

February 16, 2006

UC 8853 06S

To: Lawrence Williams, Chair  
Undergraduate Council

Received 2/16/06

From: Richard A. Kasschau  
Professor, Psychology

mad

Re: Room scheduling procedures

WITHDRAWN  
4/4/07  
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This semester, in a process repeated in many, though not all semesters I've been here, I requested rooms for conducting during-semester exams for my Distance Education courses, and finals for my sections of PSYC 1300, Introduction to Psychology. To do so, I must file a computer form which does not require me to list any detailed purpose for my room request other than class, test, or other, gives me no information about room sizes, and no information as to who processes the information I must submit.

I request that the appropriate committee of the Undergraduate Council study the current process of making such reservations, and report back to Council with recommendations to reduce the current inefficiencies, to increase the responsiveness to requests, and to establish a priority-of-access policy to lend greater order to the room reservation process.

The following are problems I've encountered over the years and suggestions for possible policies to be implemented:

**Problem:** To request a room I have to contact a department person who must relay my request to a college person, who relays my request to university-level people (Provost's Office?) who apparently sometimes relay my requests only to the Vanderbilts and a Divine Being.

**Problem:** Such a chain too often leads to hang ups intended by no one, but unavoidable in such a long chain of very busy people. I have previously been specifically instructed not to communicate directly with the actual person who schedules the rooms. In situations where an assignment has not been made, questions about that lack of decision must be fed through the same inefficient chain of command, often with delayed or no effect.

**Problem:** In general it has been the case that room assignment is strictly on a first-come, first-served basis with no rational examination of the centrality of each request to the university's mission.

**Problem:** The opening day for receiving such room requests for any given semester is almost never publicly announced.

**Problem:** Generally teaching large classes, I have a rather limited selection of rooms available in which to do PSYC 1300 final exams. If a busy Fall Semester start-up delays my Fall Final Exam Room scheduling request, I sometimes have been expected to test my classes simultaneously in (at least) a half-dozen rooms spread from the Business Administration Building to the Roy Cullen Building not even including the lecture hall(s) in which those classes are taught.

**Solution:** Can we create a system which receives room requests directly from instructors and UH personnel, but refers non-UH requests for review by administrative personnel? Specifically, can this be a computer-based system with a format markedly more responsive and intuitively obvious than the current electronic request form?

**Solution:** Can we set up a priority system which might arrange access-priority to rooms along the following lines? Higher listing equals higher priority: For any room, access is given in the following priority

Class exam activity for classes taught in the room

Other class activities (Speakers, etc.) for classes taught in the room

Other UH-related exam activities for UH classes and instructors

Other UH-related teaching activities for UH classes and instructors

University-based activities (speakers, departmental activities, . . .)

Student-based extra-curricular activities (clubs, professional groups, honor societies, . . .)

Guest activities (e.g., off-campus groups)

While it is obviously best for our administration to monitor and run such a system, administrative priorities and decisions may occasionally run counter to the intentions and needs of a specific class, instructor, or extracurricular club. There should be a faculty-elected committee to review such clashing plans, empowered to settle such issues expeditiously with final decision-making authority when the above prioritized list is inadequate.