

Annual Report to Senate Council from the Academic Facilities Committee (SCAFC)

2020-21 Academic year.

5/1/2021

Kevin Donohue (Chair), Haley Bergstrom, Alan DeSantis, Claire Fraser, Charles Loftin, Mark O'Bryan, Jurgen Rohr, Jami Warren, Allison White, Ned Crankshaw (ex officio), Mitzi Vernon (ex officio).

The committee met twice in the fall semester to review/update committee charge and discuss survey results from last year. The committee met with Facilities Management personnel regarding the faculty concerns and updates on projects, including pandemic response. This report summarizes these meetings and makes several recommendations for moving forward.

2019-20 Survey Summary of faculty concerns:

Last year's survey of faculty senators indicated the following priorities:

1. Upgrades/modernization of current classroom spaces
2. Additional parking
3. Renovation to ensure safety and health in workspaces
4. Renovation to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
5. Additional classroom space

The facilities cited for critical need of renovation/replacement were:

1. Whitehall Classroom Building (6 mentions across 4 colleges)
2. Kastle Hall (5 across 3 colleges)
3. Buildings of the Bowman Quadrangle (Bowman, Breckinridge, Kinthead, and Bradley (5 across 5 colleges)
4. Chemistry-Physics (2 across 2 colleges)
5. Blazer Dining Hall (3 across 2 colleges)
6. College of Public Health/CPH Research facility (3 across 2 colleges).

Facilities Management Feedback:

This committee met with Mary S. Vosevich, VP of Facilities Management and Chief Facilities Officer, and Gus Miller, Resource Management Director. Committee expressed concerns regarding altered priorities/future needs due to pandemic, an unevenness in the way renovations/modernizations are done across campus, and facilities that are non-compliant with American Disability Acts.

1. Mary Vosevich and Gus Miller read the survey results from the previous academic year and indicated that they were aware of the problems cited in the document. Their main points in responding to the committee were:

a. The changes from pandemic involved providing protection for classrooms and removal/blocking of seats compatible with social distancing. HVAC systems are problematic in older buildings. They have a budget to keep these systems functioning properly, and they now had to include additional filters in response to the pandemic.

b. The process for selecting renovation/modernization projects involves studies using criteria such as college growth, historic preservation, and energy. While broad based discussions are carried out with deans and university leadership, the final decision rests with the Provost and the President. In addition, colleges are expected to raise 30% of required for projects involving their facilities.

2. Mary Vosevich and Gus Miller shared their Capital Project update presentation from October 2020 to the board of trustees indicating that expected student growth over the next 5 years will require an additional 150 to 250 thousand square feet.

3. Current projects in the construction phase that address faculty priorities are

(<https://www.uky.edu/cpmd/>):

(a) In construction

Renew/Modernize Facilities - Chem/Physics Ph II

Renew/Modernize Facilities - White Hall Classroom Bldg - Phase 1

(b) In design phase

Expand College Way West Parking Lot

Expand University Avenue Parking Lot

Renew/Modernize Facilities - Reynolds Building #1 - College of Design

Renew/Modernize Facilities - Scovell Hall

4. Mary Vosevich indicated that Blazer Hall, Kastle Hall, and CPH were not on the priority list. While facilities management is aware of the conditions in Blazer Hall, it is the President and Provost's decision to continue to use these buildings. Facilities for the College of Communications (now in Blazer Hall) is on the list for consideration, but the President and Provost have not acted on it.

Summary/Recommendations:

The survey was conducted before the major changes from the pandemic were implemented. This brought about significant changes in operations to fulfill our academic mission. The rapid change in operations has brought about new needs and requirements. The future activities of this committee should focus on staying ahead of trends in academic spaces and facilities to become more effective. The information from last year's survey, however, still highlights relevant concerns. Some of the concerns are being addressed (more classrooms and parking), while others not. Blazer Hall is not under consideration, which is a serious concern for faculty in that space and their colleagues. Such concerns need to be communicated on a regular basis to the provost and president, in a manner where they are expected to address these concerns with commitments for solutions.

The changes that have taken place as a result of the pandemic restrictions have expanded the definition of academic facilities. In this past year, some classrooms have been a laptop, residential living rooms, basements, patios, and chat rooms. Moving forward it is highly likely things will not go back to the way things were. We need to seek out and evaluate new ideas for spaces and facilities that will enhance our academic mission. The committee makes the recommendations:

1. Research the types of spaces that are most efficient/effective for fulfilling our academic mission. This may involve looking through the literature, other universities, and surveying our own faculty/students as to what types of spaces are most effective (Mary Vosevich indicated that this is information she would like to see from the faculty on the next survey).
2. Continue with meetings with Facilities Management representatives to get updates on projects relating to academic facilities and express faculty concerns/ideas.
3. Set up a web-based mechanism where faculty across the university can submit concerns and suggestions that the committee has access to. While some submission may have limited interest, a review of these could drive a more formal way to collect information (interviews, field trips ...). Currently, the committee members can track concerns from the departments and colleges they are in, but this is limited. Especially during these transient times, it would be good to have a more dynamic way to collect feedback from faculty regarding academic facility ideas/needs.
4. Schedule a meeting with the provost to discuss faculty priorities and concerns relative to information obtained from faculty feedback and get commitments as to having a plan to address these. The current charge indicates that communication with the administration should be in written form and passed up through the senate council. However, an interactive meeting, especially during these times of change, would be more effective in communicating concerns, understanding constraints, and getting a response.