Classroom Strategic Planning Workgroup

Background

As the university pursues initiatives to improve classroom space, it is advisable to form a group whose primary purpose would be to develop and oversee a systematic approach for evaluating, building and maintaining modern learning spaces on an ongoing basis. This is an essential component in providing faculty and students with the best possible learning spaces that support basic academic functions including teaching, research and related scholarly activities necessary for an engaged and active learning community. Membership should include broad representation from major stake holders in the campus community whose participation is essential to managing and improving classroom space.

With pressure on budget reductions in recent years, classrooms have had limited allocations set aside to meet the needs for the basic upkeep, maintenance and improvements in these critical learning spaces. Although the Office of the Registrar is responsible and accountable for general classrooms, classroom ownership is a shared resource not fully coordinated among university stakeholders including colleges, academic departments, Facilities, and Information Technology Services. Recently some funds have been identified to make some limited improvements to targeted spaces. It is hoped that this trend will continue in the coming years and therefore the time has come to form a collaborative group to focus on the needs in this area.

Charter

In support of the university’s strategic “Teaching & Learning Goal and Critical Resources Plan” (http://www.uidaho.edu/president/leadingidaho), a coordinated and systematic approach for evaluating classroom standards in a changing instructional environment is necessary. The purpose of this group is to review current classroom resources; develop standards and metrics for existing learning spaces; make recommendations guiding decisions for enhancement of existing classrooms; evaluation of current scheduling policy ensuring flexibility in meeting the needs of modern active learning spaces. This group will make recommendations on prioritization of budgeted expenditures for any general or departmental classroom renovation, major maintenance and/or equipment upgrade project.

Charge

A systematic approach for evaluating the creation and/or maintenance of classroom environments that are acceptable, sustainable and which effectively facilitate the teaching and learning processes is essential. Numerous discussions with faculty, administration, and staff point to the lack of coordination among the many people who are involved with classrooms. This has contributed to classroom environments that no longer effectively facilitate the teaching and learning process. A coordinated strategic approach moving forward will ensure that classroom environments effectively support the instructional mission of the University and that policy and procedures are in place to facilitate equitable scheduling practices with good classroom utilization rates.

Phase I – Current State Review - Initial Classroom Inventory, Assessment and Space Ranking

- Assessment of current classroom inventory for general fitness
- Review space and rank based on current amenities and capacities
- Develop consensus on minimum design and technology standards for future upgrades

Outcome - Prioritized list of recommended classroom spaces to target for improvements should funding streams become available in the short term.

Phase II – Future State Planning – Defining Criteria for the creation of Classrooms of the Future

- Evaluation of pedagogical needs and supporting technology
• Re-assessment of Scheduling policy in light of the scheduling needs for active learning spaces
• Review Current inventory and Rank Spaces for future upgrades based on desired amenities, capacities, emerging active learning criteria and other identified pedagogical needs

Outcome – Ordered classroom design recommendations that will inform project planning as funding streams are identified and targeted toward new or improved classroom spaces.

Phase III – Assess workgroup objectives and determine if a permanent group should be formed to evolve these objectives in light of the needs of the University of Idaho’s strategic plan.

Composition

Four (4) appointed faculty members, with the following considerations:
• No college has representation of more than one faculty
• One appointed by and representing the Faculty Senate

Five (5) administrative representatives appointed by the following divisions:
• Information Technology Services
• Facilities
• Registrar
• Distance and Extended Education

One (1) undergraduate student representative appointed by ASUI

It is understood that more stakeholders will need an opportunity to add a voice to the discussion as this group considers the future of classroom space at the University of Idaho. This group should consider strategies for bringing these voices to the table as work progresses in the various emphasis areas.

Approved 10/10/13