

SAUS Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2025 | Location: Teams

Present: Dr. Lin (Libby) Yi, April Felan-Butler, Mary Washington, Doug Wells, Dr. Soma Datta, Emily Horton, Lea Black, Dr. J'Naudia Hunter, David Palmer, John Rodriguez, Jaime Richeson, Dr. Jason Makepeace, Sana Zeidan, Dr. Chris Ward, Deb Ross, Dr. Skylar Rolf, Lori Lopez

Guest Speakers: Dr. Stuart Larson (Department of Communication and Studio Arts)

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm

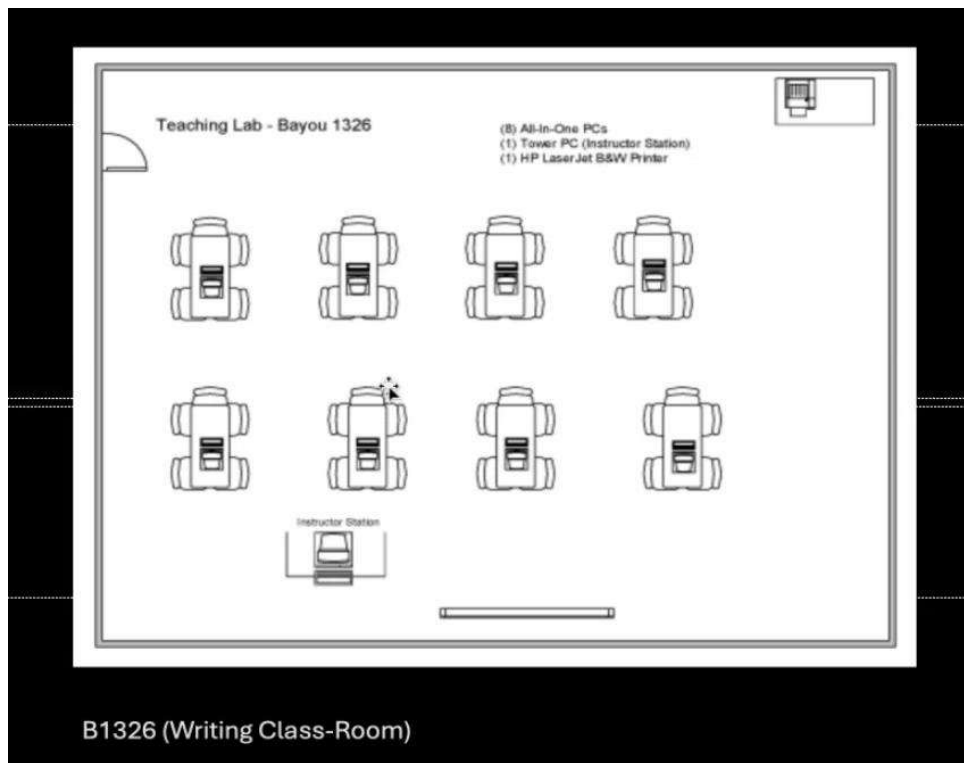
The meeting minutes from January were approved unanimously, without any objections or abstentions.

Guest speaker Dr. Stuart Larson discussed his idea of having a designated team setting classroom that is not so rigid and includes chairs and tables that can be moved easily. Dr. Larson wants to know if it would be possible to have a couple of classrooms with pods, which would be ideal for student breakout discussions and group activities in groups of 5-6 students. Dr. Larson has discussed this with other faculty members, and he believes there should be added value to students coming to class and campus; he often has his students get into groups. Room B1217 includes tables and chairs that are easier to move, and Dr. Larson would like to see UHCL implement a couple of permanent classrooms with pods that would allow students to sit naturally in groups so that he does not have tables and chairs moved around every day. Dr. Larson has not taken a poll, but he feels other professors would appreciate this, as well.

Dr. Skylar Rolf agreed that this would be a great idea; he would also appreciate a team space for his classes, and this same topic was also discussed in a recent College of Business meeting. A survey was sent out to COB faculty members, and they are trying to determine how many faculty members are interested in team spaces in classrooms.

Dr. Chris Ward (who handles scheduling for his department) feels that the team spaces would be very popular in all the Psychology classes, and current pedagogy practices encourage flexibility and less use of traditional tiered classrooms. The tables in SSCB classrooms are very heavy and difficult to move. Deb Ross asked for a visual example of the rooms that Dr. Larson would prefer to have, and he shared an example of layout the B1326 Teaching Lab (with computers), which is now designated for the Writing classes. Dr. Larson would like more classrooms like this with movable tables and chairs, and one instructor station.

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Lea Black recommended creating a poll to gather interest. Dr. Skylar Rolf stated that he would follow up with the College of Business to inform them that there is interest in team pod classrooms. Dr. Jason Makepeace (in the chat) also agreed that the College of Humanities (Art History Faculty) would appreciate this.

Doug Wells recommended that Dr. Larson should work with his college's course scheduler to get his courses in a certain room that would meet his needs, while understanding that it may not necessarily be perfect. Doug also suggests determining the typical classroom sizes, and the more that this class size is shared across the different colleges, the more likely it is that we would be able to buy furniture and assign certain rooms to.

Dr. Larson said that he plans to work with Dr. Rolf and Dr. Ward to identify classrooms that would be ideal for pod set-ups.

John Rodriguez asked if any plans may require the purchase of new classroom furniture for a small subset of rooms that accommodate even if they are not set up in pods. Doug answered that Stuart had stated earlier that there might be some movable furniture around campus, and FMC is open to that possibility.

Mary Washington: B1217 is for Faculty members who need this room and certain rooms for special reasons (HR/Medical Accessibility/etc.), and we need to be mindful about that.

There should be more classrooms that allow for flexible teaching and moving tables, but it depends on the demand by professors and class sizes, etc.

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Libby summarized that the committee's discussion supported Dr. Larson's suggestion to have a couple of classrooms designated for team-style teaching. She also stated that she would pass on Dr. Larson's request to FSSC for further discussion and consideration.

- Update from Doug Wells: Located on the 3rd floor in the SSCB, **SSCB 3.301 and 3.312** (which previously served as an office and conference room) will revert to Admin & Finance use and serve as new offices for the AVP for Business Operations. All staff members under this purview will be moving there within the next month. Last week, Dr. Walker decided to give these rooms back to Administration and Finance.
- Next, Libby briefly told us about the last FSSC meeting, and she reiterated that this committee is not just about the allocation of spaces that are available on campus but also about the utilization of spaces. Libby encouraged the group to bring up any questions that they may have about space utilization, etc.

John Rodriguez: This committee, on a macro level, takes a good look at the scores and input of faculty and staff through surveys, etc. Ultimately, we want to have high utilization rates for the LAR reports to the State Legislative sessions.

Libby also mentioned that in the last FSSC meeting, they discussed whether traditional chalkboards should remain in campus classrooms or be replaced with whiteboards.

Mary Washington: A survey about that was attempted years ago and was met with mixed feedback. Some wanted to keep the chalkboards, and others wanted all whiteboards. It honestly varies since she gets some classroom requests for chalkboards only and others for whiteboards only. Libby asked Mary about the advantages of chalkboards over whiteboards. Mary was unsure, but she stated that the Math and Statistics courses usually preferred chalkboard spaces over whiteboards.

Dr. Rolf: It would be good to have a whiteboard on the side that is not covered by the projector because he uses the whiteboard to supplement what he is showing on the PowerPoint.

Dr. Ward: had a faculty member from the College of Business contact him about concerns with the Bayou Building renovations that they may need to relocate offices during finals week. Is there any information about this, and could FMC work around the scheduling to accommodate finals and entering grades?

Doug: Not sure where that news is funneling around, but there is no exact date yet. We do want to get started as soon as possible to begin demolishing and preparing for renovations.

Dr. Rolf: the College of Business was informed that he and his colleagues must vacate their current offices by May 15th (when grades are due) with all items boxed up and ready to be moved. Doug is working with Dean Waller and Dean Irving. FMC will give time and be sensitive to the fact that this is around finals and when grades are due. The movers should arrive sometime between May 15th and June 1st. May 15th is at the beginning of this window. would like to refurbish the offices for Business and Biology and Math, but there are many moving pieces as to how to get the most out of the move

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and refurbish spaces that have not been redone in a long time. Be patient and know that the moving crew will not show up on the 1st day of finals. FMC will be in touch with SAUS and with faculty leadership.

Dr. Rolf asked why the office packing and moving process had not started earlier. Doug explained it was due to project timeline issues, and the design was not completed yet. The renovation concept started in December and became more concrete over time. The renovation plans were not completed until recently. Dr. Rolf also asked if future moves would have to go through the committee first, or is this decision not under our purview? Doug's response: It depends on the President and the direction of the President.

Libby asked Doug if the moving window could be expanded because some Faculty members go out of town immediately following the semester. This could also be challenging with giving people too much or too little time to move.

Dr. J'Naudia Hunter: As we attempt to progress and to promote our new brand, we should consider some of these things. From an outside looking in perspective, in our planning, certain people are included in the conversation, and some are left out. It would be good to have an overall perspective of all the entities that play a part; some are not considered, and many get impacted when decisions like these are made. As a committee, we should review all the effects of the necessary decisions that we make. It would be beneficial for our committee to begin to have an overall perspective of all the entities that play a part and to consider them. It must start somewhere.

Libby: Agreed with Dr. Hunter and approved of Mary's idea to use a survey to collect information regarding decisions that may affect more people. Everyone outside of the committee can be informed and vote on important decisions. Libby asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the group, but there were none.

The meeting concluded at approximately 1:55 PM.