

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Finance and Planning  
Tuesday, April 28, 1998  
3:15 – 5:00  
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

Present: Fred Morrison (chair), Jean Bauer, Catherine French, Cynthia Gillett, Gerald Klement, Leonard Kuhi, Terrence O'Connor, Jane Phillips, Peter Robinson, Terry Roe, Charles Speaks, James Van Alstine, Susan Carlson Weinberg

Regrets: J. Peter Zetterberg

Absent: Larry Fonder, Stephen Gudeman, K. Andrew Hall, Eric Kruse, J. P. Maier, Richard Pfitzenreuter, Joby Sebastian

Guests: none

[In these minutes: allocating charges and income from litigation settlements and judgments; management of classrooms; the budget (briefly)]

**1. Allocating Judgments and Settlements from Litigation**

Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 3:15 and turned to Mr. O'Connor to present a proposed policy covering allocation of judgments and settlements from litigation. This, he said, is a follow-on to the discussion the Committee had last Fall about insurance premiums and deductibles.

Mr. O'Connor explained the background of the policy – that there had been a small case last year where the distribution of costs had been made on an ad hoc basis, suggesting the need for a policy. The draft policy provides that in general, any financial obligations from settlements or judgments, up to the amount of the deductible, are the responsibility of the Resource Responsibility Center (i.e., the college). Payments received, likewise, would go to the college, up to the limit of the deductible. Any additional amounts would go to the central reserves.

Committee members made a number of points in the ensuing discussion, most of them adverse to the proposal.

-- The increase in the deductible caused continued concern. Professor Morrison reviewed the University's experience with the educator's legal liability portion of the coverage, and noted that the liabilities had exceeded the premiums. He suggested that while the increase in deductible, adopted to reduce the premiums, could save money for the University but lose it for departments. In the last analysis, the question is who inside the University will pay – the University as a whole, or the department is to pay the first \$50,000. His concern is that the system is described as fault-based, but it really is not, because these events and costs fall almost randomly.

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\* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus 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.

- When there are several units at fault, an automatic distribution of costs seems inappropriate. When there are central administrative units involved, they must also assume responsibility.
- If the fault lies outside the department, why should it pay? The fault does not always lie outside the department. This expense is part of the cost of doing business, and must be born by the organization; under IMG, the logical place is the department, Mr. O'Connor argued, whether or not at fault. In one instance, a small case was settled by a central unit where the department was NOT at fault – it was a decision they made. That should not be, it was argued; if there is no culpability, the unit should not pay.
- If a case is pursued, the General Counsel's office will pay; if the University wins, there is no debit against the department. But the interests of the University must be considered, not just the department, it was said. And that, it was rejoined, is the problem.
- If there is no money in the department? The policy allows for judgments and exceptions. The policy allows the administration to take into account extenuating circumstances, but does not spell out what would count in this regard.
- There is a need for a policy, but not this one. What is worrisome is the prospect of an allegation, but no demonstration of fault in the unit, and a decision by someone, somewhere, that it would not be worth it to pursue the charge, so a settlement is reached and charged to the department. Technically, the charge would be to the college, but colleges have the option to push charges down to the department.
- The charges should be levied against a central account, and the department charged only when there is culpability. It may be that the central reserves are not a litigation fund; then another fund could be established for this purpose.
- Also bothersome is that fees for outside counsel are covered from the first dollar, but the deductible only covers the judgment, not the fees.
- If the General Counsel decides whether to use outside counsel, the department must bear the cost without any voice in the decision.
- With cases coming every day, and a certain number valid or settled, it is alarming that there could be a \$20-30,000 settlement, with decision-makers not responsible for payment.

The Committee reached several conclusions.

1. It did not like the policy.
2. Decisions about settlements or judgments should be made in the office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, not in the Treasurer's office.
3. The deductible on the policy should be lowered, preferably back to \$10,000, and the General Counsel's office should be responsible for making decisions, with a central fund to pick up costs.

Professor Morrison thanked Mr. O'Connor for presenting the policy.

## **2. Classroom Renovation Management**

Professor Morrison next turned to Dr. Phillips for a presentation from the Facilities Management Subcommittee. Copies of the recommendations from the Subcommittee concerning the management of classroom renovation had previously been distributed to Committee members. (The recommendations are appended to these minutes.)

Dr. Phillips noted that the Subcommittee had been given two charges this year, one of which was to study classroom management. She explained that many people had been involved in the work of the Subcommittee, and that it had drawn very much upon the 1995 classroom study (which had been accepted by the University administration but had not been implemented.) Their recommendations update the report for IMG and for the conversion to semesters.

The single biggest problem with the 1995 study, and the major cause of the failure to implement it, was because no one was identified as responsible for classrooms. There needs to be one coordinator or classroom czar, who can exercise good judgment and use power wisely. The czar/ina needs to be responsible not only for scheduling, but must also "own" the classrooms and be responsible for repair and maintenance, Professor Morrison observed. Right now ownership is fragmented between several units, Dr. Phillips agreed.

The proposals are for the Twin Cities campus only. The proposals do not include labs.

The proposal calls for the classroom coordinator to have responsibility for those classrooms that are now centrally-scheduled. The question of what else should fall under the coordinator (e.g., departmental classrooms) can be revisited later. Rooms designed and paid for by departments would be retained by departments.

One problem with current classroom management is that it is assumed all are used for lectures and that technology is used to enhance lectures. For other kinds of instruction, the room must be re-arranged so that people can talk to one another. No one talks about different kinds of classrooms for different kinds of teaching.

Dr. Phillips agreed, and pointed to the call for an advisory mechanism for faculty and students to participate in decisions on how classrooms will be changed. She also assured the Committee that local control would not be lost, nor would there be any need to duplicate or create a large bureaucracy or to reallocate dollars. The Subcommittee is not recommending that a new person be HIRED, but that responsibilities be rearranged so someone can take on the tasks. This specifically does NOT mean simply adding classrooms to the existing portfolio of responsibilities that someone may already have. She agreed with the observation that there probably are sufficient funds to handle classrooms; what is lacking is coordination.

Professor Morrison raised an alternative perspective, one that he did not necessarily endorse but that perhaps should be considered: There should be no central classroom administration, and all classrooms should be allocated to departments or colleges, which could swap and trade their uses, and decisions could all be made locally.

There could be several problems with complete decentralization of classroom management. The University could lose economies of scale, if four or five departments each decided they needed a large classroom for large classes, and if such a classroom were controlled by one department, how would it be managed to the satisfaction of all the departments that used it? What happens when there are enrollment fluctuations, and a department no longer wants a large classroom? Or needs one? Classrooms are more like human resources and other all-campus or all-University activities, which pervade everything that departments do. The decentralized classroom scheduling system is broken, because it does not include training, design, advising, maintenance, and so on – scheduling is only a small part of classroom management.

To be consistent with IMG, control would go to the colleges, not the departments, and perhaps a few large classrooms, such as those in Willey Hall, could be controlled by central offices.

One Committee member expressed reservation about the ability of any central authority to make good decisions about classrooms. The more centralized decision-making, the more department initiatives are impaired. Until a few years ago, classroom management was in the hands of Elizabeth Grundner. Her official job was to assign classrooms, but she got things done in terms of maintaining them, as well. Professor Morrison observed that the POSITION DESCRIPTION for Ms. Grundner went to the Registrar's office; the JOB itself did not, and the University lost a lot when she retired. She took on responsibilities that she was not assigned to see to it that classrooms worked.

Dr. Phillips said that without someone to serve as a leader, who can obtain money for classrooms and get things done, they won't happen. The person in the position they are recommending would not exercise totalitarian control, but would coordinate; on the other hand, once the advisory groups have participated, someone must make a decision.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendations, with the understanding that Dr. Phillips would change the wording in a few sections to clarify the intent. It was agreed that these recommendations should be placed on the docket of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly for information.

### **3. The Budget**

The Committee then held an off-the-record discussion of the budget. It was noted that most of the 1998-99 budget was already committed, and that the Committee needed to begin thinking about the 1999-2001 biennial request. Much of the work will be done over the summer, so some summer meetings may be required.

The Committee discussed how to use hiring to improve departments, the uses of the "blue chip" funds provided by the legislature, the possibility of targeting funding, use of funds for retraining faculty, support for mid-career faculty.

Professor Morrison adjourned the meeting at 4:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

**1998 Classroom Management Recommendations**  
**with target dates**

(These recommendations draw heavily upon the 1995 Classroom Study)

**1. Create a Coordinator for classroom management**

Appoint, designate, or hire a single individual who will be responsible for the coordination of the management of the entire scope of these recommendations. This person would be responsible for coordinating the activities of the units currently involved in classroom management activities, should be given authority over all aspects of classroom management so that s/he can make a final decision if consensus between the coordinated units is not achievable, must have sufficient budget to accomplish the tasks of classroom management, will report to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, and should be focussed on classroom management and not fragmented by additional duties at the University. For this position to be effective, it is critical that the individual in it be included in all discussions about classroom management issues. The Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost is responsible for creating and filling this position and should report back to the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning on its progress. Target date for having this Coordinator in place is July 1, 1998.

**2. Create an advisory mechanism**

Develop a mechanism within the Assembly Committee on Educational Policy (ACEP) and Facilities Management Subcommittee to provide advice to the Coordinator on issues concerning classroom management. Rather than develop a parallel system for input into classroom management issues, the current governance structure should be used. Because issues range from educational policy to facilities management to finance and planning, ACEP and Facilities Management Subcommittee (the latter of which reports to the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning) appear to be the best candidates for this responsibility. It is likely that both committees will need to devise a mechanism to get appropriate input from faculty, staff, and students that exceeds that possible from the membership of their committee. For example, to ensure appropriate input into design standards for technology upgrades, representatives from Media Resources, Information Technology, and departments/colleges already heavily invested in technology should be part of a working group providing input, advice, and counsel. To insure that this advisory system provides feedback in a timely manner, the Coordinator (mentioned in recommendation #1 above) should be an ex officio, non-voting member of ACEP and the Committee on Finance and Planning. Target date for having mechanism in place is October 1, 1998.

**3. Train faculty to use technology**

Develop a systematic method of training faculty to use the technology that is or will be placed in classrooms. Establish a program to train faculty to use both existing and future technological equipment. This program should include broad training for the development of presentation materials that maximize the potential of the technology and enhance the student learning experience and specific training relating to the equipment in specific classrooms. Some of this already exists (e.g., within the Digital Media Center and Room Scheduling), but it is currently inadequate for our needs. This program may be assigned to an existing office but is to be overseen by the Coordinator. It should be noted that the broad training should be provided on an on-going basis during the year, but the specific training is likely to be concentrated at times before the academic term begins as faculty prepare to use specific assigned classrooms. Target date for a pilot program is September 1, 1998. Full implementation target date is August 1, 1999.

**4. Establish an immediate contact system**

Develop an immediate-response classroom help/support service to respond to maintenance, support, and service issues encountered by faculty and instructors in their daily classroom use. A central contact point should be established for all classroom problem calls. (This does not preclude local/regional support activities.) Target date for implementation is September 1, 1998.

#### **5. Consider reorganization**

Consider reorganization of the various units involved in all aspects of classroom management. It may be structurally more efficient for the various groups involved in room scheduling, maintenance, repair, upgrade, training, response, etc. to be organized in a different way. This should be studied. Target date for recommendation from such a study is July 1, 1999.

#### **6. Define standards**

Provide a base-line quality standard and define a higher level of support service for users of classroom technology that promotes the use of effective, appropriate technology for instruction and learning in the classroom. These standards can be used to improve the quality of the existing facility to support the learning modalities of today. They should be based on the types of classrooms generally in existence at the University and similar institutions of higher education. Some initial work is available in the 1995 Classroom Study, so this should be used as a starting point for discussion. Implementation target date is March 1, 1999.

#### **7. Provide a plan and adequate funding to implement and maintain standards**

Upgrade all University classrooms to the defined baseline of quality. Establish and fund a five-year capital improvement program to achieve this objective. This recommendation was put on a 5 year time frame in the 1995 study. The Capital and Supplemental Requests will make an impact on this recommendation, so it should be reviewed now that the legislative budget process is complete. Target date November 1, 1999.

- Fund the improvement of all classrooms to an acceptable level of physical condition and functional capability.
- Maintain all classrooms at the defined baseline of upgraded quality to ensure they remain in acceptable condition.
- Make a parallel funding commitment for management and operations, to ensure these classrooms are fully utilized.

Establish and fund a five-year capital improvement program to broaden the availability and upgrade the quality of educational technology and related resources in classrooms. Target date November 1, 1999.

- Develop a systematic method of upgrading technology in classrooms to enhance teaching.
- Develop a strategic plan for technology enhancement that will provide cost-efficient access to classroom technology as needs of collegiate programs dictate.
- Develop a comprehensive program for improvements, funding, service, support and training to maximize the use and value of these resources.

Increase and stabilize the level of funding for the maintenance, repair, and operational support for classroom technological equipment. This funding should exist in normal allocations, not be add-ons to the budget as in the current Legislative Request. Target date July 1, 2000.

Develop a road map to the future by initiating a process to explore and develop innovative new learning environment models. New classroom models will need to be created to take advantage of new information technology and the evolution of teaching methods coming from new discoveries about how learning occurs. New types of classrooms, more responsive to evolving needs, will supplant current classrooms over time. Target date December 1, 1999.

**8. Monitor the progress of the following recommendations from the 1995 Classroom Study which are already in progress.** Coordinator, along with Advisory Group, should make new recommendations as appropriate. Target date for initial review is November 1, 1998.

**Automation of scheduling**

This is in process, but should be monitored for effectiveness.

**Upgrade Maintenance and Housekeeping Services**

The 1995 Study recommended an increase in the level of funding for the maintenance and repair of classrooms, rescheduling of the majority of maintenance and repair and housekeeping services delivery to non-class hours, and upgrading of the standard of maintenance / housekeeping service. The progress of these recommendations needs to be reviewed.

**Utilization Policy**

The 1995 Classroom study recommended weekly room hour usage goals of 32 hours per week based on 45 daytime hours per week with a station utilization of 65 percent be established. It also suggested that there was an excess of classrooms based on these recommended standards. These standards should be reviewed as the University converts to semesters, with new policies and standards adopted as necessary so that the classroom need and supply are balanced. Once these are adopted, steps must be taken to ensure that both policies and standards are clearly understood and followed. A recommendation to reduce or increase the number of classrooms may be a result of this review.

**9. Review or reconsider the following recommendations from the 1995 Classroom Study for validity and accuracy.** Two recommendations in the 1995 Classroom Study (to centralize scheduling of all classrooms and to evaluate utilization of meeting and conference rooms) are controversial and should be reviewed to determine if the University community wishes to address these items. If yes, the Coordinator, along with Advisory Group, should initiate the discussion. Target date for initial review of the recommendations (not suggesting that any action will result from this review) is January 1, 1999.

**Background:**

One focus of the Facilities Management Subcommittee this year was Classrooms and Classroom Management. For discussion of this issue, additional members of the University community were brought together with subcommittee members. These additional members represented units of the University that are involved in classroom management (e.g. Room Scheduling/Registrar, Facilities Management, Media Resources, etc.)

The ensuing discussions, and these recommendations, focussed on the Twin Cities campus' general-purpose classrooms that are currently centrally scheduled. While many of the recommendations highlight technology in the classroom, it was understood by the members of the discussion group that general purpose classrooms must serve a large variety of teaching and learning styles and that rooms need to be flexible to support these different styles.

These recommendations were unanimously approved by the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning on April 28, 1998.