

Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS)

November 23, 2015

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 and Introductions; OCM Solutions to Classroom Issues; Faculty Learning Community: Active Learning Spaces; Discussion of OCM Input]

PRESENT: Kevin Smith (chair), David Crane, Jeff Lindgren, Ali Sweidan, Susan Staats, Mary Steffes, Susan Spanovich, Suvadip Sinha, Ju Ae Kim, Maria Sera, Ryan Bean

ABSENT: Michael Hofer, Kent Kirby, Luke Odenthal, Chris Dovolis

REGRETS: Roberta Kehne

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Kevin Smith, chair, welcomed new committee members and called for introductions. He then gave an overview of the primary goal of the committee, which is to provide students and faculty with the most access possible to the highest quality learning spaces. Smith stated that having the ability to inventory, schedule, and centrally manage all University learning spaces is the best way to do that. So, he said, the goal is to foster communication between the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) and deans, directors, and others in charge of departmentally managed space.

2. **OCM Solutions to Classroom Issues.** David Crane, classroom facilities manager, OCM, presented on the ways that OCM has assisted departments in managing classroom space. Crane began by providing an overview of the OCM [website](#), which he said is the best way to connect with OCM. He said that since the mid-to-late 1990s, OCM has continued to take in classrooms from various units throughout the University. Crane said that when departments come to OCM with requests to manage space, they take over scheduling through Ad Astra to better understand current and potential classroom use. They can then backfill the rooms with events when not in use for classes.

He then used Mondale Hall as an example of a unit that asked OCM to help with management of classroom space. Over the summer, OCM took over management of thirteen classrooms in Mondale. Crane noted that OCM assumes financial responsibility when it is asked to take over a space. For Mondale, he said, initial development could exceed one million dollars for the thirteen rooms. He added that usually departments have looked at other options before coming to OCM. This means they've come to a realization that they cannot sustain their current model, either due to lack of resources or staffing. For Mondale, Crane said, the goal was to increase accessibility and remove fixed furniture, thereby improving space flexibility. The plan is to stabilize technology immediately, and then work on the physical updates to the rooms next summer. Per Crane, all rooms will receive card reader hardware which automates locking and unlocking, new paint, carpet, window treatments, and acoustical treatments. He said spaces are

generally in poor condition when they come to OCM for assistance, and that when taking over a room, OCM looks at current use versus how the room was used originally. At Mondale, they looked at current trends in A/V technology in law school instruction.

This traditional model of classroom acquisition could be called reactive, said Crane. Basically this means the rooms are in poor condition, with failing technologies and concerns about accessibility, fire, and electrical code violations. Additionally, the rooms may be inflexible, not very functional, or perhaps not as comfortable as they might be. Crane said that the problem with a reactive model of classroom acquisition is that they come to OCM with no advance notice, and so OCM just tries to react as quickly as they can.

He said that OCM has tried to approach departments to demonstrate how they might be able to save departmental money. He added that Mayo room C231 sat decommissioned for almost a decade because the department had given up on it. It was only when Tate was unusable due to construction that OCM came in and worked on the room to make it serviceable. Crane added that Classroom Technical Services is an independent subdivision of OCM and thus can work with anyone. They provide guidance about space development free of cost. It's a model, he said, that OCM might use to approach departments.

In addition to reactive acquisition of space, Crane said that OCM has also provided proactive assistance and/or consulting services on the following buildings:

- Humphrey 50, in partnership with the Office of Information Technology
- Willey Atrium, Facility Management (FM) asked OCM for ongoing support
- Keller Hall 4th floor study space, FM asked OCM to support
- UDS Dining: CSOM and Nolte, OCM has taken over the scheduling when not being used for dining
- Moos 3-110
- McNeal Hall atrium Study Space
- Civil Mineral Building Study Space
- Keller Atrium 1-175/2-175

He shared the benefits of being more proactive rather than reactive: it minimizes disruption for students, it allows for faculty input, potential issues are identified before they arise, and it allows the relationship to develop between individual units and OCM. He added that traditional reactive model deals with immediate needs and doesn't allow time for planning. This results in business decision rather than design decision, which leads to OCM becoming a collection agent to deal with fixes rather than an aid to maximize learning.

Crane concluded his presentation by asking the committee for their thoughts or questions. Ryan Bean stated that it seems there is an overarching stewardship argument to be made for OCM management. The cost savings include maximizing use of facilities and some other efficiencies. Furniture, fixtures, and equipment would be maintained more regularly. There are spaces on campus that could be better utilized if OCM had control.

Smith asked if it would be possible to inventory all learning spaces. Crane replied that centrally managed space has quite detailed information, and some units also do a good job of inventorying space, but not all are doing so. He added that OCM is quite detailed because they are trying to analyze both short term and long term room use. Smith replied that perhaps just the value of inventoried space would encourage some departments to allow OCM to manage. Crane agreed and said that OCM thinks it would be a great service to look at providing for departments, wouldn't be that difficult, and might be a good way to start conversations with departments about what OCM can offer them. Smith concluded the discussion by adding that it would also be a way for administrators and faculty to garner innovative ideas for nontraditional use of space; perhaps the committee could help facilitate these discussions.

3. Faculty Learning Community: Learning Spaces: Jeffrey Lindgren, assistant department director, Center for Educational Innovation (CEI), provided an overview of a new Active Learning Classroom Faculty Learning Community (FLC) sponsored by CEI that begins in Spring 2016. Lindgren stated that experts in the use of Active Learning Classrooms (ALC) will be involved in the learning community alongside instructors who are new to teaching in ALCs. Participants will get feedback on their teaching, and will attend only eight meetings throughout the year. Participating faculty will be asked about specific areas they'd like to explore and so, said Lindgren, participants are encouraged to arrive with a specific project. The FLC could also be a way to discover basic tools that would promote use of active learning in a variety of spaces.

Lindgren said that those leading the FLC have published a book on the topic titled, *A Guide to Teaching in the Active Learning Classrooms*. Anyone interested in more information, or in participating should visit the [CEI website](#) or contact Christina Petersen.

Lindgren concluded by asking committee members what challenges instructors face when considering ALC instruction. Members provided the following list:

- Becoming accustomed to standing in the middle of the room.
- There is no kill switch on microphones.
- Pods in the middle are really not great for nine students, but rather only four to five.
- There is a learning curve on the projector system for students.
- Dongles are needed for iPhone.
- Students need to understand they need to be prepared for class. Straight lecturing doesn't usually go that well.

4. Discussion of OCM Input: Smith concluded the meeting with a discussion of ways OCM might compel departments to use them as a resource. He said that on the St. Paul campus many faculty are trying in situ learning using an iPad app which students can use to interact with a space they are in. It's a GPS-connected lesson "in the field," he said. The challenge is Wi-Fi signal can be lost in various parts of the campus grounds. Perhaps, he added, OCM could be a resource, a place to start on discussions such as this.

Lindgren stated that he's heard a couple of different professors who are meeting in various locations all over campus. He said he meets regularly with people from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and would be happy to reach out to them. Susan Spanovich said there are

plans to replace Wi-Fi capabilities across all units and spaces within the next two years, so in the next ten years, classroom spaces may look quite different and varied.

Smith then asked the committee who they might talk with within units or departments. Crane Said that University Services is looking to reorganize so that each building would have primary building contacts. That individual, he said, might be a good person to talk to for ideas. Smith added that departmental schedulers would also be a good resource.

Crane said that until a space is identified as a classroom space, OCM is not involved. But perhaps OCM could talk with departments about specific classrooms and how they may be updated/serviced by OCM involvement. This could range from almost free consulting he said, to a full takeover of responsibilities. OCM could provide information on what a department would get back from centrally-managed space.

Maria Sera stated that the Institute of Child Development needed a new classroom but that was not in the budget plan. Could OCM, she wondered, be involved in the planning by providing some analysis? Crane replied that when a capital project is initiated, if it's an academic space, OCM does get put on the list of those informed, and provides feedback through the department. Crane said they could do a scheduling scenario of various classrooms. For instance, he added, how far would someone have to walk to get to the classroom they need? What would be lost when a classroom is redesigned? If anyone expects changes in where classes will take place, he said, they should definitely talk to OCM to assist in decision-making.

Ali Sweidan asked about student involvement in classroom development. Crane stated that the infrastructure committee met with students, so that's one place. Smith said that surveys aren't the solution and that even the questions asked on current surveys don't provide much information about why a space is good or bad. Perhaps the committee should look at the questions asked in surveys. Sera said students also need to speak up and ask questions so that faculty can respond. Susan Staats suggested something as simple as a #crappyrooms@umn account to give feedback.

Smith then asked committee members to go back to their respective units and see if people are aware of what OCM can do for them. He said he will try to formulate questions to send out in February.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
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