Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS)
September 19, 2016
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:** Welcome, Introductions, and Review of the Charge; Overview of Governance; Office of Classroom Management Overview; Learning Space Master Plan; Brainstorming on Issues for the Year]

PRESENT: Maria Sera (chair), Donalee Attardo, Mark Bergen, David Crane, Mike Hofer, Roberta Kehne, Kent Kirkby, Jeff Lindgren, Peng Peng, Ali Sweidan

REGRETS: Ryan Bean, Thomas Michaels, Christine Peper, Suvadip Sinha, Mary Steffes

ABSENT: Susan Spanovich

GUESTS: Vickie Courtney, director, University Senate Office

1. Welcome, introductions, and review of the charge
Chair Maria Sera welcomed members and asked them to introduce themselves. She then reviewed the charge with the committee.

2. Overview of governance
Vickie Courtney, director, University Senate Office, gave an overview of senate governance at the University of Minnesota. She said that the University of Minnesota is considered to have one of the strongest and most active shared governance systems among large research universities, and that it is unique in that faculty, students, staff, and alumni are all involved in governance. The umbrella body is the University Senate, which was established in 1912 and consisted only of faculty members until 1969, when students were given representation. In 2004, the University Senate was expanded again, when professional and academic staff and civil service staff were granted representation. The University Senate now has representatives from faculty, students, professional and administrative (P&A) staff, and civil service staff, for a total of 278 members when all seats are filled. Courtney explained that the University Senate contains within it four senates: the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, the P&A Senate (comprised of professional and administrative staff) and the Civil Service Senate. Each senate has its own consultative committee, and under them there are 23 working committees and a variety of subcommittees. Much of the governance work is done through these committees. Some standing committees report to the Faculty Senate, some to the Student Senate, and some to the University Senate. Members of these committees may but need not be senators, and the Committee on Committees selects most committee members. The appropriate senior academic officers also serve as ex officio, non-voting members of relevant committees, which ensures regular communication between the administration and governance. Courtney also noted that because of restrictions imposed by federal and state labor law, unionized staff and the faculties that have voted for collective bargaining do not participate in the governance system.

Courtney then enumerated the three ways that a committee can take action: passing a resolution, issuing a statement, or writing a letter to the appropriate administrator(s). The difference between a statement and a resolution, she said, is that a resolution calls for some sort of action, whereas a statement simply gives the committee's opinion on a given matter. If the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee decided to pass a resolution, she said, it would first go to its parent committee, the Educational Policy committee (SCEP) for approval, then to the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC), and then on to the University Senate. A statement follows the same route, but goes to the senate for information only, as no action is necessary. A letter is treated much the same as a statement.

Courtney emphasized the collaborative aspect of shared governance. She said that it is a best practice to consult with appropriate administrators before taking any action, and also to collaborate with other committees that may be working on the same issue.

3. Office of Classroom Management (OCM) Overview
David Crane, assistant director, Office of Classroom Management, gave an overview of his office. He presented a PowerPoint and directed members to OCM's website, http://www.classroom.umn.edu. The site features Academic and event scheduling, information on study space, photos and summaries of new classroom projects and more. He reviewed the history of OCM, explaining that there was a time before OCM, and that in the 90s there was a study done that revealed the disconnect between University's strategic vision for the future and the quality of central classrooms. OCM reports to the University registrar and associate vice provost, Academic Support Resources, who reports to the vice provost. OCM is an academic organization that works extensively in facilities and technology areas, he added. He shared that Classroom Technical Services (CTS) summer technology upgrades are a recurring part of the OCM lifecycle-based technology renewal plan. Approximately 80 classroom technology upgrade projects in 18+ buildings were completed by CTS for OCM on the Twin Cities campus this summer in the following locations:
- East Bank: Amundson Hall, Armory, Burton Hall, Ford Hall, Murphy Hall, Piek Hall, Scott Hall, Smith Hall
- West Bank: Anderson Hall, Blegen Hall, Humphrey Building
- St. Paul: Bioscience Building, Food Science and Nutrition Bldg, Hodson Hall, Kaufert Lab of Forest Products, Magrath Library, McNeal Hall, Ruttan Hall

There are also a number of projects underway that are collaborations between OCM and the University, OIT, and/or academic departments.

Crane also discussed the Tate remodel and its ramifications across campus. He said that the remodel put 1193 seats out of commission in nine classrooms, including the second-largest lecture hall on campus. An additional classroom in Mayo was brought online, but that auditorium holds only 115 seats, and does not make up for the space that is out of play during the Tate remodel. Crane said that while upgrading buildings and learning space is desirable, better planning around how to offset the loss of space during construction is required.

Crane informed the committee that OCM is available to departments to consult on departmental space, and that they prefer to work as a partner throughout the life of a space, rather than be called in when a space has gotten so bad that it needs to be completely remodeled.

Crane revealed that Bruininks Hall is due for an upgrade in summer of 2017. He said that Bruininks Hall holds one of the largest, if not the largest, grouping of Active Learning Classrooms (ACLs) at any university. There is great demand for these classrooms, but they are more complex expensive, so OCM is looking at ways to reduce cost and improve efficiency in the maintenance of these classrooms. This will be a major challenge for his office, Crane said. Hofer asked whether there was training available for instructors on how to use these classrooms effectively. Crane said that there is, and that there is also research on student outcomes with regards to ACLs. He said creating an intuitive, reliable interface is a top priority. Roberta Kehne informed the committee that the ACL environment can be very difficult to navigate for students with certain disability conditions; in particular, she said, these classrooms are challenging for students who need sign language interpreters, students with attention deficit conditions, and students with impaired vision. She also stated that sign language interpreters find the rooms difficult as well, as information comes from a variety of directions. Sera added that it can be difficult for instructors as well, as the lectern is located in the center of the room.

4. Learning Space Master Plan Update
Sera gave background on the Learning Space Master Plan (LSMP), which the committee suggested in 2014-15 in order to catalog the space and plan for future needs. However, the administration declined to pursue the idea, so Sera would like to return to the plan and see if it can be reworked into something that the administration would find helpful. Jeff Lindgren, assistant director, Center for Educational Innovation, shared additional context:
- The idea was to create a suite of options across campus, in terms of classroom size, amenities, technology, layout, etc., that could serve a variety of pedagogical needs. Lindgren said that SUNY Buffalo and Stanford had such plans.
- Jeremy Todd, director, Office of Classroom Management, presented the LSMP to the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) in October 2014. The SCC was receptive, reported Lindgren.
- In September 2015, individuals from the Provost's Office, University Services, and the Office of Information Technology held a series of meetings to talk about learning spaces. They then sought feedback from their respective vice presidents, including whether the upcoming Pillsbury Hall renovation could serve as a sort of test case for the plan.
- The decision was made not to develop an overarching learning spaces plan, but rather to focus on specific requests in the upcoming capital plan. The 2016 state capital request included learning spaces in Pillsbury Hall, ACLs in the Biological Sciences Center, a Health Sciences Education facility, and ACLs on the Duluth campus.

Sera said that there is a need for planning, and that ideally it should be part of the capital request. Crane commented that capital projects can be difficult to plan for, as funding may or may not be approved. In the past, he said, a three-pronged approach was taken:
- OCM operational funding for small projects
- Systematic/infrastructure issues
- Capital request

Kehne said that OCM has been extremely helpful on a case-by-case basis for disability accommodations. However, she emphasized the importance of considering disability access when new classroom spaces are designed or existing spaces are updated. Code dictates how

many accessible seats are required in a given space, and that in larger spaces, more accessible seats are required, as well as more locations for those seats, she said, adding that that code is the minimum and can always be exceeded. She said that for example, tiered classroom spaces are difficult for wheelchair users, as they are limited to seats in only the front or back of the classroom, which is not always desirable.

Power doors are also crucial, Kehne added. They can make the difference between access to a space being a right or a privilege. She shared the example of a student who uses a wheelchair who is taking a class in Rapson 100 and who wants to sit up front. The lack of power doors at the front of the room means that the student has to rely on others to open the door for him, or sit elsewhere. It can also be inconvenient when power doors are located only on one side of a room—this often obliges wheelchair users to go significantly out of their way to enter a building. However, the University has instituted a policy in its construction standards wherein power doors will be installed on both sides of the room, she said.

Finally, Kehne said, lighting should also be considered. Students with certain conditions cannot tolerate some types of lighting, especially fluorescent, and the most common solution is to have them sit in the corner and reduce the lighting in that corner. To modify lighting in a large space can be very expensive, she said. She reiterated that planning proactively for such things is much more cost effective than retrofitting an existing space.

Crane said that they have moved to lighting with higher ballast, which more people can tolerate, and that they are moving toward LEDs, which will resolve further issues.

4. Brainstorming on issues for the year
Sera solicited further suggestions from the committee on areas of focus.

Donalee Attardo, director, Academic Technology, Office of Information Technology, suggested looking at techniques that allow for greater active learning, such as having larger space that allow students to get up and move around, furniture that allows for group work, etc. Crane said that often classrooms are designed to be flexible and accommodate greater capacity, which is efficient, but that efficiency should also be balanced with the need for a variety of types of spaces to meet a variety of needs. He also said that it is very difficult to find swing space during the semester.

Sera suggested that the committee come up with a list of best practices and required features for new classroom design. Crane said that OCM has a set of design features and requirements that are given to architects who work with the University, and that he could send it to the committee. Kent Kirkby asked whether the committee should focus only on classroom space, or whether learning space is defined to include study space, outdoors space, etc.? Crane said he thought that there was room to think about adjacencies and space outside of classrooms.

Mark Bergen said that a good first step would be to ask for feedback from senior leadership as to why the plan was not picked up, and perhaps reframe the discussion in a way that asks how the committee could be helpful in their goals and initiatives. He also suggested that the committee could walk through the capital campaign and see where the committee could help. Kirkby said

that capital projects are typically decided by the time they become capital projects, so logistically it is difficult to provide feedback on them. Jeff Lindgren said that for example, AHC is designing a new facility, and has reached out to the Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) for feedback; he wondered whether there would be a way to encourage other departments to consult with CEI and OCM during the planning phase? Crane added that they could also offer feedback from instructors and students, which could be useful in planning new space. Vickie Courtney said that the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning does deal with the capital plan, and that the committee could interface with them. She also suggested inviting Mike Berthelsen, interim vice president of Facilities Management, to a CAS meeting. Crane added that this could also help plan for offsetting seats during construction. Members agreed that developing a set of best practices for new space would be a good project for the year.

Hearing no further business, Sera adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office