

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
JOINT CLASSROOM STEERING COMMITTEE
Annual Report to the Faculty Senate
April 2008

Committee Charge:

The Joint Classroom Steering Committee (JCSC) shall serve as a steering group to the functional areas that manage and have responsibility for classroom upkeep and planning (MTS, Enrollment Services, and Business Services). The committee shall be responsible for the development of plans for all aspects of classroom planning and management, including, but not limited to, the development and management of a single classroom data-base, the establishment and updating of design standards, scheduling and planning, assessment of needs for classroom refurbishments and setting priorities, maintenance and ongoing management of classrooms and the coordination of resources for classroom upkeep and improvement. This committee shall also monitor progress and the execution of these plans.

Committee

Ann Morrissey, Interim Chair, Planning Services
Ken Sisson, Enrollment Services
Janie Palm and David Porter, Media & Technology Services
Tom Frisbie-Fulton and Ryan Carrillo, Capital Planning & Space Planning
Vern Wyman, Business Services
Jerry Sidio, Facilities Services
Lynn Pasquerella and Dean Libutti, Provost Office
Karen Caines, Faculty, Nursing
James Kowalski, Faculty, CSC
Michael Pennell, Faculty, Writing
Robert Bullock, Associate Dean, A&S

Class scheduling and data base management issues:

In prior meetings, the committee discussed progress on the classroom data base management system and the challenges to improving upon the current system. Staff in enrollment services and on the classroom management and media teams will continue to work toward addressing the issues discussed, mainly having to do with integration of databases and ease of use by the end users. The committee will follow up at a later date. It was further noted, that limited resources allow for only incremental progress.

To better understand how classrooms are currently utilized and the number of classes held in varying size classrooms, the JCSC reviewed a summary analysis provided by Dean Libutti, Special Assistant to the Provost. It was noted that the majority of students in Fine Arts, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences take classes with 70 or more students enrolled; Letters is close behind with just over one third in 70+ classes; almost all English Communications (writing and communication) courses have 25 or fewer students; additional smaller course resources/sections have been added in this category to benefit

the first year student experience; the majority of math classes (90%) are in the middle category - with an enrollment range of 38-46; for the Fall 2007, 42% of students were enrolled in a general education course with 70 or more students and 39% for the Spring 2008; there are a few popular courses that enroll over 300 freshmen. The committee discussed the level of technology in various classrooms and the best way for it to be enhanced. The Seat Management Committee will continue to address scheduling and seat needs for classes.

Technology Planning

At the November meeting, the committee discussed the idea of focusing on technology improvements to large classrooms as an initial effort in order to enhance the experience of students in those classes and to aid faculty who teach in them. In preparation for its next meeting, the committee asked the technology services staff to survey faculty to obtain feedback about their technology future needs.

In the February meeting, David Porter, committee member and Dir, Networking & Telecommunications and Media & Technology Services provided an overview of the results of the informal faculty survey. Some of the concerns expressed in the survey by faculty were ease of use of current technology, the limited percentage of classrooms with web access, technology personnel support to classrooms, and the need for more reliable LCD projection capabilities across classrooms. Current plans for technology improvements to classrooms were also reviewed including the work being conducted for the NOMAD education grant. The committee decided that a short-term master classroom technology plan, which would identify priorities towards improving classroom technology support, should be developed. The staff of the Media and Technology Services Office agreed to further research best practices and develop a draft plan in consultation with JCSC faculty members. A strategy for the plan will be to standardize the technology across classrooms within levels. In this effort, all classrooms would realize a certain minimal standard; and a growing percentage would realize a mid-level of technology or a higher level of technology.

At the April meeting of the JCSC, a draft master technology plan was presented for discussion for the short-term future. After review, the committee asked that work continue on the plan, and that it involve focus groups of students and faculty to solicit additional feedback. A timeframe for completion of these activities was set for July 2008 and the committee will take up the issue again at that time. The committee also indicated that a resource plan would need to be developed with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to support approved planned improvements.

Classroom Maintenance and Support

The committee discussed the work of the Classroom Media Assistance Team and the Classroom Management Support Team during several of its meetings. Work will progress on issues of communication with faculty about the available classroom support resources and the committee will revisit the issue in the future. The Asset protection plan for classrooms was reviewed and it was decided that a new request be sent to the deans and department chairs to allow for updating the priorities. This is currently occurring.