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Annual Report of the University Senate Growth and Development Committee
2018-19 Academic Year
April 19, 2019

The purpose of the University Senate Growth and Development Committee (Committee) is to examine general changes and strategies related to broad questions of advancement related to the university. After due deliberation, the Committee decided that, while it would be open to a variety of issues related to the university, our area of focus would be management and planning of university space. The committee interpreted university space broadly to mean not only classrooms but meeting spaces, public spaces, laboratories, collaborative rooms, or any other places where research, teaching, learning, or collaboration occurs.

During the 2018-19 academic year, the committee met with the following university representatives: 1) Terrence Cheng, Professor of English and Stamford Campus Director, 2) Peter Diplock, Assistant Vice Provost for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, 3) Deborah Shelby, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Operations, and 4) John Volin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Two other university representatives were unable to attend Committee meetings either due to illness or a cancellation. The Committee also spent significant time meeting to consider the challenges of university space, receive input from various constituent groups represented on the committee, and coordinate anticipated recommendations to the University Senate. The input from both university representatives and Committee members is reflected in this report.

Notable issues include:

1. The Stamford Campus

The Stamford Campus is experiencing enormous growth, particularly within the past three to five years. Enrollments in residence halls have risen to 425 students in only the second year of residence availability. The Stamford Campus has also leased twenty-two apartments in a building complex in downtown Stamford. Sharp increases in enrollment are anticipated in the future.

Within the UConn community there is value and attraction to an urban experience. The Stamford Campus provides an option for students that want a UConn experience in an urban setting. The challenge will always be resources and synergizing units to make programs run effectively. For example, Storrs students could spend one year in Stamford if they chose in order to live in a more urban setting or take advantage of local connections to business and employers.

Regarding Stamford Campus space, the Stamford Campus is at or near full of its space availability. The Stamford Campus is very full in the afternoons and evenings because of classes. The Stamford Campus now uses their auditorium and multi-purpose room, previously used for rentals, for student clubs and other meetings for the Stamford Campus. To the extent that the auditorium and multi-purpose room are used for internal clubs and meetings, it impedes the campus from fully leveraging a potential revenue stream. The broad concourse is not a mere transitional space but rather is in constant use for health and wellness fairs and other events. Adjunct and full-time faculty numbers have also grown over the past five years. Adjuncts currently have offices in Stamford but as the campus grows that may change and adjuncts could be forced out. We want to ensure that any new faculty hired in Stamford succeed, and a challenge in addition to space is the potential challenge of attracting graduate students to the campus.

One particular space challenge at the Stamford Campus is the availability of laboratory space. Such programs have particular environmental and spatial demands that are necessary for study of a specialized subject. For example, even though biology is the second largest major on the Stamford Campus, students are unable to complete the major. Any enhancement of this program would be hampered by space limitations. Digital media and design majors have reached 100 students, and they will need their own production area and discipline-specific spaces. While the school of business assists in space sharing by allowing Stamford Campus classes to use its space as available, there will soon be a need to have new spaces for classes and other activities. Laboratory space must be further developed in order to keep pace with demand.

Even though the Stamford Campus is in a state of rapid growth, there are future programs that can be developed. One such program is expanding the campus's footprint in education. Stamford and Norwalk have large school districts. Teachers need credentials to continue their career path. This population could be served with a graduate degree in education.

In addition, a master's degree in digital media with an educational technology focus would also be promising. Such a degree would not only leverage assets in digital media but exploit the aforementioned potential market for teachers while already having useful space that is set up for digital media majors. With graduate programs, the Stamford campus has limited competition, and is a robust market for growing graduate education in a vibrant professional marketplace.

2. Innovation of Learning Spaces

The university is taking the challenges of managing university space seriously and committing the time to develop a thoughtful approach to learning spaces. In the long-term, the university must continue to take a strategic mindset, rather than a reactive mindset, to the management and innovation of learning spaces. There is faculty demand for experimentation with new learning styles but insufficient rooms are available to operationalize those styles. Learning spaces will need to be developed in order for faculty to use the space in the way they envision. Basic standards are needed for learning spaces as well as more specific standards for specific types of learning areas. The university should avoid a passive 'build it and they will come' perspective for classroom use.

Regarding classrooms specifically, the university needs a 360 view of how each type of classroom functions and operates. This would streamline the ability of faculty to find a space that fit their needs. While some faculty will proactively seek out new technology, other faculty may be prompted by the technology that is made available to them in the class they teach. Classroom space management should introduce more choice to faculty in order to encourage pedagogical experimentation by both proactive and reactive users of the learning environment. Ideally, classrooms should be 'plug and play' for faculty members who can enter a classroom and readily meet their pedagogical needs with the resources available there.

The university should, as appropriate, benchmark with its peer or aspirational institutions regarding university space as well as seek information from higher education leaders in space management. Other schools have had great success in creating learning spaces that were amenable to active learning, more faculty-student interaction, innovation, and peer-to-peer learning. For example, a group of faculty and staff visited McGill University in order to learn about innovative space management. Findings from such visits and other external research should be adapted to UConn's space needs as relevant.

While there are significant efforts to better understand university space, more precise data is needed to discover the use, potential, and limitations of the spaces we have. In order to fully understand under what conditions space is either being misused or inefficiently used, more data is necessary. A system should be put in place, either through the Registrar's Office or another unit, to optimize any slack in that system. Such an investment may be able to alleviate pressures to construct new space, thus saving resources in the longer-term.

While universally innovative classroom spaces are ideal, budgetary constraints will obviously be a factor. Better choice should be provided to space users within the constraints that the university possesses. The goal of any space innovation is for its stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, to feel more satisfied in what they do. When reviewing or designing spaces, pedagogical needs come first and then inquiries about technology and other ways students and faculty may want to use the particular space follow. Spaces should be available for a diverse array of uses that do not impede upon one another. The overall goal is not an unrealistic perfection, but to get things "roughly right," and use that as a basis for further innovation.

3. Usage and Management of Learning Spaces

Regarding usage of learning spaces, such spaces are highly utilized. Classroom capacity varies according to preferences, with bunching on certain days. University heat maps reveal that Tuesday-Thursday schedules appear to be most preferred by faculty. Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedules are still well-utilized but not as much as Tuesday-Thursday schedules. Friday afternoons are fairly open for scheduling. Classrooms in the 50-75 size range is the greatest challenge. Available large classrooms are still sufficient to support university demands, but are estimated to reach full capacity in the near future.

Approximately 56.7% of classes follow university standard meeting times.[1] When a class does not follow standard meeting times, it can occupy two or perhaps three time-space equivalents for a single class. Non-standard schedules create inefficient use of classroom space. At least 80% compliance with standard meeting times would help manage classroom use. This system was contrasted with a model system at another university that a faculty and staff group visited, whereby standard meeting times were required and could only overruled by the Provost's office at that university. This created almost complete compliance with standard meeting times. Standard meeting times need to be better utilized in order to more optimally manage the space available.

Regarding management of learning spaces, approximately 190 classrooms are managed centrally. Approximately double that number is managed by schools and departments. University controlled classrooms are maintained such that technology is retained for no longer than five years. The committee learned that more schools are delegating control of their space to the university. When this occurs, the delegating schools get first priority over their ceded space. Such space not claimed by the delegating school is then available for extra usage. Also, the schools and departments do not have the pay for the technology support when that space is delegated to the university.

Regarding these and other changes, the Committee is mindful that the university does not have unlimited flexibility to change the academic calendar due to restrictions imposed by federal funding and state control. Any adaptations must be made with these constraints in mind.

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[1] *See* https://policy.uconn.edu/2017/09/07/assignment-of-instructional-space/.

4. Research Spaces

Although classroom and student-centered space were of primary focus to the committee, research space was also addressed. Some renovations are being planned in support of research. There is a real need for flexible laboratory space that can be modified as needed as faculty require new space for funded as well as unfunded research. Flexible space could function as temporary space as we develop more long-term solutions. Many ideas are being considered to find ways to improve existing, or make new space. The university is well aware of how stretched resources are. Shared spaces are also possible, but not all research spaces can be shared across multiple faculty.

The lack of sufficient research space is also a problem at the regional campuses. It is also an obstacle for leveraging laboratory research in certain disciplines. As the Stamford expansion plans develop, the university needs to fully explore the space demands of the expansion and ways that these can be met. Space and resource limitations at Stamford and other regionals effect the research areas that can be supported. Each campus has unique issues. Campus directors should be involved in conversations about research space needs.

Growth and Development Committee Members:

Johnny Banks, Admissions Office
Janet Barnes-Farrell, Psychological Sciences,
Robert Bird, Business Law (Chair)
Tracie Borden, Waterbury Campus
Ming-Hui Chen, Statistics
Benjamin Christensen, Student Health Services
Stuart Duncan, Graduate School
Joerg Graf, Molecular & Cell Biology
Faquir Jain, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Michelle Judge, Nursing Instruction and Research (sabbatical spring 2019)
Louise Lewis, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
Evan Metzner, Undergraduate Representative
Andrew Moiseff, Physiology & Neurobiology
Kylene Perras, School of Engineering
Carl Rivers, Office of the Registrar
Lyle Scruggs, Political Science
Jeffrey Shoulson, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Initiatives (Ex-Officio Member)
Deepa Shukla, Graduate Student

Committee Charge: *This committee shall keep under review the general changes, actual and prospective, of the University over time and may recommend any desirable expressions of Senate opinion on these matters. The committee may also provide on behalf of the Senate an evaluation and review of specific issues and activities related to institutional advancement. The committee shall include one graduate student and two undergraduate students.*