

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome, Approval of September 18, 2002 Minutes, Future Agenda Items, Classroom Utilization]

[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: Jane Phillips, chair, Steve Fitzgerald, Bernard Gulachek, Steve Spehn, Karen Alaniz, Kenneth Heller, Steve Sperber, Nancy McGlynn

REGRETS: Bobbi Cordano, Denise Guerin, William Hanson, James Perry, Nelson Rhodus, Jonathan Suk

I). Jane Phillips, called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

II). The committee unanimously approved the September 18, 2002 minutes.

III). Issues the committee will address in 2002 - 2003:

- Funding
- Classroom Utilization
- Disability Access to Classrooms
- Physical Environment Classroom Standards

Concerned that a previously suggested agenda item, technical issues and emerging technologies, may be outside the purview of this committee, further discussion on this item was tabled until Professor Heller was present. It was mentioned that other groups such as SCEP, SCFA, The Digital Media Center, TEL Council (Technology Enhanced Learning Council), etc. may be better suited to deal with this issue.

IV). Steve Fitzgerald distributed a PowerPoint handout titled "Twin Cities General Purpose Classroom Supply, Demand & Utilization Update" and presented it to the committee. (The PowerPoint presentation will be available at www.classroom.umn.edu under Scheduling and Utilization after December 20, 2002.)

Discussion highlights from the presentation included:

- Despite recommendations by the Semester Conversion Task Force that all colleges revise their curricula to a semester format as opposed to a quarter format, several committee members said that a lack of resources prevented this from happening the way it was intended. During the semester conversion process,

colleges reduced a percentage of the courses they offered, but this by no means implies that each college actually completed a curricula redesign. If colleges had the resources to properly redesign their curricula for semesters, it is likely that classroom utilization would be positively impacted, noted Dr. Heller.

- Departmental classrooms provide colleges with teaching space that can be more specific and narrow in its teaching infrastructure than central classrooms, which are designed to meet the broader needs of the entire University community. Recognizing that both departmental classrooms are valuable space resources, utilization and efficiency initiatives must continue to be made in all departmental as well as central classrooms in order to achieve maximum efficiency of all Twin Cities classrooms.
- A suggestion was made to design a software program similar to a ‘conflict catcher’ that was used under the quarter system and modify it to work with the semester system. The software would be used to help departments realize the implications of offering courses at different times and/or days. Mr. Fitzgerald understands the utility of such a program and will research its feasibility further.
- Mr. Fitzgerald noted the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) is investigating the possibility to being able to offer departments’ access to the new version of its scheduling program, Resource 25, to assist in their scheduling endeavors.
- The Office of Classroom Management does its best to facilitate interdepartmental negotiations when scheduling courses. However, this task becomes extremely difficult when an attempt is made to do this across collegiate boundaries.
- No more than 60% of a department’s centrally scheduled course offerings should be scheduled during the peak time of the day, 9:00 – 2:00. A member suggested setting up some type of reward system for those in compliance because otherwise departments would continue to operate in their best interests which might be in conflict with those of the larger University community. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the Office of Classroom Management is increasingly in a better position to uncover those departments that are not in compliance.
- It was noted that collegiate advisers tend to discourage departments from offering large freshmen classes late in the day. Naturally this adds to room scheduling problems. It was further mentioned that late afternoon classes conflict with intercollegiate athletics, band, faculty with childcare or other commitments, etc. Mr. Fitzgerald pointed out that there are identifiable underutilized time periods such as Monday mornings and Fridays where classes could be scheduled in order to improve economies of scale as it relates to classroom scheduling and utilization.

- The Office of Classroom Management is concerned about several departments' inflated enrollment projections and the impact this has on room scheduling and utilization. While a plus or minus 10% deviation is acceptable, departments are being notified by OCM when their projections significantly depart from this range. A member suggested the University implement a policy to curb inflated enrollment projections. Mr. Fitzgerald referred members to the OCM's website for valuable scheduling and other important classroom information - <http://www.classroom.umn.edu/>
- A suggestion was made to integrate the summer into a true tri-semester system. Because the meeting was due to end, it was agreed that this idea would be discussed at the next meeting on December 16, 2002.

V). With no further business, Ms. Phillips adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate