

## Provostial Task Force on Academic Space & Support

May 9, 2001

Membership of the Committee:

David Pomeranz, Chair

Peter Baigent

Joanne Daly

Nancy Duffrin

Alan Inkles

Elaine Kaplan

Eugene Katz

Joan Kuchner

Helen LeMay

Manny London

Gary Matthews

Larry Noonan

Jane O'Brien

Amy Provenzano

Beverly Rivera

Mark Schneider

Charles Simpson

Emily Thomas

Gary Van Sise

After an organizational meeting, the Committee divided into four sub-committees, concerned with General Space and Long Range Planning, Classroom Needs, Audio-Visual Needs and Rehab and Maintenance Coordination. Each subcommittee submitted a report and the whole committee held a final meeting to discuss the reports and formulate a general statement. This summary attempts to represent that statement.

### **I. Global Problems Concerning Space.**

The major problem that we face relates to the disparity that exists between the SUNY Construction Fund's estimate of our space needs compared with our existing space. Almost every unit on the campus feels squeezed for space, yet, by SUNY Construction Fund formulas, we have far too much. For classrooms, SUNY estimates that we have a surplus of 33,373 sq.ft (18.99%). For teaching labs, the surplus is 66,437 sq. ft. (28.90%), for research it is 312,072 (46.59%) and for departmental and faculty offices it is 343,461 (67.41%). The Task Force has determined that there are three reasons for this discrepancy:

a) *SUNY Formula.* The SUNY formulas that are used to estimate our space needs are woefully out of date. They never, in fact, adequately represented the needs of a major research university.

b) *SUNY Miscalculation.* The SUNY calculation of our needs is based on our CASA data. The East Campus does not do CASA. Therefore, although East Campus Space is calculated as part of our campus total, the entire East Campus faculty, Medical School, Dental School, School of Nursing, Allied Health Technology & Management, and Social Welfare do not justify any space on the campus.

c) *Stony Brook Misclassification and Alternate Classification.* A sampling was done within the College of Engineering to determine whether the space utilization reported to SUNY accurately reflects actual usage. This involved a room by room examination, and some differences were noted. These differences are unlikely to make a major difference in the calculation, even if the entire campus was surveyed in this way. Much more significant, however, were alternative calculations. For instance, Departmental Research Departmental Space justification is driven by a formula, but Organized Research Space is not. We classify 81% of our research space as Departmental Research Space.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Redo the Formula. Currently a Consultant involved in the development of our next five year Capital Construction Plan is working out a new formula based on the number of people who actually occupy and use space. Not surprisingly, it puts us in a much more favorable position with respect to space justification. We recommend that the Administration strongly support his efforts to get SUNY to change its formula. If we are successful in this effort, our long term efforts to plan for the orderly expansion of our physical plant will be greatly enhanced.

2. Correct SUNY Miscalculation. In parallel with our effort in item one, we should work to make SUNY aware of their miscalculations so that they can be corrected. Even without success in redoing the formula, success here will significantly reduce the disparity between SUNY's calculation and our current space.

3. Redo our space classification. In addition to the first two recommendations, and especially if one and two are not successful, we should consider a wholesale reclassification of space, especially research space. By reclassifying Departmental Research Space into Organized Research Space we can significantly reduce the apparent space surplus that SUNY calculates for us.

## **II. Classroom Needs.**

The major problem here is that there is a disparity between SUNY, and some parts of our administration, who believe that we have more than adequate classroom space, and the view of most of our faculty who believe that our teaching space is inadequate. The Task Force has identified four reasons for this discrepancy:

a) *A mismatch of classroom sizes.* Most of our current classrooms hold less than 40 students. But as our enrollment continues to increase, there is more need for classrooms that hold 60-80 students and 125-150 students. It does us no good to have an adequate total number of seats if they are not configured to meet our class sizes.

b) *A mismatch of audiovisual capability with faculty needs.* Our faculty are increasingly taking advantage of advances in audiovisual technology in preparing their classes. Yet the number of classrooms that can handle these needs is quite small. This will create an increasing problem as the pressure on those classrooms that can handle the state-of-the-art technology continues to mount, while those classrooms that have not been upgraded become increasingly underutilized.

c) *A mismatch between course scheduling times and student registration.* There are many examples that illustrate the point that if classes are scheduled at inconvenient times, students will not take them. We will give two:

1. WRT102. This is the one course all students must take for graduation. For Spring
2. ANT 367. For Fall 1999 the class was offered T/Th 11:30-12:40. All 75 seats were ta

d) *A mismatch between class scheduling and normal campus time slots.* This is especially seen in the scheduling of graduate classes. Classes may be scheduled in time slots that overlap normal campus time slots resulting in classrooms being taken out of service for two time slots by a class that really needs only one.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Convert Old Chemistry to a Technology Classroom Building. This would provide a significant number of new classrooms designed and equipped with the latest technology. The building should include lounge/meeting spaces for students to wait before class and for instructors to gather with students after class. New lecture-hall rooms could be built attached to the building and extending out toward the Zebra Path. Not only would this solve the mismatches described in (a) and (b) above, but it would provide extra classroom flexibility. This is important so that classes are able to move to larger quarters when enrollments increase, rather than simply increasing unmet demand.

2. Change MWF time vector to start 20 minutes earlier and end on Friday at 3:50 instead of 5:20. This would represent a better fit relative to student demand and aid in the optimization of classroom utilization. It would allow commuting students and students leaving for the weekend on Friday to catch the 4:18 train to New York City.

### **III. Audio-visual Needs.**

The major problems here are that there are few classrooms equipped for modern audio visual technology and that we have an inadequate delivery system for the audio-visual equipment that we do have. The Task Force has identified two causes for these problems:

- a) A lack of systematic upgrading of the audiovisual capabilities of classroom space.
- b) Inadequate staffing of Educational Technology.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Rehab Old Chemistry into a Technology Classroom Building. This is the same as recommendation 1 in the previous section.

2. Systematically begin the upgrading of existing classrooms to be able to handle the new technology.

3. Establish an equipment delivery service. This would reduce the wasted time that faculty use in setting up equipment and encourage the faculty to take advantage of the developing technologies. New staff lines would have to be created and additional space

found to house the enlarged staff.

#### **IV Rehab and Maintenance Coordination.**

The major problem here is that rehab and maintenance projects are not being completed in a timely and cost effective way. The principle cause is a lack of communication between users and providers, as well as within the chains of command both on the providers and users sides. Some specific examples: Facilities Engineering performs rehab estimate requests that it may receive from faculty, deans or the Provost's Office. In some cases there is no chance that the rehab will be funded, yet the estimation process requires both time and money that could better be used for other projects. Providers are often not kept informed of developing projects on the academic side so that they can budget their resources adequately. Users feel that there are not adequately kept informed of changes in scope or details of projects that may have significant implications for both time and cost. Users feel that there are insufficient consequences for projects that come in over budget and behind schedule, and insufficient incentives for providers to make low estimates and then bring in projects below estimate and ahead of schedule.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. All requests for initiating rehab projects should be sent from a department, through the relevant Dean's Office and then to the Provost's Office. Perhaps a signature form such as that used for Research Grants, can be prepared.
2. Once a year the President approves a list of state-funded rehab projects. For each of those projects a liaison from the relevant Dean's Office (usually an Assistant or Associate Dean) should be appointed to coordinate the project. That person would meet with Facilities and the user and would have the authority to approve or disapprove the plans and any changes to the orders.
3. Other projects, both state and research funded may appear during the year. They should funnel up the system in the normal way. When they reach the Provost's office, the Provost's Office in consultation with the Deans, should decide where the new project should be inserted into the Priority List. If it is only an estimate that is being requested, they will also decide whether and where on that Priority List the new request should be inserted.
4. Representatives of Facilities, Construction, Deans offices and the Provost's office should continue to meet on a regular basis.