MEMORANDUM

TO: Leon Richards, Chancellor
FROM: Harry Davis, Faculty Senate Chair
RE: Report of the Chancellor’s Task Force on Space Allocation and Management Implementation
DATE: November ?, 2008

The Senate received the above report, dated August 14, 2008, attached to your September 3rd memo. The original fact finding report was sent to the Senate’s Budget Committee for study, but the latest report has not yet been thoroughly studied by the Budget Committee or the Senate. We are pleased that you have taken the initiative to inventory the College’s space and to manage such in a responsible and fair manner. The Senate is concerned over several issues:

1. The Task force did not seem to consider input from individual departments or the governance organizations representing faculty, staff, and students. Hopefully this process is occurring now, before creation of a policy and its implementation.

2. The Senate believes that any formulation of a policy on space utilization should be made in consultation with the governance bodies since there could be profound affects on academic matters. Loss of a classroom could mean the inability to offer a course. Loss of a workroom could mean the decay of the work environment and the inability to perform academic functions. Loss of a computer lab or study space could have an adverse affect on student success and satisfaction.

3. The manner in which implementation will be made is not clear. It would not be fair that an individual faculty who uses a space be ordered to cease and desist without consulting with the affected department. These matters should be between the administration and the department, not between an individual and the administration.

   The Senate suggests that implementation by performed by a committee consisting of a democratic representation of the campus and in consultation with the department representing the affected individual. Only the department and the individual faculty will be aware of all of the issues and ramifications. While some courses require significant use of office hours for student help, others do not. While some departments provide tutors to help with this student need, others do not. There are too many special circumstances that preclude the use of a sweeping overall approach. It doesn’t make sense that we become so efficient that no one wants to work here.

4. Many of the recommendations in the fact-finding report do not seem to be recommendations coming from faculty. For example, it would be clear to ALL faculty that
faculty engage in “confidential discussions with students” because we assign grades and counsel students about them. Also, some buildings have rooms, often shared by many faculty, which are referred to as a lounge or workroom. These may contain a microwave oven, fax machine, sink, etc. It would seem a double standard to include faculty lounges without also including those used by staff and administration.

5. It is not logical to prescribe what furnishings are allowed in a faculty office. The report sites disparity in office size and so faculty must be creative in order to make the most efficient use of available space, often using very high bookshelves, chairs, and other pieces of furniture not provided by the College. It makes no sense to relegate faculty to College-issued Spartan offices because this would not be conducive to spending time on campus. The Senate believes that faculty should personalize their office, within reason, and make it into a comfortable and inviting environment for the faculty member and their students. It should be a relaxing place where academic excellence and collegiality can grow. Otherwise faculty will be inclined to teach, spend a minimum time in office hours, then leave. It seems that this recommendation throws a shadow over the effectiveness of the entire report.

The Senate is in favor of many aspects of the report including a college scheduler and the assessment of space inventory. However, the devil is in the details of implementation. Please provide a mechanism for further input from the Faculty Senate and the other governance bodies before the creation of and implementation of a policy.

Aloha, Harry

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