

CLASSROOM ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

[In these minutes: Review of Committee Charter, Office of Classroom Management Update, 2005 – 2006 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: John S. Anderson, chair, Andre Prah, Caroline Rosen, Steve Fitzgerald, Jeffrey Lindgren, Steve Spehn, Denise Guerin, Ken Heller, Roger Miller

REGRETS: Roberta Juarez, Jay Hatch

ABSENT: Michaelleen Fox, Bernard Gulachek, James Perry

I). Professor John S. Anderson called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. Members then, at the request of Professor Anderson, went around the room and introduced themselves.

II). Copies of the subcommittee's charter were distributed to members for their review. Professor Anderson noted that the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS) has the authority to make changes to its charge if members believe changes are in order. He read the charge aloud as members followed along. He added that with the reorganization of the Senate and the renaming of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, housekeeping changes to the document, requiring the subcommittee's action, are necessary. Members unanimously endorsed a motion, which eliminated the reference (found in the first sentence) to the Assembly Committee on Educational Policy and replaced it with the Senate Committee on Educational Policy. Members then unanimously approved replacing language referring to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost with the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, which is referenced twice in the membership section of the charge. Neither of these changes substantially alters the committee's charter or reporting lines.

III). Professor Anderson turned to Director of Classroom Management Steve Fitzgerald for an update from his office. Mr. Fitzgerald began by providing background information on the Office of Classroom Management.

To begin, he noted that the genesis of the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) stems back to the early 1990s when there was a growing concern that central classrooms were not meeting the teaching needs of faculty or the expectations of students. As a result, the University started a sequence of events, which ultimately resulted in the

establishment of OCM in the fall of 1999. The Office of Classroom Management was created to be a central point of accountability and responsibility for central classrooms.

From the onset, the Office of Classroom Management tackled the major problems in classrooms:

- Lack of technology.
- The poor overall physical environment of classrooms.
- Inadequate utilization of classrooms particularly as it relates to the scheduling process.
- Lack of support for faculty teaching in classrooms.

As a central point of OCM's methodology for communications with faculty, it chose to use web-enabled communication. As a result, OCM developed a powerful website, which Mr. Fitzgerald encouraged members to familiarize themselves with: www.classroom.umn.edu.

Since its inception six years ago, OCM has come a long way. Examples of OCM accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- Development of technology standards in UMTC central classrooms (the UMTC "Projection Capable Classroom" standard).
- Creation of a Technology Upgrade Plan. Under this plan, approximately eighty percent of central classrooms have been technologically enhanced and brought up to the classroom technology standard.
- Development of facility standards for UMTC central classrooms, in partnership with University Services, to address classroom construction and design issues.
- Creation of a classroom hotline, which faculty can call for support and assistance when they are experiencing problems with a classroom. This includes staffing to operate the hotline, as well as the capability to respond to classroom emergencies and to track/follow-up on reported problems.
- Establishment of metrics and standards, lifecycle costs, systematic operational methodologies and generation of reports that are capable of quantifying what is happening in classrooms.
- Numerous scheduling system improvements, which include considerable emphasis on improving classroom utilization. Mr. Fitzgerald noted the ongoing support of CAS, and the growing awareness of the University at large in this important area.

For clarification, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that OCM is responsible for Twin Cities central classrooms, which are synonymous with the terms general-purpose and centrally scheduled classrooms. These classrooms are designed to meet the pedagogical requirements of a broad range of University community users. Central classrooms are a University asset owned by the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and designed to support the teaching and learning needs of any and all colleges and departments. OCM is the Provost's agent for managing these assets. By contrast, departmental classrooms are more narrowly focused, supporting a particular program or departmental need e.g. studios, clinics, etc. The distinction between central and

departmental classrooms are documented in the University space system with central classrooms coded as 110s and departmental classrooms coded as 120s.

There are approximately 300 central classrooms in 60 buildings across the Twin Cities campus. This equates to roughly 23,000 student seats and 300,000 square feet of space. While classrooms represent a small fraction of the University's overall space, it is the place where students spend a majority of their time while on campus. Mr. Fitzgerald added that depending on the formula used, \$60 to \$70 million worth of tuition dollars flow through central classrooms per semester.

In response to a question regarding which central classroom buildings are currently off-line, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the primary building is Nicholson Hall. He stated, however, that it will reopen for spring semester 2006, adding 800+ centrally scheduled classroom seats to OCM's inventory, which constantly fluctuates from semester to semester.

Moving on, Mr. Fitzgerald provided members with an OCM summer activity update, and highlighted the following:

- Thirty-eight classrooms were upgraded from first generation to second generation "Projection Capable Classroom" standard technology.
- OCM continues to partner with colleges and departments to upgrade classrooms.
- Nolte Library, formerly an OCM scheduled East Bank meeting room, has been turned over to CLA and a technology enhanced East Bank meeting room has been reconstituted in Folwell Hall to replace this loss.
- Significant scheduling system improvements have continued e.g. automated interface between the scheduling system and PeopleSoft, the PeopleSoft Transactional Interface. This system enhancement has allowed for the elimination of double data entry, improved accuracy of information in the system, as well as simplifying aspects of the scheduling function and increased efficiency.
- Phase two of the Electronic Course Scheduling (ECS) system was installed.
- The Electronic Course Authorization System (ECAS) was upgraded.
- ECS reporting refinements were made to the system, aiding colleges and departments in eliminating scheduling inefficiencies.
- A workshop, "Scheduling University", was held this summer for departmental schedulers and department administrators involved in the scheduling process. This workshop was the first in what is expected to be an annual event. It was well received and well attended.
- Departmental Resource 25 (R25), a version of the software used by the Scheduling Unit in OCM, is being marketed to departments in order to provide them with a proven, easy-to-use product for scheduling departmental classrooms. With Departmental R25, the department gains the operational benefits of the enterprise-level software, while it retains full and autonomous control over its own departmental classrooms. OCM pays for the licensing of R25, which means that there are no out-of-pocket costs to departments, other than having their scheduler(s) learn how to use the system. Last year, CAS brought forward a recommendation to SCEP that all departments be required to use R25. While a

final decision relative to this proposal has not been made, serious consideration is being given to having all departments adopt R25. Currently, 9 colleges, 21 departments and 88 departmental users are using R25. Feedback from departments who have adopted R25 is enthusiastic!

- Over the past several months, there has been a dialogue that the University should become involved in convention and event support. Engaging in convention and event support would allow the University to take advantage of its under-utilized academic space, especially during the summer months, and also leverage its dining and residence hall capabilities during off peak periods. As a result, a new department has been created to provide these services, the Convention and Event Services Office. OCM has been asked to identify central classroom space for convention/event purposes, and has agreed to do so for summertime use in rooms not being used for academic summer programs or scheduled for maintenance. Additionally, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that this newly created department has expressed strong interest in using R25. OCM has stated that it can provide the R25 support if it is allocated the necessary resources and as long as it does not interfere with its academic support mission.

Questions/comments following this update included:

- What percentage of the 240 departmental classrooms are being scheduled using R25? Mr. Fitzgerald stated that approximately 10% of departmental classrooms are being scheduled using the R25 system (departments are also scheduling other departmental resources such as CBS labs with R25). He added that OCM is seeing a great deal of interest in R25, which is forcing it to expend a lot of time marketing the system to departments.
- Do departments that use R25 to schedule their departmental classrooms need to convert these classrooms to central classrooms? No, departments that use R25 maintain control and ownership of their classrooms. By using R25, departments get the benefit of:
 - A standardized system.
 - The expertise of OCM's Scheduling Unit.
 - Web-site resources.
 - Gaining a better understanding of their space utilization.
- Are departmental classrooms really departmental classrooms as opposed to very small meeting rooms and/or lab spaces? Mr. Fitzgerald noted that each of these other categories of space has a discreet identifier in the space system, and so departmental classrooms are indeed, for the most part, departmental classrooms.
- Are breakout rooms considered classrooms? In the context of the Carlson School of Management (CSOM), OCM has recommended that some small (8-person) CSOM departmental classrooms be reclassified as meeting rooms to better represent their intended use.
- What are the minimum number of seats that would constitute a room for use as a central classroom? According to Mr. Fitzgerald, realistically, twenty seats would be the minimum number of seats for a room to be used as a classroom.
- Doesn't an office similar to Convention and Event Services already exist? Mr. Fitzgerald noted that there are a number of offices at the University with a similar

function, however, they are fragmented across the institution. This makes it extremely confusing for people outside the University to know whom to contact when they are interested in securing University space for convention and event purposes.

- Under what jurisdiction is Convention and Event Services housed? According to Mr. Fitzgerald, Housing and Residential Life is providing this newly created department with administrative and accounting staff. It is expected that this office will report to Auxiliary Services.
- Would it be helpful to OCM if departmental use of R25 were mandated across the University? Yes. If a decision were made to mandate the use of R25, the current energy OCM's small Scheduling Unit is spending on marketing the system could be focused on supporting the operation of the system instead.

Mr. Fitzgerald used the R25 discussion to segue into the next topic, classroom utilization. He noted that utilization is challenging for a number of reasons:

- Chronic over-utilization of classrooms during peak hours, 9:00 – 2:00.
- Under-utilization of classrooms at 8:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m.
- Systemic problems such as enrollment over-projection.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted, however, that fall 2004 utilization was better than previous years. For the Minneapolis campus, overall classroom utilization was at 68% time utilization, while the target was 71% (utilization during peak hours was 72%, just over the 71% target). St. Paul campus utilization was clearly lower, representing an excess of central classroom space versus demand on that campus.

Next, Mr. Fitzgerald provided preliminary fall 2005 utilization statistics:

- 16,700 sections were scheduled.
- 900 classroom cancellations; much improved over previous years.
- 650 unplaced courses at the start of the final sequence of the scheduling process.

A member commented that with 900 course cancellations there should have been plenty of space for the 650 unplaced courses. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that this statement is inaccurate because these events do not cancel each other out for a number of reasons. Notably, all courses have to be placed at the beginning of the semester. Late cancellations after the drop/add deadline are available only after-the-fact (and this is why they cause, not help, efficient classroom utilization).

The comment was also made that it would appear that an unintended consequence of the University's policy, which stipulates that departments can only schedule 60% of their courses during peak hours, leads to an increase in the number of sections that are scheduled at 2:30. Mr. Fitzgerald acknowledged this point, but stated that the dynamic is somewhat more complex. Mr. Fitzgerald noted there has been an increased demand to offer courses at the prescribed 2:30 time scheme, which meet for 75 minutes two-times per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) rather than three-times per week for 50 minutes. This, in conjunction with twice per week four credit courses and the additional load of Thursday discussion sections, has created a scheduling problem of a second peak period. In Mr. Fitzgerald's opinion, it is not a time of day problem as it is a day pattern

problem. He added that OCM has attempted, with varying degrees of success, to level-load the utilization schedule to the best of its ability. He cited the Physics department's scheduling of 115 discussion sections on Thursdays as an example of asymmetric day-demand on the classroom inventory that is very difficult to schedule.

Mr. Fitzgerald communicated other OCM initiatives:

- Rapid Response Teams, which preemptively provide classroom facility support to faculty during the first week of classes.
- Security Monitor Program, conducting security patrols during nighttime hours.
- Develop better instructions for lighting systems and lighting controls in classrooms.
- Optimize seating count in classrooms.
- Improve the number of physically accessible ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant classrooms.
- Involvement in the CSOM expansion project, and the Science Teaching and Student Services (STSS) building planning. The Science Teaching and Student Services building potentially could be under construction during FY 07 – 08 on the Science Classroom Building (SciCB) site, which would force OCM to take SciCB site off-line during the construction of this new building. While recent capital projects are reducing the overall inventory of classroom seats, OCM is witnessing a significant increase in the quality of teaching and learning spaces for students. The University is trying to better utilize its classroom inventory and to provide better classrooms for faculty and students.
- As of fall semester 2005, 78% of the Twin Cities' classrooms fully meet the Projection Capable Classroom standard. In addition to the 220+ central classrooms that meet the technology standards, various departments have purchased the same system from the Classroom Tech Services ISO for installation in 125 departmental meeting, conference or classrooms. This means that faculty can now walk into almost 400 rooms across the campus that have the same reliable and proven operational protocol with which they are familiar.
- Explore Projection Capable Classroom Phase III asynchronous video streaming.
- Continue with experimentation on student response systems. Mr. Fitzgerald referenced a white paper on this topic on the OCM website:
http://www.classroom.umn.edu/notes/support_srs.asp
- Continue efforts to secure a recurring funding mechanism to support the teaching and learning infrastructure in classrooms. Last year, FY 05, OCM received 35% of its recurring funding requirement, and this year, FY 06, it has received 58% of its recurring funding requirement. While still woefully short of 100% funding of the recurring lifecycle requirement, progress is being made. Because OCM is in its fourth year of the technology upgrade effort, systems are reaching their end-of-service life in larger numbers. The number of rooms that OCM needs to replace on an annual basis continues to increase, necessitating a focus on sustainability of past progress rather than on new upgrades. The shortfall of recurring lifecycle requirements means that classrooms are still dependent on one-time funding to bridge the gap.

A member asked how much funding OCM receives from its partnerships with the various colleges. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that OCM would not be at the point it is at today, in terms of technology enhancements to central and departmental classrooms, without the collaboration it has had with departments/colleges to date.

IV). Next, members brainstormed items for the CAS 2005 – 2006 agenda. The following items were mentioned:

- Resolve the issue of using new student response system (SRS) technology in centrally scheduled classrooms.
- Discuss acoustics, audio levels and other issues related to classroom sound systems.
- Receive a report from Convention and Event Services on their expectations for releasing classroom space for events.
- Address classroom design issues e.g. breakout rooms in the vicinity of auditorium/lecture space.
- Learn about the new budget model and how it will impact common goods such as OCM. Under the new budget model, how will classroom space be attributed and to whom?

V). Hearing no further business, Professor Anderson adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate