the State in future capital requests to fund classroom improvements.

VP and CFO Pfutzenreuter urged CAS to have ready its recommendations by July so they can be incorporated into the biennial budget document. The biennial request document frames the funding/investment issues for the next two years and is decided by next fall. The Committee's 'place holder' in the biennial request is extremely important. EVPP Bruininks added that even if the State does not fund the request it at least lets them know that this is a priority. Members were told their request needs to be very strategic and a case needs to be made for why it is extra ordinary.

Bobbi Cordano asked EVPP Bruininks point blank if he would be willing to be an ally on behalf of the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee when it approaches the Alumni Association and the Foundation to help secure funds for the classroom project. EVPP Bruininks agreed and laid out suggestions on how to proceed:

- Draft a 3-5 page ‘case statement’ that outlines why private money is needed. This statement should emphasize why it is important to invest in technology support systems in order to facilitate learning.
- Clearly summarize what the University has already done, plans to do and then demonstrate that there remains a significant gap and that private funding can make a real contribution.
- Make the case compelling and plan to get it done.

Responses to questions and comments from members included:

- What are the disadvantages of earmarking funds? EVPP Bruininks believes that earmarking leads to perverse behavior in budgeting systems. He recommended that rather than earmarking funds the University needs to make an internal commitment to its ‘common goods’ initiatives e.g. classrooms by making them an institutional value and commit to funding them. Instead of earmarking tuition, he suggested funding classrooms through recurring assessments. EVPP Bruininks made a commitment to build classrooms into a staple, recurring budget and that this commitment will be forwarded on to his successor. In terms of securing private funding, the University will first need to make an internal commitment to these initiatives before seeking funds from private donors.
- A member commented that the University is not talking about the future but is stuck in the past and is playing catch-up with classroom technology. The questions are, why has the University fallen so far behind and what can be done to change this situation? Each year the Classroom Technology Upgrade Plan is falling further and further behind. There are real potential educational gains to be had by using technology in classrooms. How can the University accomplish the basics? EVPP Bruininks responded by stating:
  1. Upgrading classrooms is a priority for and has been evidenced by the commitments and decisions the administration has made over the last 4-5 years. Although it may not be perfect, the administration will have a more recurring, stable budget under these operations going forward.
  2. Pressure needs to be kept on the academic community at the University related to issues of classroom utilization and scheduling. EVPP Bruininks stated he does not support upgrading classrooms that are an artifact of not using time and space well on the part of the academic community.
  3. The technology investment strategy needs to be more systemic than just classrooms.

There is no simple solution to the problem, but the Committee should know that the University has made a commitment to classrooms and will do whatever it can

to firm up the funding. The financial strategy needs to be as creative as possible with both recurring and non-recurring funds. Classroom issues cannot be looked at solely from a technology perspective without looking at utilization rates and how time and space are used.

- Professor Guerin asked if it would be possible to get President Yudof to articulate more publicly the University's commitment to classrooms? EVPP Bruininks stated that President Yudof has already done this by raising the issue to the highest levels. President Yudof's overall strategy is to improve the excellence and quality of the University and this includes upgrading classrooms.
- The Deans are strongly supportive of the classroom issue and have been willing to volunteer some of their own resources. For the Deans, it is balancing act of all academic priorities.
- Once again, a member raised the idea of having the Colleges take over all ownership of tuition and classrooms. While EVPP Bruininks recognized this suggestion as a model, in his estimation doing so would create chaos. Implementing such a model would create yet another layer of administrative overhead. He reminded members that under certain situations central governments add value.

Professor Guerin summarized today's discussion:

- The administration is committed to the classroom funding process, establishing recurring funding sources and the development of a budget plan to ensure recurring funding as well as capitalization.
- The Committee recognizes the administration's concern about classroom utilization issues.
- The administration is open to the idea of matching private donations.

Professor Guerin thanked EVPP Bruininks and Associate VP and CFO Pfutzenreuter for their presence at today's meeting.

V). Other Business: Professor Guerin set up the next two meetings for April 8<sup>th</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Closing comments and suggestions from members:

- Find out when input to the biennial budget request needs to be submitted.
- At the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting Steve Fitzgerald will share his budget processes and requests with the Committee.
- Make sure that learning components are included in the CAS proposal and then integrated into the biennial budget request.
- The Committee needs to stay focused and not get diverted.
- Because the University is extremely decentralized, the Committee needs to proceed on all fronts with pressure on the Deans, central administration, etc.
- During the interview process for the new Executive Vice President and Provost it will be important for candidates to be aware of this issue.

VI). With no further business, Professor Guerin adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate