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Space Occupancy Procedures

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Space Occupancy Procedures.

Submitted by Reed Smith

2/28/2011

Question:

Does a procedure exist for the displacement of the majority of a campus academic unit's primary classroom space by the campus administration, without addressing the impact of such displacement on the academic unit, and without consulting the affected unit before the decision is made?

Rationale:

The concern involves CLASS, the Office of Research Services, and the Center for Rural Health, all of which desire to occupy the same space on the first floor of Veazey Hall.

The first floor contains six classrooms, including three specially-designed computer labs, that were renovated only three and 1/2 years ago for occupancy by Communication Arts at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars to GSU. A new plan now calls for re-renovation of the classrooms into office space at an additional cost. Neither the Dean of CLASS nor the Communication Arts Department Chairperson were consulted nor informed of this decision before it was made. Nor did the administration offer a plan for alternative classroom space for Comm. Arts as part of this decision. Communication Arts is faced with attempting to locate alternate classroom space on campus within CLASS buildings after the fall schedule and classrooms were already designated.

The whole scenario sends a clear message that research is now more important at GSU than undergraduate instruction and that the collegial decision making process, formerly a hallmark of GSU, has been abandoned.

My department has already asked the CLASS Dean about this.

Response:

4/14/2011: The President's Cabinet decided recently to assign to the Graduate School six classrooms in Veazey Hall that had been designated for courses offered by the Department of Communication Arts. Coming as it did after the allocation of classroom space for Fall Semester 2011 classes, this reallocation of classrooms on campus has caused and will continue to cause problems for members of the department, students enrolled in their courses, and Dean Michael Smith:

1. They must now locate other classroom space.
2. Those classrooms may not have the special equipment currently available in Veazey Hall.
3. This situation has the potential to continue for a number of years.

As a result of this situation, the Senate Executive Committee has approved the following resolution. Be it resolved that the Senate Executive Committee requests that:

1. During Fall Semester 2011, staff of the members of the President's Cabinet study planned use of classroom space during Spring Semester 2012, reserve six available spaces for Communication Arts classes (preferably in a single building), and provide the department chair with long-term scheduling control of these spaces.
2. At the outset, future plans regarding reallocation of classroom space and/or office space include members of the department(s) affected and their dean(s).
3. Members of those departments have time to work in a spirit of consultation and collaboration with their dean(s) and members of the President's Cabinet to help develop and implement possible space reallocation plans.
4. The President's Cabinet inform faculty members of the accepted hierarchy for determining which unit has priority in scheduling a room at a particular time in a particular space.

3/7/2011

Dr. Jean Bartels responded:

The allocation of space on campus is a complex issue which is impacted significantly by our increasing enrollments and expanding programs, our limited existing facility space, the severe reductions in state support for any new buildings in the foreseeable future, and our commitment to expanding graduate education and scholarship as elements of our strategic vision. The renovation and repurposing of existing space is currently our only avenue to expansion that can support our current strategic initiatives. Given our current limitations and expansions, the entire University community must come to understand that space can no longer be understood as forever promised or owned by any one entity on campus. The innovative, collaborative, and cooperative use of space will increasingly become an expectation. University decisions related to building renovations, and the subsequent assignment of space, are the responsibility of the President's Cabinet reflecting their role in creating, monitoring, and adjusting the master plan for the University's development. The President's Cabinet always welcomes innovative suggestions regarding the use of space on campus, particularly as they continue to investigate strategic locations to meet student, faculty, and program needs.